



Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River

User Capacity Study

Recreation Assessment

Interim Report

June 2021



## Foreword

This work has been made possible with assistance, support, and input from many stakeholders who live, work and play on and alongside the Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River. The intent of this project is to support the protection and stewardship of the Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River, the responsibility of the Lower Delaware Management Committee.

We thank several individuals for their time, patience and input. Notable are Sarah Bursky (National Park Service), Maryann Carroll (Delaware River Greenway Partnership), Bryan Cope (Northampton County), Richard Dodds (Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River Management Council), John Mauser (Lower Mt. Bethel Township), Rob Costagna (Milford, NJ), Richard Dodds (Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River Management Council), Patricia Kalleser (NJ Department of Environmental Protection), Cindy Kunnas (Lambertville Chamber of Commerce), Ross McLennan (Bucks County), and Mark Zakutansky (Delaware River Water Trail).



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## I. Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River 2007-2011 Action Plan: Check in

This interim 'recreational assessment' report addresses the recreation-related goals of the 2007-2011 Action Plan as the starting point for review of the current recreational environment on the Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River. Assisting the reader's review are three familiar, primary resources and a Google Earth map which locates them in a river context:

- Lower Delaware Wild & Scenic [Designation Map](#) - Includes non-supportive jurisdictions
- National Park Service Lower Delaware [Scenic & Recreation River](#)
- Lower Delaware Wild & Scenic River [Outreach Map](#) - Includes non-supportive jurisdictions
- Lower Delaware Wild & Scenic River [Access Sites](#) (Google Earth)

The 2007-2011 Action Plan established goals and priority actions for six areas: 1) Water Quality, 2) Natural Resources, 3) Historic Resources, 4) Recreation, 5) Economic Development and 6) Open Space Preservation. Specific to policy and implementation items in support of the 2007-2011 Action Plan for the Wild and Scenic Lower Delaware River, this review shares the Recreation Goals, noting how its implementation directives updated the original plan with regard to preserving and protecting Recreational Resources.

### 2007-2011 Action Plan: Recreation

The following is an objective review of actions identified in the [plan](#) that are specific to Goal 4: Recreation. The plan has not been updated.

#### Overall Objective

Encourage recreational use of the river corridor that has a low environmental and social impact and is compatible with public safety, the protection of private property and with the preservation of natural and cultural qualities of the river corridor.

#### Policies

- Establish publicly-owned land which provides appropriate river access and support facilities for people pursuing recreational opportunities.
- Establish strict rules on excessively noisy or intrusive activities or vehicles in the river corridor, and promote enforcement of those rules by both states.

- Promote appropriate public access points with maps, guidebooks, signs, etc. to reduce recreational trespassers on private property.
- Lands with significant recreational value within the corridor should be publicly owned or protected by land trusts in order to facilitate public recreational use.
- Guidelines should be established and enforced for the use of public access sites by commercial operators for access, parking, and operations.
- No wake zones should be enforced.

## Implementation

### **Recommended**

Conduct a recreational use study, including impact on the environment

### **Actualized**

This is in process.

## Access to the River

### **Recommended**

Access recommendations in the Delaware River Water Trail Plan should be implemented. Several additional and potential access sites have been acquired or are planned since the Lower Delaware River was designated into the National Wild and Scenic River System, including one at the Giving Pond, the extension of the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park, and at the mouth of the Musconetcong River.

State, county, municipal, and private entities should provide additional access sites to the river, particularly low-impact recreational activities that are environmentally suited to protecting the river and habitats.

Suggestions include fishing, birding, and wildlife observation, hiking, and canoe camping. All proposals for new recreational activities should be evaluated to determine the impact upon the important resources of the study area.

An analysis of river access needs should be conducted that facilitates officials at all levels to provide access, including funding information.

### **Actualized**

See the Delaware River Water Trail Plan, Lower Delaware River Review included at the end of this section.



## Recommended

The Lower Delaware River Management Committee should participate in the annual Delaware River Sojourn.

## Actualized

The Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River Management Council provides funding for Delaware River Sojourn youth scholarships, thanks to support from the National Park Service. While the Committee has not participated as a whole, current and past members of the Committee have participated.

## Safety

Recommended	Actualized
The New Jersey Marine Police and the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission should:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide the police force necessary to enforce the rules governing recreational activity in the river corridor, particularly during peak periods of use on summer weekends.</li></ul>	Every effort is made by jurisdictions, and their capacity is insufficient for the busy season. Traffic in 2020 was extraordinary and exaggerated by COVID-19 protocols, but system stress is projected to continue as the river has now been discovered by new user groups.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work in partnership with personal watercraft retailers and manufacturers to encourage safe and courteous use of personal watercraft.</li></ul>	This has not taken place in a program that has been shared.

<p>Governmental entities at all levels and both sides of the river should adopt compatible rules governing recreational use of the river corridor. These rules should be in accord with the recreational goals of the Management Plan.</p>	<p>This has not been developed.</p>
<p>Commercial operators are encouraged to comply with health and safety regulations both in the use of watercraft and food and beverage sales.</p>	<p>Food and beverage sales as well as a relationship between large on-water outfitted crowds and trash have been the source of controversy, and precedent has not been firmly established.</p>
<p>An effective enforcement policy should be developed to minimize excessive noise and speed, to eliminate potential collisions between river users, to discourage intimidation of non-power watercraft users and fisherman by power craft, to protect the environment, and to consider establishing designated areas for personal watercraft.</p>	<p>Enforcement tools exist. Enforcement resources such as launch-based rangers or interpretive staff are in short supply.</p> <p>The level of on-water enforcement to address practices such as ‘no radio zones’ has been low or non-existent for years.</p> <p>While personal watercraft engine ‘noise’ has improved, the popularity of wake surfing and waterproof purveyors of music create challenges to on-water courtesy.</p>

**Interpretation**

**Recommendation**

A comprehensive interpretation plan for the entire Lower Delaware River corridor is needed that is compatible with the plan prepared for the Delaware and Lehigh Navigation Canal National Heritage Corridor. The plan will encourage the protection of resources, promote safe and courteous river use, and raise awareness of the value of the Delaware's resources.

**Actualization**

This plan was not conducted.

