



THREE RIVERS WATER TRAIL Map & Guide



Ohio River

SUGGESTED TRIPS

Chartiers Creek

Launch at Westhall Street **②** for this 6 to 7-mile paddle. Head upriver past the Western Penitentiary and around the eastern tip of Brunot Island. The island's backchannel, free of barge traffic, leads to the mouth of Chartiers Creek. After passing under railroad and highway bridges, paddle more than a mile up this quiet waterway until the water gets shallow. Back at the Ohio River, finish rounding the western end of the island and return to Westhall Street. Following the red paddle signs and launch using the non-motorized ramp at the east end of the park **⑩**. Paddle up the Mon River, beneath the Hot Metal Bridge, a relic of steel making days now converted to pedestrian and bicycle use.

Harmarville to Sharpsburg

For a more adventurous trip, try locking through! With a friend, drop a car at Sharpsburg's James Sharp Landing **⑪**, load both boats onto another car, and share a ride to the Deer Creek Access in Harmar **⑬**. This scenic trip passes Oakland and the historic rowing club buildings in Verona **⑭**. Stop at Sycamore Island, the undeveloped island owned by Allegheny Land Trust, for a quick 1-mile loop hike. Once you pass the City of Pittsburgh Water Works, be sure to cross to the left bank before you approach Lock & Dam #2. Call the lock on the phone or radio to let them know you're there. Locking through can be intimidating the first time, but friendly Army Corps of Engineers employees will help guide you through. Exiting the lock, you are almost at the end of your 7.5-mile paddle - Sharpsburg's James Sharp Landing **⑮** is just ahead on river right. Before making the short drive to Harmar to pick up the other car, make a stop on Sharpsburg's Main St. Here you will find local shops, eateries, distilleries, and local breweries. For more information on navigating dams, check out our section on Locking Through.

For a shorter trip that does not involve locking through, drop a car at Aspinwall Riverfront Park **⑯** and exit the river before reaching Lock & Dam #2. Wander around Aspinwall Riverfront Park, one of the area's newest parks and visit Aspinwall's shops and restaurants.

Millvale to Downtown

This 5-mile round trip provides easy access to Downtown businesses, festivals & landmarks, on a section of the river used by many paddlers. Use one of the two launches in Millvale Riverfront Park, **⑦** or **⑩**. Paddle along Her's Islands (also known as Washington's Landing) quiet backchannel frequented by wildlife and rowers alike. Past the island, keep to the right shore as you paddle downstream. Tree-lined banks lead to the bustle of Downtown. The North Shore hosts stadiums and memorials along the park at the river's edge. There are two launches that you can use to exit the water on the North Shore **①**.

or **⑦** Across the river, the view of the Downtown skyline is stunning, especially at night. After docking back in Millvale, venture up to Grant Ave. There you will find specialty shops, breweries, and local eateries.

South Side Riverfront Park to Sandcastle

This trip travels upstream! Remember that left and right bank orientation refers to a downriver approach. Follow the red paddle signs and launch using the non-motorized ramp at the east end of the park **⑩**. Paddle up the Mon River, beneath the Hot Metal Bridge, a relic of steel making days now converted to pedestrian and bicycle use. SouthSide Works and the Three Rivers Heritage Trail are located along the left bank, which curves beneath the Hays Woods, a square mile of undeveloped forest along 400-foot-high bluffs. Look out for the bald eagles that nest along the bluffs. Former and current industrial sites of the Hazelwood neighborhood, including barge mooring and servicing sites, are located along the right bank. Just around the bend, the blue Glenwood Bridge marks the location of Sandcastle Water Park on the left bank. Turn around for the return trip and enjoy a rare view of Oakland's university district from the water. After your trip, you can visit E Carson St., known for its eateries and nightlife. Here you will have a diverse selection of food options.

