

The Bluestone River, named for the deep blue limestone riverbed of its upper reaches in Virginia, has created a gorge 1,000 feet deep. The bottomland within the gorge was first used by Native Americans. In the late 1700's, the Lilly, Meadow, and Farley families were among the first to built homesteads along the river. At the confluence of the Bluestone and Little Bluestone Rivers, the community of Lilly once flourished. The Bluestone Turnpike, a riverbank road used by those who farmed and timbered the area until the 1940's, is used today by hikers, bikers, and horseback riders to access the park.

The Bluestone River and the rugged and ancient gorge it has carved is a richly diverse and scenic area of the southern Appalachian Mountains. Time spent in thoughtful solitude along this little mountain river offers the visitor a vestige of primitive America. There are nearly 800 documented species of plants growing in several diverse Appalachian forest habitat types. The Bluestone also provides excellent areas for watching many mammal, bird, amphibian, reptile and insect species. The riverbed habitat supports healthy populations of many warm water game and non-game fish.

The Three Rivers

Bluestone National Scenic River is one of three National Park units in southern West Virginia; the other two being New River Gorge National River and Gauley River National Recreation Area. The diversity of natural and historical resources found in these three parks are preserved as part of a larger family of close to 400 nationally significant places which make up the National Park System. These special places are sanctuaries for national pride, a sense of place, and renewal of mind, body, and soul.

For park information:
Bluestone National Scenic River
P.O. Box 246, 104 Main Street, Glen Jean, WV 25846
304-465-0508 www.nps.gov/blue



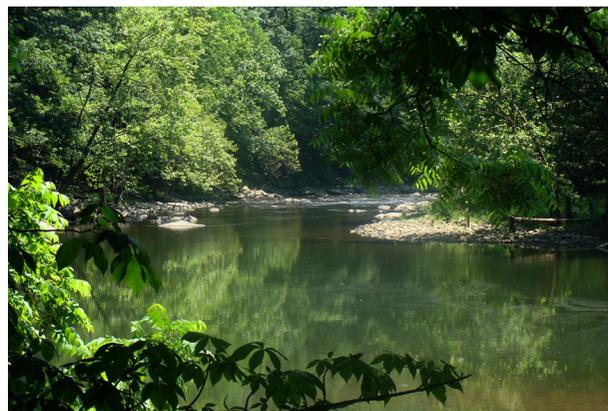
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National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Bluestone National Scenic River

Bluestone



Bluestone National Scenic River (NSR) is a living landscape that provides an unspoiled experience for visitors and a haven for a variety of plants and animals. Created in 1988, this Wild and Scenic River protects a 10.5 mile section of the free-flowing Bluestone River.

Our nation's Wild and Scenic Rivers System was established for the purpose of protecting for the present, and preserving for the future, undeveloped, free-flowing rivers that possess "outstandingly remarkable" scenic, natural, cultural, geological and recreational values. The scenic beauty, biological diversity, and primitive nature of the Bluestone Gorge make it ideal for inclusion in the system.

The responsibility of protecting Bluestone NSR is shared between the National Park Service, WV State Parks, and the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources. A section of Bluestone NSR lies within the boundaries of Pipestem Resort State Park, and the remaining portion is also utilized as a West Virginia Wildlife Management Area.

Visiting the Bluestone

Bluestone NSR is located near Route 20 between Hinton and Athens, West Virginia, and is most easily accessed through its two neighboring state park areas, Bluestone State Park and Pipestem Resort State Park. Another way to access the park is via a narrow, graveled road that provides access to the Bluestone Turnpike Trail at the former Lilly town site at the confluence of the Little Bluestone River.

To reach the Bluestone NSR from Bluestone State Park, follow signs for Old Mill Campground and then continue to a small parking area near an iron gate. From Pipestem Resort State park, the Bluestone can be accessed by an aerial tram (fee charged, May-October), hiking down the River Trail, or viewed from rim overlooks. The Lilly road access can be reached by turning on Ellison Ridge Road off Route 3 at Nimitz, and following it approximately five miles until turning left on the gravel Bluestone Road ending at the riverside.

Directions

Bluestone NSR is a day use area; the adjoining state parks offer camping and other services. (1-800 CALL WVA)

The Bluestone Turnpike Trail, which follows the river for nine miles from the Mountain Creek Lodge (at the base of the tram at Pipestem Resort State Park) to Bluestone State Park, is open for hiking, biking, and horses. Fishing on the Bluestone requires a West Virginia license.

Opportunities for canoeing and kayaking are usually limited by adequate water levels to spring and early summer. The Pipestem tram will transport canoes, kayaks, and bicycles. (fee charged)

Hunting is permitted within the Wildlife Management Area of the Bluestone NSR according to WV regulations. All users should use caution and wear blaze orange during hunting seasons.