## Lower Delaware River Review

The following are recommendations put forth in the 2006 Delaware River Concept Plan, and an update to acknowledge the action has taken place. Many plan recommendations apply to the Upper, Middle and Lower Delaware River: where the needs differ by section, only those which focus on the Lower Delaware are included.

## River Resources: Access Points

### Recommended

This plan suggested exploring three locations for new access points and examining the Portland Reliant Energy Power Plant access for reopening.

### Actualized

- The **Portland Reliant Energy Power Plant** has not been approached to encourage the re-opening of their water trail access. With permission, large groups can still use the site. This section of the river has few access launch and parking facilities.
- **Giving Pond** - The Giving Pond is now a relatively good access point for non-motorized boats. A vehicle with a trailer can unload and turn around, and the Giving Pond park has plenty of parking, port-o-Johns, etc. The Delaware River Sojourn stops there, and PA DCNR allows folks to camp there with a large group in consideration of a request.
- **Delaware Canal State Park** - There have been no new river access sites developed along the canals of Pennsylvania or New Jersey since 2006.
- **Musconetcong River** - Access to the Lower Delaware at the confluence of the Musconetcong River via Old River Road in Riegelsville is referred to as the Riegelsville, NJ Boat Launch. It was [enlarged and improved](#) in 2014.

## River Resources for Camping and Overnight Trips

### Recommended

The Lower Delaware offers camping, the section has more opportunities for inns, bed and breakfasts and motels. Island camping could be investigated. Inns, bed and breakfasts, and nearby motels could assist vehicular traffic and parking overflow by providing shuttles for their customers who plan to enjoy the river.



## Actualized

No new camping has been opened since the plan was adopted. In fact, Bulls Island has discontinued camping access at the park. Generally this need still exists. Shuttles have not been established: the opportunity may have been explored.

## Signage and Wayfinding

It was recommended that the Delaware River Water Trail include a signage system similar to the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, which uses National Park Service standard sign specifications.

Recommended	Actualized
Post the Delaware River Water Trail branded sign at major access locations.	Signage has been purchased for Lower Delaware Access points using the Water Trail logo, only for the Pennsylvania side and where PA DCNR owns lands. Signs purchased have not been installed.
Mark access points where appropriate.	Few access points are marked from the river view.
Work with PennDOT, NJDOT, NYDOT, and the Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission (I-80 and south) to place identification signage on bridge crossings.	Bridges are not signed.
Consider offering basic access and safety information in Spanish as well as English.	Bi-lingual signage is offered at a few access points.
Work with departments of tourism and state DOTs for assistance with directional access signage.	This has not taken place on behalf of the entire reach.

## Safety and Education

Among the recommendations were the following, and comment on implementation:

Recommended	Actualized
Increase the frequency of volunteer safety patrols.	No, though this has taken place on the Upper Delaware.
Increase availability of paddling instruction programs.	Outfitter presence has grown, and may provide basic instruction. There have been few efforts to increase paddling instruction: <a href="#">Two Rivers Kayaking</a> (Easton) provides instruction; <a href="#">Big Bear Gear</a> (Lambertville) states canoeing instruction as a service.
Work with emergency personnel along each river section and large management unit (such as NPS) to receive feedback and input on access locations, GPS points and numbering at both the river access launch/retrieval area and trailhead.	This has taken place at times, and could be improved with a comprehensive effort.
Information at access site kiosks can include the skill level recommended for a given stretch of river.	This has not occurred, signage at several launches encourage the pursuit of paddling awareness.
Investigate the potential for using solar powered call boxes at river access sites, so information can be received by 911 dispatch with a GPS unit, or NPS in NPS-managed areas.	Unsure of the degree to which this has been pursued.

Use a special radio frequency that provides safety information and warns of hazardous river conditions; provide more radio contacts in different regions.	This has not taken place. Groups are serviced by different communication centers so radios have different frequencies: they may use marine radio channels. Frenchtown uses Hunterdon County in Cherryville. Bucks County communications center in Doylestown. Frenchtown and Erwinna/ Tinicum personnel respond together.
Initiate a river user survey, particularly in the Lower Delaware River segment.	This was initiated.

## Boating Regulations and Fees

### Recommended

Boating regulations are inconsistent from state to state, and from state to federal government; they are unevenly applied even among access sites in the same state. New Jersey and Pennsylvania have reciprocal fishing regulations and law enforcement, but not reciprocal boating regulations. Different regulations apply to different classes of boaters in each state. It is recommended that State web sites include information on all state requirements. DRGP will provide links with those agency's sites.

### Actualized

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Division of Fish and Wildlife [Delaware River Boat Access Sites](#) resource includes basic access information for Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River launches.

Launch fees and permits are extremely inconsistent within Pennsylvania, within New Jersey and between the two. Site fees range from \$0 (free) to seasonal to annual. A life jacket mandate was initiated in 2016 for Pennsylvania waters November 1 - April 30.

## Additional Information Needs

### Recommended

### Actualized

Conduct a gap analysis to determine	This was not conducted.
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locations and needs for additional access points, and determine feasible locations based on physical, environmental and financial consideration.	
Consider where land trails/open spaces provide: - Access to natural, scenic, cultural or historic resources; - Opportunities for resource interpretation or education; - Access to community resources; and - Facilities that can serve water trail access areas.	This was addressed in part, at a few sites like Bulls Island and Delaware Canal State Park.
Determine whether or not landowners can be protected from liability if paddlers use their property to portage around a river hazard.	Major rapids have adjacent public lands, minimizing worries about portaging.

## Public Outreach

Distributing information about the Delaware River Water Trail, significant natural and cultural resources, safety, access, and other aspects of the river must be an ongoing effort.

### Recommended

### Actualized

A Delaware River Water Trail website will be the principal means of providing information to the public. The site can be updated with current information and safety advisories, as required.	The Delaware River Water Trail <a href="#">website</a> was developed as the principal means of providing information to the public about the corridor, regulations, river conditions and hazards, safety measures, and endorsement of Leave No Trace ethics and practices. The site was overhauled in 2020 (thanks to a Pennsylvania water trail mini-grant program, matched by funds from the Delaware River Greenway Partnership) to feature the trail in an interactive platform.
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Develop or sponsor educational programs and workshops on water safety, stewardship of the river and its resources	Programs include the Delaware River Sojourn, programs with local paddling clubs such as the Philadelphia Canoe Club, Delaware River Keeper, Hunterdon County, both State Park agencies, and others.
Efforts should be made to establish a “leave no trace” program	Leave No Trace is explained and endorsed on the website, and annual cleanups are coordinated by the DRGP.