Braddock to the Point

A unique urban float trip begins at the 11th Street ramp, **⑩** adjacent to the active US Steel mill in vibrant Braddock. Along Braddock Ave, you have the opportunity to immerse yourself in this steel town. There are antique stores, eateries, and breweries to explore. This trip will surely introduce you to the industrial heritage of the region. Once you take in the local sites, paddle down the Mon beneath the bridge and hillside town at Rankin, and past the industrial remains of the Carrie Furnace on the right bank. The left bank was once the site of the Homestead Steel Works and is now The Waterfront, a major brownfield redevelopment. Nine Mile Run, one of the largest urban stream restoration projects in the US, emerges at Duck Hollow **⑯** on the right bank, just before the towering Homestead Grays Bridge.

Past the Hot Metal Bridge, South Side Riverfront Park offers a rest stop and take-outs on the left bank near the green Birmingham Bridge **⑯**, which are perfect spots to have a picnic. Continue to the Point for views of the city, downtown bridges and inclines, and Mt. Washington. This roughly half-day trip can be extended by continuing down the Ohio to the Westhall Street access **②**. It's probably easiest to leave a vehicle where you plan to exit the river and drive back to Braddock.

Neville Island
Shipyards along the waterfront testify to the island's industrial heritage. Dravo Corporation built tugboats, barges, and World War II landing ships, and Pitt-Des Moines fabricated the St. Louis Gateway Arch.

Brunots Island
Captain Meriwether Lewis of the Lewis & Clark Expedition, spent his first night of the westward voyage on this island after leaving Pittsburgh on August 31, 1803.

Point State Park
Located at the confluence of the three rivers, this state park commemorates and preserves the strategic and historic heritage during the French and Indian war. The park is home to Pittsburgh's iconic fountain, the Fort Pitt Museum & Block House.

Boathouse Row
The riverfront at Verona, once called Sylvan, was the historical center for recreational boating in this region with a "Boathouse Row" of seven canoe and pleasure boat clubs. Several of the old clubs are still present along the river.

Carrie Furnace
U.S. Steel's Homestead Works was the greatest steel mill in the world, and Carrie Furnace was its heart. A National Historic Landmark site, these are among the only pre-WWI 20th-century blast furnaces to survive. During its operation, it produced 1,000 - 1,250 tons of iron per day.

Hot Metal Bridge
The Hot Metal Bridge of the Jones and Laughlin Steel Co. carried molten iron in ladle cars across the river from the blast furnaces on the Oakland side to the hearth furnaces on the South Side, where it was made into steel. Today, the bridge serves pedestrians and cyclists as part of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail system.

Bald Eagles Nest
Since 1937, Pittsburgh has seen the return of bald eagles and other native animals. This re-appearance is the result of efforts to restore our riverfronts after decades of industrial use. Enjoy watching a pair of eagles in the forested hillside above the trail in Hays Woods.

Elizabeth
Twenty-two miles upriver from Pittsburgh near the Allegheny County line, Elizabeth dates from 1787 when it was an early township controlling the entire triangle between the Monongahela and Youghiogheny Rivers. Early industries included keelboat and steamship building for the western waters.

The Three Rivers Water Trail Map was financed in part by a grant from the Community Conservation Partnerships Program Environmental Stewardship Fund under the administration of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation administered through the Pennsylvania Environmental Council's Pennsylvania Water Trails Partnership Mini Grant Program.

Washington's Crossing
In 1753, 21-year-old George Washington nearly drowned while crossing the icy river on his first military mission, after delivering a message to the French to vacate the Ohio Country.

Sycamore Island
Allegheny Land Trust's permanently protected Sycamore Island is home to a rare hardwood floodplain forest. Rich in biodiversity, the outdoor space is framed by the arching canopy of silver maples, sycamore, and eastern cottonwood trees. It is a unique habitat for a range of unusual birds and aquatic species. Paddle to the island for a self-guided 1-mile tour or register for an overnight camping permit. More information can be found at alleghenylandtrust.org.

Ramp Launch
PA Fish and Boat Commission Launch
*PFBC or DCNR launch permit required.