Sign Plan

**Recommended**

**Actualized**

Develop sign templates using the D & L National Heritage Corridor sign system as a model.	Sign templates exist, but they have not been use for water trail access points.
Where public agencies require their own designs for signs, develop designs incorporating common features of both the agency and the Water Trail.	Agencies seem to produce signs according to their own standards.
Develop a handbook that includes signage functional types and guidelines/standards for their location, design, installation and maintenance.	There is a sign ‘standards’ document for Delaware Water Trail signs that has not yet been utilized.

## Marketing Strategy

Recommended	Actualized
Use free websites to market the water trail.	This has been successful thanks to social media and partners such as the Delaware River Basin Commission.
Work with Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission to have the Delaware River Water Trail formally designated into the Pennsylvania Water Trails System.	This has taken place.
Work with tourism agencies to include the water trail guide in promotional materials.	This has taken place.
Distribute guide to liveries and other recreational vendors, canoe groups, paddlesports magazines and other recreational venues.	The Guide was printed early on and is now available online as a pdf. The National Park Service offers a printed Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River map.
Hold kickoff event for distribution of guide.	This has taken place.
Develop Public Service Announcements (PSAs) for cable TV, radio, and print media.	These tools, common in the past are now eclipsed by the effectiveness of social media and email lists. The Delaware River Water Trail Guide was printed and is available <a href="#">online</a> . The DRGP, National Park Service, NJ and PA State Parks, counties, municipalities and environmental groups share information well.



## Website Development

Recommended	Actualized
Develop an interactive website as part of the Delaware River Greenway Partnership site.	The website is maintained by the Delaware River Greenway Partnership (DRGP) who conducted a complete redesign (mentioned in 'Public Outreach' above) in 2020. This website is separate from the DRPG website.
Determine content and links with governmental agencies, including tourism agencies, chambers of commerce, other non-profit organizations active in the region or concerned about trail issues.	This has been initiated and seems to be well-maintained.
Obtain permission of private access site owners, liveries, and campgrounds to include information on the web site.	Yes: understandably, this can be a sensitive subject.

## II. Public Survey of Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River Recreational Use – Fall 2020

To gain an understanding of the public's perspective about Lower Delaware River recreation a survey was developed to seek their input. Thanks to the outreach assistance from DRGP, 239 stakeholders responded to the survey from October 16 through December 18, 2020. In addition a virtual town hall meeting was conducted November 30, 2020. See Attachment I to see a complete list of survey questions.

The initial objective was to develop a profile of users for nine locations along the reach to include access descriptions, parking characteristics, capacity and whether payment is required, picnic tables, camping, access dimensions, access for power vs. hand-carried craft, bathrooms, hours of operation and proximity to town center.

As survey responses were submitted, it became evident that additional launch points should be considered. Four additional launches for a total of thirteen were added to the

survey options and a thirty were researched, referenced on Table I and in the Google Earth [Access Sites](#) map.

This following input reflects the access points survey respondents indicated as the one that best represents their practice when they put in and take out from the Lower Delaware.

We reached out to with representatives from the most important stakeholder groups, to be sure we would achieve the diversity among our respondents:

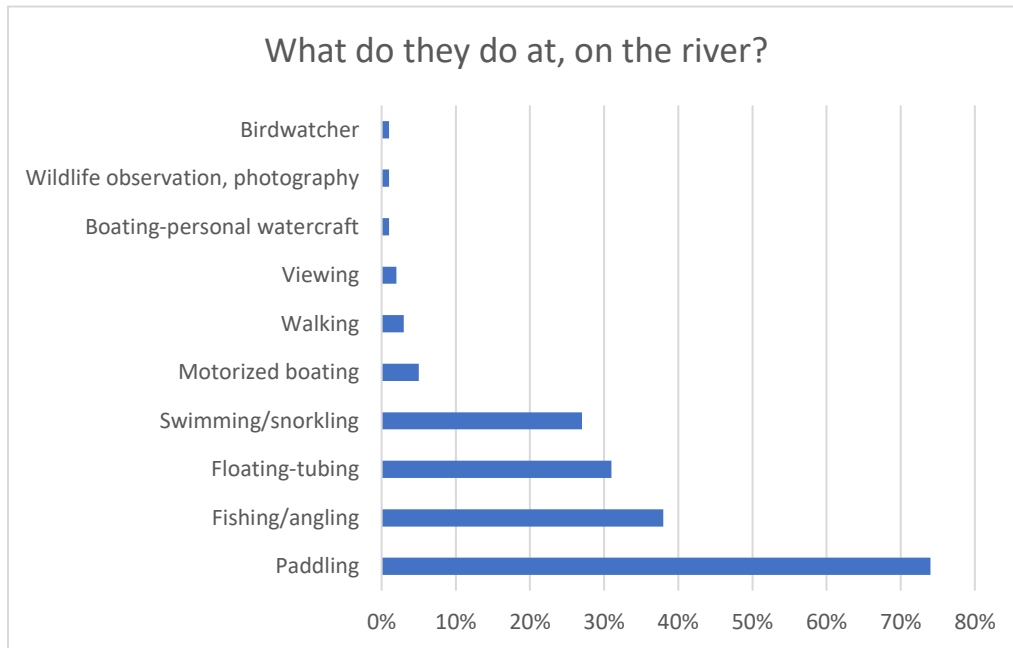
Kingwood DEP, NJ	18%
Scudders Falls - Yardley	14%
Lambertville, NJ	8%
Riegelsville Access, NJ	8%
Portland Footbridge, PA	8%
Tinicum County Park - PA	6%
Upper Black Eddy - PA	3%
Belvidere, NJ	3%
D&L Canal - PA	3%
D&R Canal State Park	2%
All of the above	2%
Milford Bridge to Delaware Canal	1%
Point Pleasant, PA	1%
Scott Park - Easton, PA	1%
Washington Crossing	1%
Giving Pond - PA	1%
Sandts Eddy	1%

The survey and follow up included discussions with stakeholders, all contributors to the future of the Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River:

- Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River Management Council;
- Agency Staff representing Northampton County, Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission, Delaware Canal State Park, Delaware and Raritan State Park/New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission, and Delaware River Basin Commission;
- Township officials - Portland, Knowlton Township / Columbia, Upper Mt. Bethel, Belvidere, Lower Mt. Bethel, Easton, Phillipsburg, Pohatcong, Bridgeton, Stockton, Milford, and Frenchtown;
- 132 Residents, 20 Landowners, and 11 Business owners;

- 179 self-described river users who included at least one person for each access point, as well as private launches and a few downstream of the protected reach.

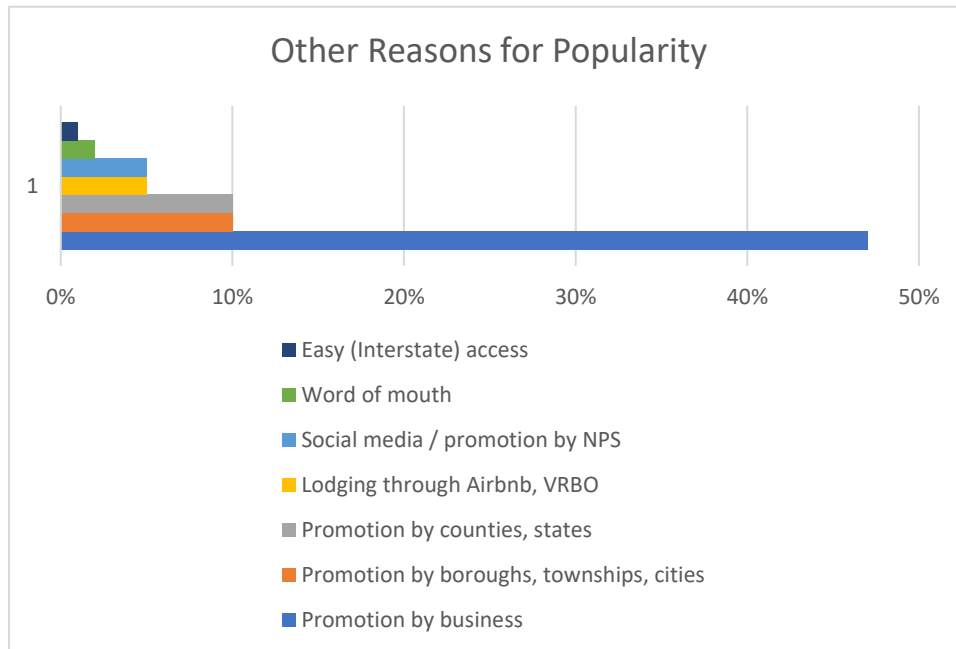
Recreationists shared the nature of their preferred type of river use, able to choose up to three. Nearly three-quarters of respondents indicated that they paddle, and roughly a third indicated they swim or snorkel, tube float or fish.



Asked to describe the recreational use on the Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River, nearly one-third (32%) of respondents indicated they think it is over-utilized, in need of dramatic management improvement. Nearly the same number (31%) think the use is 'appropriate' and 24% think it is over-utilized but manageable. Five percent view the river as underutilized.

When asked to choose the factors which contribute to the increased popularity of river recreation, well over half (57%) cited river tubing. Forty percent of respondents felt the source is people using their own inner tubes versus seventeen percent believing the growth is due to commercial outfitters. Other perceived contributors to growth, according to respondents, are paddlers with their own boats (11%), people renting kayaks, canoes and rafts (6%) and anglers (6%).

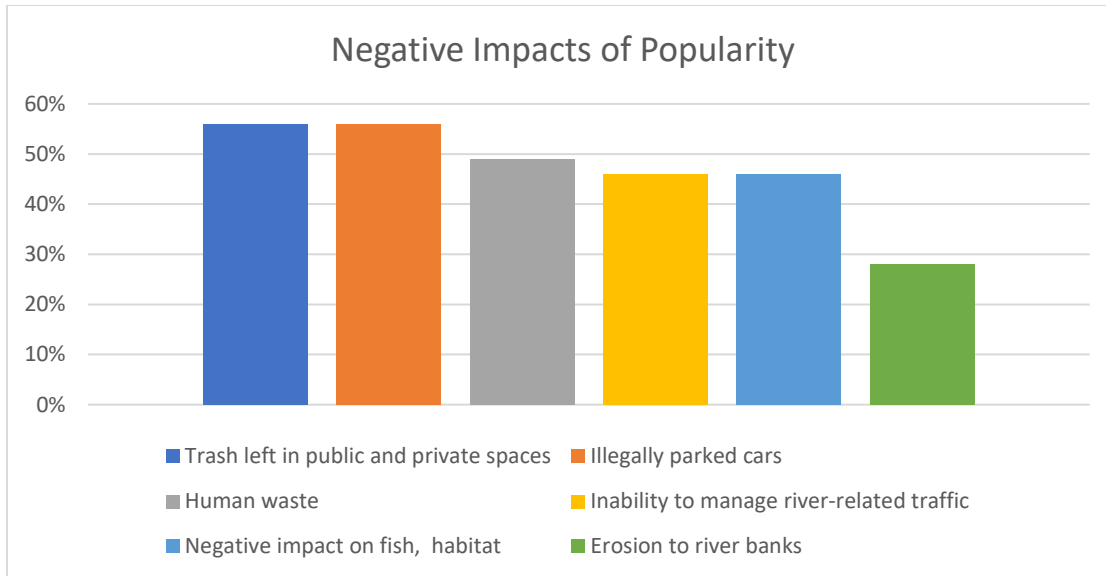
Respondents suggested the ‘other’ reasons for growth to be promotional efforts by local businesses, the National Park Service, and local jurisdictions, and lodging service such as Airbnb and VRBO. See Exhibit II for examples of promotional messaging from local businesses and jurisdictions.



## Perceived Impacts of the River’s Popularity

Survey respondents believe strongly in the positive outcomes associated with the growth of river recreation. Sixty-three percent feel the experience of being on or around the river has increased users’ awareness of the need to protect river values. One third cited tourism dollars as a positive consequence, and 25% believe river recreation-based awareness has grown or strengthened volunteerism.