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Three Rivers Water Trail

Confluence of the Allegheny, Monongahela, and Ohio Rivers

Map & Guide

THREE RIVERS WATER TRAIL

Developed by Friends of the Riverfront

PENNSYLVANIA BOATING REGULATIONS

- Want More (and better) Trail? Friends of the Riverfront relies on donations from individuals, foundations, and corporations to protect and restore the riverfront in the Pittsburgh region through trail development and stewardship. The Three Rivers Water Trails now comprise of 30 access points along the Allegheny, Monongahela, Ohio, and Tuggerughi broad and diverse collaborations, we continue to work towards and promote environmental restoration, economic vitality, and public health benefits for Allegheny County and Southwestern Pennsylvania.
- Friends of the Riverfront is dedicated to the development and stewardship of the Three Rivers Water Trail and Three Rivers Water Trail in the Pittsburgh region. This guide is provided so that everyone can enjoy the natural amenities that make the Three Rivers Water Trail Map by visiting friendsoftheriverfront.org and hit the trail on foot or wheels!

KEEP EXPLORING

ON LAND

Friends of the Riverfront works with thousands of volunteers to steward the riverfronts in Allegheny County and improve their ecological health. We remove trash, plant and care for native trees and plants, and maintain the places that make the trail a great place for recreation, relaxation, and transportation.

STEWARDSHIP

Friends of the Riverfront provides guidelines to minimize your impact by following these simple concepts.

When you are finished exploring the Three Rivers Water Trail, head to the Three Rivers Heritage Trail. The Three Rivers Heritage Trail is a 33 mile multi-use trail on both sides of all three rivers. Check out the interactive Three Rivers Heritage Trail Map by visiting friendsoftheriverfront.org and hit the trail on foot or wheels!

DO YOUR PART

Please help us care for the land, water, and cultural resources along the Three Rivers Water Trail by respecting wildlife, other trail users, and private property.

GET INVOLVED

Help Friends of the Riverfront to keep expanding and caring for the Three Rivers Water Trail and Heritage Trail. Consider becoming a member, come out and volunteer with us and meet other Water Trail users.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Emergency Contacts

All areas dial 911
VHF Channel 16

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Weather & River Conditions

Weather Forecasts

412-488-0222
friendsoftheriverfront.org

River Conditions Inc. Flow Rate

412-262-5290
www.weather.gov/ahps/

Water Temperature

412-395-7500
www.firs.usace.army.mil

Lock & Dam Information

412-395-7500
friendsoftheriverfront.org

Red Paddle Markers

Red paddle signs at Three Rivers Water Trail Access Points help guide you from land and water.

Fishing Opportunities

The Allegheny, Monongahela, and Ohio Rivers offer a tremendous variety of quality fishing opportunities throughout the year.

Fishing requires an appropriate license and the waters are regularly patrolled.

Please visit fishandboat.com for fishing license and additional information.

Connecting to the Region

The Three Rivers Water Trail is connected to four other Water Trails in the region. Keep exploring and visit our neighboring Water Trails.

Middle Allegheny Water Trail

- Runs 61 miles on the Allegheny River in Armstrong County. This water trail offers 11 access points along the Allegheny River and 6 access points along tributary streams. This water trail is managed by Armstrong County Tourism.

Kiski-Conemaugh River Water Trail

- The Kiski-Conemaugh River Water Trail offers 12 access points along its 18 mile water trail. This ability to traverse this water trail can vary throughout the year, with peak water flows from February through May. In July and August flow can drop below desirable levels. This water trail is managed by the Conemaugh Valley Conservancy.

Ohio River Water Trail

- The Ohio River Water Trail offers 9 access points along its 54 mile water trail. This water trail also includes portions of the Beaver River, Pagoon Creek, and Little Beaver Creek. This water trail is managed by the Ohio River Trail Council.

Yough River Water Trail

- The Yough River Water Trail joins the Three Rivers Water Trail at its 75 mile water trail. This water trail offers 12 access points along its 17 miles of water trail. The Yough River, Monongahela, and Ohio Rivers meet at McKeesport, PA where the Youghiogheny and Monongahela rivers meet. Sections of this water trail is managed by the Mountain Watershed Association.