On the other side of this popularity, survey respondents see a number of negative impacts of the river’s growing popularity. Roughly 50% cited trash, illegally parked cars and human waste, and nearly as many (46%) believed it has resulted in a negative impact on fish and habitat, and an inability of jurisdictions to manage river-related traffic.



## Management Strategies and Tactics Suggested by Survey Respondents

When asked for process recommendations, 37% of those who completed the survey favored asking representatives of the recreation and business communities to develop a balancing plan or process. Over a quarter (26%) suggested that such representatives serve on the Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River Management Council, and nearly the same suggested the Council develop a new management plan for which these representatives are important contributors. Ten percent indicated the business and recreation representatives should be required to serve on the Council.

### III. Trends in Outdoor Recreation

#### Outdoor Recreation Growth in 2020 and Beyond

##### Local Outdoor Participation

After an initial national shutdown in early spring 2020, individuals and families sought relief from COVID-19 seclusion by heading outdoors. Walking, running, and paddling provided a relatively safe means to get some exercise when team sports, games and outdoor entertainment were not available. Data has shown the outdoor participation level challenged land and water resource site managers, given the limitation of supplies and restrictive sanitation requirements: parks were forced to close bathroom facilities as crowding surged.

The impact on businesses was mixed. Restaurants pivoted to accommodate pickup and delivery services to mitigate for limits on indoor dining. However, an unprecedented upside was experienced by manufacturers and destination retailers of outdoor recreation hard goods, and is continuing this spring.

A January 14, 2021 article by the [Bucks County Herald](#) stated, “Across the D&L Trail, trail counters recorded an average monthly increase of 88% compared to the previous year, and “trail counters along the D&L Trail recorded monthly percent increases as high as 166% this year.”

Local businesses that participate in the D&L’s Trail Friendly Business program have reported an inability to keep bicycles, kayaks and other outdoor recreation items stocked.”

### **US Forest Service Estimates the Value of Non-Motorized Boating**

A recent (May 20, 2021) [article](#) reported that US Forest Service research scientists have calculated the societal value of recreational opportunities (in national forests in the United States) per day for over a dozen recreational activities and estimate individuals’ value of non-motorized boating to be \$119 per day.

More communities than ever are seeking to calculate the value of outdoor experiences. “When goods and services aren’t bought in the market place, the monetary value is more difficult to observe,” said Eric M. White, a research social scientist with the Forest Service, who studies the economy of recreation in local communities. “So we try to estimate the value of recreation to the individual and to society as a whole by looking at the data.”

### **Post-COVID Future of Outdoor Participation**

*Outdoor Participant (COVID and Beyond)* is a [special report](#) completed by the Outdoor Industry Association March 31, 2021. The following few points may be helpful for those projecting future levels of river recreation.

- Those who participated in an outdoor activity for the first time alone did so close to home and chose an activity with a low barrier to entry (e.g., walking, running, biking, hiking, etc.). Vacations were also an entry point (e.g., trying kayaking while on a fishing trip).
- Although new participants report more screen time (TV and online) since the onset of the pandemic — presumably to replace things they did before COVID like going out to restaurants, bars or events — they also hope to reduce their screen time as restrictions lift.



- Outdoor activities are a cost-effective antidote that can serve as the social fabric that brings kids, families and communities together safely.
- More than 60 percent of those who started or resumed walking, bicycling, fishing, or running/jogging intend to continue once restrictions lift.
- About one-quarter of new participants said they don't want to continue their outdoor activities: the top barriers include travel, resuming other activities, and family demands.



Image: Outdoor Industry Association

## River Safety - New Usage and Fatalities

Along with the popularity of newfound outdoor activities come accidents, near misses and fatalities. This [nj.com article](#) posted in 2015 and updated January 17, 2019 discusses a rising level of river fatalities. Drownings are extremely easy to prevent by wearing a life jacket, which indicates the continual need to inform and advise users to practice basic best practices to insure they will have a fun day on the river. This article included a [map](#) to point out specific incident locations.

## IV. River Capacity Studies

The concept of carrying capacity has its root in range management: overuse mandates a process for determining control of an overabundance of user traffic that is ‘not too great for us to handle.’

User capacity can be described as a subset of the larger visitor use management framework. User capacity is an estimate and not always a definitive number. In addition, the amount of investment devoted to determining user capacity needs to be commensurate with the consequence of the potential decisions to be made about managing visitor use.

There is no strict guidance for establishing and monitoring visitor use on and for Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers. As an illustration, Upper Farmington River [Management Plan](#) includes only the intention to conduct a study.

As this Partnership Wild and Scenic River is managed by a management council with many partnered entities and no strict control, the discussion (page 46) suggests a review of what a traditionally defined user capacity study would entail. It is not easy to compare an assessment of a river whose constituents and recreational profiles may be quite different. The Interagency Wild and Scenic River Coordinating Council white paper [Steps to Address User Capacities for Wild and Scenic Rivers](#) is probably the best place to start. Its process follows:

### Step # Details

1. Describe the baseline and current conditions and uses for the WSR
2. Identify desired conditions for river values and classifications
3. Identify the kinds of use that the WSR corridor can accommodate
4. Identify measurable indicators for the desired conditions
5. Establish thresholds for each indicator
6. Identify triggers that elicit management response
7. Identify management actions to take when triggers are reached
8. Determine the WSR corridor’s user capacity
9. Establish a monitoring and adaptive management approach

The fundamental questions for the Lower Delaware River Wild and Scenic River to consider are related to the framework for establishing any system that measures, monitors and controls the movement of people through its network of public access points.

## V. Tohickon, Tinicum, and Paunacussing Creeks

These three creeks are included in the protection afforded the Lower Delaware River. Their nature as recreation destinations vary substantially from the Lower Delaware and from each other. Notably, recreation activity has a welcome impact on their respective communities. As is illustrated by the story of the Tohickon (below), the popularity of the creek for its recreation value can fuel public support for the resource in the face of an environmental (or other) challenge.