HISTORY AND INFORMATION

History of Our Rivers

The Allegheny, Monongahela, and Ohio Rivers form a unique confluence in Pittsburgh. The Allegheny River from western New York ends at the Point, as does the Monongahela from the mountains of West Virginia. The Ohio River begins here where the two rivers meet. At times, you can see a marked difference in the color of the water from the rivers, as the Monongahela mixes with the Allegheny downstream of the Point. The Ohio flows westward into the Mississippi a thousand miles away, and then travels southward to reach New Orleans and the Gulf of Mexico.

History of Our Rivers

The Allegheny River is a young river formed from the last ice age some 10,000 years ago, and its waters tend to be faster and colder than those of the slower moving Monongahela, an ancient, wider river from a million years ago. The Ohio River, called the beautiful river (a bell river) by French explorers, was the start of the watery road west for countless immigrants and settlers in the nineteenth century.

History of Our Rivers

Pittsburgh's rivers change with the seasons. They can freeze in the winter, then flood with snowmelt in the spring thaw. A century ago the rivers could fall so low in summer droughts that navigation was impossible. To assure a constant water level on these working rivers, the Army Corps of Engineers constructed locks and dams, enabling year-round commercial "slackwater navigation" essential to the expansion of Pittsburgh from an important center of iron and steelmaking, to a critical supplier of material for World War. Barges laden with coal, sand, gravel and other heavy materials still ply these stabilized, reliable waters 24 hours a day.

History of Our Rivers

To help paddlers get on the water, Friends of the Riverfront developed the Three Rivers Water Trail, which contains 30 access points among the 73 riverfront municipalities within Allegheny County.

History of Our Rivers

It also has regular access to the popular land trail bordering all three rivers - the Three Rivers Heritage Trail, also developed by Friends of the Riverfront.

History of Our Rivers

From the water trail, paddlers can reach the North Shore with its stadiums and restaurants, the trendy Lawrenceville shopping district, the growing

History of Our Rivers

Millvale, and Verona, the rare floodplain forest on Sycamore Island, and so much more.

History of Our Rivers

Beginning in the 1990s, Friends of the Riverfront was charged with partnering with municipal and private entities to create public access points for non-motorized boats. These water trail landing are seen from the river and road by red paddle-shaped signs, each indicating the distance from the Pittsburgh Point. Several water trail landings - adjacent to amenities and points of interest - contain racks for stowing your craft, interpretive signage, and available parking. The Three Rivers

History of Our Rivers

The locks and dams also divide the river into a series of "pools." The Emsworth pool - also called the Pittsburgh pool - extends 24 total miles from the Emsworth Dam on the Ohio, six miles below the Pittsburgh Point; to seven miles up the Allegheny to the Highland Park Lock and Dam; and 11 miles up the Monongahela to the Braddock Lock and Dam.

History of Our Rivers

In just one day on the Three Rivers Water Trail you can take in the serene beauty of our hills with eagles soaring above, dock your boat in one of the many river towns to explore and have lunch, cruise along the river looking at remnants of our industrial past, and then take in the fireworks at the Point in Downtown Pittsburgh. The Water Trail provides a unique opportunity to see the many parts of what makes Pittsburgh a great place to live and visit.

History of Our Rivers

Now grab your boat or visit one of the many outfitters in the area, check the river conditions, pick your launch site and plan your route, then get out on the trail!

History of Our Rivers

For the most current information on paddling opportunities and links to weather and river conditions, please visit our website at friendsoftheriverfront.org.

History of Our Rivers

Watch the Locking Through Instructional Video On Our Website

History of Our Rivers

Approach the lock and be aware of the following signals: Red means stand clear and do not enter, Green means approach lock under full control, and Yellow means proceed to enter lock directly. The Lock Master reserves the right to deny permission to pass through due to inadequate line, give one end of the line to the Lock Master. They will place the line around the mooring hook above. Feed the rope through your hand going up/down with the water level while holding the other end securely.

History of Our Rivers

After being let up/down, wait for the Lock Master to give you an OK before proceeding. Leave at a slow and consistent speed staying close yet visible beside the storm wall. Do not stop until you are well away from the pull of the dam's current and other boat traffic.

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