**Tohickon Creek** offers high quality intermediate to advanced, destination recreation for whitewater paddlers hailing from Eastern Pennsylvania, New Jersey and indeed throughout the Mid-Atlantic region. While the Tohickon is paddled year-round, recreational water is released from Lake Nockamixon two weekends each year to the Lower Tohickon Creek by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Recreational releases take place the third weekend in March and first weekend in November, flowing through four miles from Ralph Stover State Park, near Pipersville, Bucks County to the confluence with the Delaware River at Point Pleasant.



*Photo by Tim Palmer*

A significant challenge has been proposed to downgrade the water quality standard for the Tohickon. A significant, negative public response stayed the downgrade, and the process to maintain or improve water quality here remains at this time. This [video](#) produced by the Delaware Riverkeeper describes the run and the water quality issue.

**Tinicum Creek** is notable as the host of visitors visiting the Frankenfield Covered Bridge, [one of twelve covered bridges](#) in Bucks County. It is one of the longest covered bridges in the county, measuring 130 feet.



*Left: photo by Tim Palmer. Right: set of 3 photos by Raymond Finkelstein.*

**Paunacussing Creek** recreational river traffic is limited as well. Tourists may be those interested in its historic squared stone, arched bridge in Solebury Township. It was built in 1854 and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places ([88000783](#)).



*Left: photo by Tim Palmer. Right: photo by Shuavev*



## Interim Report Conclusion

In review of the 2007-2011 Action Plan, Section 4: Recreation, it is clear than many process improvements and management tools have been implemented. However, they have not kept place with the growth of traffic and an evolving consumer dynamic.

The final report for this project will include a review of specific discussion points from the November 30, 2021 town hall and in depth interviews conducted with stakeholders. These bodies of input should contribute to the strategies offered to address the need to manage river use growth such that new and returning visitors are invited and welcomed without overwhelming the facilities at and along the river.

A few considerations may include the following, with suggested priority:

- I. A suggested framework for ‘defining’ appropriate levels of use. This would incorporate traffic at all access points included in the partnership jurisdictions. For the Council to consider is an approach to those jurisdictions now outside the protected reach.
- II. Suggestions to increase collaboration with and between jurisdictions in New Jersey and Pennsylvania with respect to:
  - a. Permit and fee levels, seasonality, implementation and reciprocity
  - b. Law enforcement vs. interpretive staff
  - c. On water presence by boating law administration to take responsibility for enforcing power boating laws that include those governing wakes, and noise and other safety necessities.
- III. Suggestions for increasing engagement between the river recreation public and business visitation-seeking business sector, whose collaboration might benefit the river community.
- IV. River Access - Pursuit of new or improved access in the Delaware Canal State Park, Northampton, Tinicum, and Bucks County and actions recommended in the 2007-2011 Action Plan and Delaware Water Trail Plan.
- V. Next Steps - Suggestions to the Council in its role as the partnership responsible for managing the protection of the recreational (and others) value of the Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River.

# Attachment I

Fall 2020

## Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River Use Survey Questions

Q1 a. What is your role or interest in the Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River?

Q1 b. If you are a river user, please identify the uses with which you are most familiar. Choose up to three.

Q2. What does the Lower Delaware River's 'wild and scenic' designation mean to you? Check all that apply.

Q3 a. Please identify your primary access location - one which you manage, or which has the greatest impact on your river-based business, recreation or other personal experience.

Q3 b. Please describe the current level of river use in the vicinity of this Primary Access Location:

Q3 c. Describe the growth of recreational use on the Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River in the vicinity of this Primary Access Location:

Q4. Which agency or organization is responsible for managing use of public spaces around the access point you have identified above, including posting signs and enforcing laws regarding parking, trespassing and inappropriately leaving trash and human waste on public and private property? Check

Q5. Which, in your opinion, are primary contributors to the change in use in the vicinity of the access point mentioned in Question 3a. above during the past 10 years?

Q6. Which additional factors have contributed most heavily to the popularity of the Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River?

Q7 a. What are the most significant positive impacts of increased river use?

Q7 b. What are the greatest negative impacts of increased river use? Check all that apply.

Q8 a. Please list an organization, agency or company whose records might include their parking capacity (e.g., when lots were built or expanded), retail sales and equipment rentals who could help us estimate the number of people visiting the Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River.

Q8 b. Please share the NAME of an individual at the above-mentioned organization who could help us estimate the recent growth of river visitation.



Q8 c. Please share an EMAIL ADDRESS for the individual at the above-mentioned organization or agency who can help us estimate the recent growth of river visitation.

Q9. The Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River lays out protections for both recreation and economic growth in its Management Plan. (See <https://www.lowerdelawarewildandscenic.org/resources/documents/lower-delaware-wild-and-scenic-management-plan>) How might the Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River Management Council (LDWSR) be composed to get the most input as possible in balancing these goals? Check all that apply.

Q10. There are additional values for which the Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River needs to be managed according to the Lower Delaware River Management Plan (<https://www.lowerdelawarewildandscenic.org/resources/documents/lower-delaware-wild-and-scenic-management-plan>). Which do you think are linked most closely with recreational river use?

Q11. Is there anything else you would like to suggest to the Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River Management Council, whose charge is to 'protect and enhance' these values?

Q12. The Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River Management Committee has discussed this subject further with many landowners, business owners, agency representatives and river users as a follow up to this questionnaire. The interview request period ends today, 12/18 and we are particularly interested in speaking to business owners in the river community.

Q13. Your First Name

Q14. Your Last Name

## Attachment II

### Examples of Outreach and Recruitment

Visitation to the Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River has grown over time due to hard work and collective expertise cultivated by its cities, townships, boroughs and entrepreneurs.

#### Retail Awareness Outreach

Many communities, businesses and agencies along the Lower Delaware promote the river and encourage visitation through websites and social media. Just a few of the posts are included below.

**Delaware River Towns Local** (now the **Greater Lambertville Chamber of Commerce**) has compiled a list of [3 Free Boat Launches](#).

- Upper Black Eddy Access (Route 32, just below Milford bridge)
- D&R Canal State Park Lambertville (off Bridge St. behind Lambertville Station)
- Holland Church Access (off River Rd., 1 mile south of Riegelsville bridge)

*“Rivertowns promote both the uniqueness of their community and their proximity to the river. Located along the banks of the Delaware River, [Frenchtown, New Jersey](#) captures the small town experience perfectly with a great selection of small shops and restaurants all offering an equally impressive view of the Delaware River.”*

*“Sitting across the Delaware River from its more famous “sister city” New Hope, [Lambertville](#) has been rewarded over the years for its quaint beauty along with an impressive sense of community. Lambertville was proclaimed by Forbes Magazine as one of the “15 Prettiest Towns in America,” “#1 end of the week escape city in New Jersey” and one of 12 “Ideal Cities to Get Married In.” One thing’s for sure, there’s always a great view of the Delaware River!”*

*“[Milford, New Jersey](#) is an interesting town situated in western Hunterdon County, New Jersey, United States. At the 2010 United States Census, the area’s population was 1,233. The Upper Black Eddy – Milford Bridge, claimed and worked by the Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission carries Bridge Street crosswise over the Delaware River.”*

*“The little Victorian-time town of [Stockton](#) often hosts events for you and your family found at the Stockton Market or the historic Prallsville Mills. Bulls Island is also located relatively close to Stockton, New Jersey and offers stunning campgrounds complete with views of the Delaware River.”*

## River Guides

There are many excellent, descriptive guides and maps which provide access and interpretive information for paddlers.

- New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection - [River Boat Access Sites](#)
- Pennsylvania Fish and Boat - [Article](#) highlights launches in Pennsylvania
- Delaware River Water Trail [Map](#)

## Paddlesports Outfitters

The Lower Delaware River has experienced significant impact from the efforts of river-based outfitters, particularly those which rent tubes, and their impact in the vicinity of launch points.

Outfitters on the Lower Delaware also rent canoes, kayaks and rafts. This is a list of the primary firms with a list of their capacity to 'touch' consumers via social media, a primary means of initial contact, relationship development, and return business.

Bucks County River Country – Point Pleasant, PA

<https://www.rivercountry.net/>

[https://www.facebook.com/Bucks-County-River-Country-95141206000/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/Bucks-County-River-Country-95141206000/?ref=page_internal)

8,044 people like this

8,306 people follow this

<https://twitter.com/BCRiverCountry>

462 followers

Delaware River Tubing – Milford, NJ

<https://www.delawarerivertubing.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/njtubing/>

34,871 people like this

34,636 people follow this

Unassociated blogpost

<https://southjerseyadventures.wordpress.com/2012/08/13/delaware-river-tubing-frenchtown-nj/>

<http://delawarerivertownslocal.com/rest-in-peace-greg-chance-the-famous-river-hot-dog-man/>

Twin River Tubing – Phillipsburg, NJ

<https://www.twinriverstubing.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/twinriverstubing>

2,577 people like this

2,607 people follow this

<https://twitter.com/TwinRiverTubing> - 508 followers

Delaware River Family Campground – Columbia, NJ

<https://campnj.com/campgrounds/delaware-river-family-campground>

<https://www.facebook.com/Delaware-River-Family-Campground-369421693096008/>

3,106 people like this

3,155 people follow this

Big Bear Gear – Lambertville, NJ

<https://bigbeargearnj.com/pages/delaware-river-tubing>

<https://www.facebook.com/BigBearGearNJ/>

1,968 people like this

2,075 people follow this

<https://twitter.com/BigBearGear1>

32 followers

<https://www.instagram.com/bigbeargear/>

691 followers

## Canoeing, Kayaking Instruction

There is positive movement in the availability of paddlesports instruction.

**Two Rivers Kayaking** offers [paddling lessons](#) and rentals in Easton. These are the trip options at this time:

- Downtown Easton
- Sandts Eddy to Easton
- Easton to Riegelsville, NJ

**Big Bear Gear** in Lambertville has just begun its tubing outfitting offering in 2021 and plans to offer canoeing instruction.

Table I - Lower Delaware River Launches

[\[Google Earth Access Sites\]](#)

River Acces Responsibility	\$ Fee and Terms	Interpretive guidance (e.g., Leave No Trace)	Parking enforcement	Name	Town	State	Ramp Type	Launch Type	Parking Type	Parking Spaces	Restrooms	River Mile
Multiple/None - Northampton Cnty Portland Waterfont Park, river accessed on Toll Commission bridge property	No fee	None in place to enforce Borough of Portland Police	Borough, maybe State of PA	Portland Footbridge Access	Portland	PA	Gravel	Hand Launch	On street, Borough lot	10 +	No	208.0
Township of Knowlton leases from NJ Green Acres - State property, leased	No fee	Township of Knowlton	N/A	Ramsayburg Historic Farmstead	Knowlton Township	NJ	None	Hand Launch	Gravel	4	No	204.0
NJ Dept of Fish and Wildlife	No fee	NJDFW	Belvidere Police, NJDFW, NJ State Police	Belvidere	Belvidere	NJ	Concrete	Cartop, Power, Non-Motorized	Paved, Roadway	10	Yes	198.5
PPL Martin's Creek, now Talen, below plant	No fee	State of PA	State of PA	Martin's Creek Launch	Lower Mt. Bethel	PA	Concrete	All	Gravel, paved	80	Port-a johns	194.2
PA Fish and Boat	Boat permit required	PA Fish and Boat	State of PA	Sandts Eddy - PA Fish and Boat Access	Lower Mt. Bethel	PA	Paved, Concrete Ties	Power, Non-Motorized	Paved	24	Yes	189.3
Forks Township Northampton County owns property Access, no launch only steps	No fee	Township Police	PA State Police	Frost Hollow Overlook (exploring access opportunities)	Forks Township	PA	Sand, Gravel	Cartop, Hand, Power, Non-Motorized	Paved	8 on Rte 611	No	186.5
City of Phillipburg, NJ	No fee	City of Phillipsburg Police Dept.	City of Phillipsburg Police Dept.	Phillipsburg Boat Ramp	Phillipsburg	PA	Concrete	Power, Non-Motorized	Paved	6 with trailers, 80 regular	Seasonal (Apr-Oct) on ramp	183.9
City of Easton	Metered parking	Parks and Rec, Easton Police	Easton Parking Enforcement Dept.	Scott Park, City of Easton	Easton	PA	Paved, Concrete Ties	Power, Non-Motorized	Paved	10	No	183.7
Delaware Canal State Park - Northampton County	Boat permit required	Delaware Canal State Park - Law Enforcement in park boundaries. Seasonal, 4-10;s, 1 day overlap - Ralph Stover State Park. Local may have to respond.	611 to Rte 32 s of Riegelville / River Rd, PA State Police	Delaware Canal State Park, Old Canal Park	Easton	PA	Cartop, Hand, Beach, Primitive	Non-Motorized	Gravel / Dirt	20	Sometimes placed by City of Easton	183.5
Northampton County	No fee	County with backup from State or Easton City Police	PA State Police	Wy-Hit-Tuk County Park	Williams	PA	Cartop, Hand, Beach, Primitive	Power, Non-Motorized Access to canal slopes are steep	Paved	34	Yes	180.9
Delaware Canal State Park - NH County.LPermit	Boat permit required	State Park with backup from State or Easton City Police	No issues - no shoulder	Theodore Roosevelt Recreation Area Lock 22/23	Williams	PA	Hand	Non-Motorized	Paved	26 - Upper and lower lot	Yes	177.6
Northampton County	No fee	PA State Police	PA State Police	Fry's Run County Park	Willilams	PA	Cartop	Non-Motorized	Gravel	20	No	176.7
NJ Department of Fish and Wildlife	No fee	NJ Department of Fish and Wildlife	NJ State Police	Riegelville (Holland Church) Access, NJ	Riegelville	NJ	Paved, Concrete Ties	Power, Non-Motorized	Pavers	20	No	175
PA Fish and Boat	Boat permit required	PA Fish and Boat	PA State Police	Riegelville, PA/Durham Furnace Canal, PA Fish and Boat Access	Durham	PA	Hand, Primitive	Non-Motorized	Gravel	30-40	No	174
PA DCNR - D&L Canal State Park	Boat permit required	PA DCNR - D&L Canal State Park	PA State Police	Durham Furnace/Lock 21 DCNR Access	Durham	PA	Primitive	Non-Motorized	Paved, Gravel	10	No	173.8
PA DCNR - D&L Canal State Park	Boat permit required	PA DCNR - D&L Canal State Park	PA State Police	Lynn Island/Lock 20 DCNR 'Canal' Access/Narrows ville - steep	Nockamixon Township	PA	Primitive	Non-Motorized	Gravel	2	No	171.0
PA Fish and Boat	Boat permit required	PA Fish and Boat	PA Fish and Boat	Upper Black Eddy PA Fish and Boat Access	Bridgeton Township	PA	Paved, Concrete Ties	Power, Non-Motorized	Paved	5	No	167.7

Delaware Canal State Park	Boat permit required	PA DCNR - D&L Canal State Park	No issues - no shoulder - tickets given on connection road	Giving Pond DCNR Access	Tinicum	PA	Primitive (steep)	Non-Motorized	Gravel	Two lots joined by gravel drive	Sometimes, maybe post COVID?	165.3
D&R Canal State Park	No fee	NJ DEP	Frenchtown Police	Frenchtown DEP Access	Frenchtown	NJ	Primitive	Non-Motorized	Paved, Gravel	100	Yes	164.3
D&R Canal State Park	D&R Canal State Park Memorial Day - Labor Day, NJDFW Maintenance fee \$15/year	D&R Canal State Park	State of NJ DEP, NJ State Police	Kingwood Boat Launch: D&R Canal State Park	Kingwood Township	NJ	Paved, Concrete Ties	Power, Non-Motorized	Paved, Gravel	30	Seasonal port-a-johns	163.4
Bucks County	No Fee	Bucks County Parks and Recreation - PA State Police	Bucks County	Tinicum County Park	Riegelsville	PA	Paved, Concrete Ties	Power, Non-Motorized	Paved, Gravel	100	Yes	162.9
D&R Canal State Park	None	D&R Canal State Park	State of NJ DEP, NJ State Police	Fairview Access	Kingwood	NJ	None	Hand Launch from Bank	Off Road	7	Seasonal port-a-johns	162.0
D&R Canal State Park	\$60/80 Memorial Day - Labor Day or \$12/20 Boat Ramp Maint. Permit \$15/year	D&R Canal State Park	State of NJ DEP, NJ State Police	Byram Boat Launch: D&R Canal State Park	Kingwood	NJ	Paved	Power, Non-Motorized	Gravel	50	Seasonal port-a-johns	156.1
D&R Canal State Park	\$60/80 Memorial Day - Labor Day or \$12/20	D&R Canal State Park	State of NJ DEP and NJ State Police	Bulls Island Recreation Area Boat Launch	Stockton	NJ	Paved, Concrete Ties	Power, Non-Motorized	Paved	50	Yes	155.2
Delaware Canal State Park	Boat permit required	Delaware Canal State Park	PA DCNR	Virginia Forrest	Solebury	PA	None	Hand Carry Down Steps - 2 (steep)	Paved	30	Yes	153.8
D&R Canal State Park - Boat club holdover lease	\$0	State of NJ DEP and D&R Canal State Park	State of NJ DEP and Lambertville Police	Lambertville Boat Launch	Lambertville	NJ	Paved	Power, Non-Motorized	Paved, Gravel	25	Yes	148.6
D&R Canal State Park	\$60/80 Memorial Day - Labor Day or \$12/20	State of NJ DEP	State of NJ DEP and West Amwell Police Department	Fireman's Eddy	West Amwell	NJ	Primitive	Power, Non-Motorized	Gravel	40	Seasonal port-a-johns	146.8
Washington Crossing State Park	Boat permit required	PA State Park Policy	PA State Park Policy/ State Police	Washington Crossing	Washington Crossing	PA	Hand, Beach, Primitive	Non-Motorized	Paved	100	Yes	141.8
D&R Canal State Park	No fee	NJ State Park Police, Ewing Township Police	State of NJ - Mercer County	Scudders Falls	Ewing Township	NJ	Hand, Beach, Primitive	Non-Motorized	Paved	20	Yes	139.5
PA Fish and Boat	Boat permit required	Morrisville Borough Police/ PA State Police	Morrisville Borough Police/ PA State Police	Yardley Access	Yardley	PA	Paved	Power, Non-Motorized	Paved	50	Yes	138.7

Fish and Boat - can enforce at any of the DCST launches (Waterway Conservation Officers are trained for law enforcement)

[\[Google Earth Access Sites\]](#)