



Upper Delaware

Watching the Eagles

Clean water, ample food, and stands of large trees make the Upper Delaware an ideal habitat for the bald eagle. In the winter, the best viewing areas are often near open water where eagles feed.

Flowing Free

Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River is a part of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Over 35 million people live within a 150-mile radius of the Upper Delaware River, which includes 73 miles of the longest and one of the cleanest undammed rivers in the eastern United States.

Running between Pennsylvania and New York, the Upper Delaware flows through forested highlands reminiscent of the days when the native Lenape camped and fished along the river. The landscape of the 1800s was quite different. Farming, timbering, quarrying, and activity on the canal and railroad made the Upper Delaware a busy place.

Today, the Upper Delaware supports a healthy ecosystem for people and for wildlife. Its watershed is a major source of drinking water for more than 10 percent of the United States population. While most of the land along the river is privately owned, Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River provides ample opportunity for recreational and educational pursuits.

Taking a River Trip

The Upper Delaware provides opportunities for quiet floats or thrilling rides through the rapids as the river winds south from Hancock, N.Y., to just north of Matamoras, Pa., and Port Jervis, N.Y. River access areas are provided for public use along both riverbanks.

Launch your own canoe, raft, tube, or other vessel from a public access site. Rentals are available from private liveries, which provide safety instruction, gear, and a PFD (lifejacket). They will also shuttle you back to your vehicle. Many liveries have campgrounds.

A valid registration is required for any motorized watercraft on the river.

Fishing

The clean waters of the Upper Delaware are known for their abundance of trout, bass, walleye, eels, and shad.

A New York or Pennsylvania fishing license is required for anglers on the main stem of the Upper Delaware River. Be sure to obtain a summary of laws and regulations with your license and read it carefully.

Licensed fishing guides are available for hire. Bait and tackle shops are located in the area.

Brook trout



American shad



Smallmouth bass



Visiting Zane Grey's Home



Tour the Zane Grey Museum, the Lackawaxen, Pa., home of the "father of the western novel" and world-record-holding fisherman.

Hiking

Because nearly all the land along the Upper Delaware River is privately owned, hiking along the river is limited. However, several agencies and organizations provide opportunities for hiking nearby.

Camping and Lodging

Privately owned campgrounds and other lodging facilities are located along or near the river.



Exploring the D&H Canal

The Upper Delaware includes portions of the historic Delaware & Hudson Canal (1828–98), which transported anthracite coal mined in Pennsylvania to the Hudson River Valley.

Remnants of the canal can be sighted along the river from Lackawaxen south to Port Jervis, and at other areas along its former route.



John A. Roebling's Delaware Aqueduct, built in 1848, carried canal boats over the Delaware. The aqueduct, now a bridge, can be viewed and walked or driven across from the New York and Pennsylvania sides.

Enjoying the Views

The scenic drive along N.Y. 97 includes prime riverscape views between the gateway communities of Port Jervis and Hancock, New York. On the Pennsylvania side, scenic U.S. 6 provides access to the park through the natural beauty of the Pocono Mountains.

- Parking
- Restrooms (seasonal)
- Boat launch
- Canoe/fishing access (parking may be limited)
- Fishing
- Hiking trail
- Picnic area
- Ranger station
- Campground (all privately owned)
- Rapids

New York 97 at Hawk's Nest north of Port Jervis



Respect the River



The Upper Delaware features riffles and Class I and II rapids between placid pools and eddies. Though the river depth averages four to five feet, 12- to 18-foot holes are common, and many are deeper. The river can rise rapidly after heavy rains and releases from dams on tributaries.

You should be able to swim and know a few basic paddle strokes before attempting a river trip.

Always be Prepared

- Be aware of the river conditions and weather
- Carry drinking water
- Wear a PFD (life jacket) and appropriate gear
- Let someone know your plans

Your Safety is Your Responsibility

PFD Always wear it

It's smart to wear a PFD or Personal Flotation Device—also known as a life jacket—while boating, tubing, fishing, wading, or swimming on the river. We recommend you wear it.

By law all children 12 and under must wear a PFD while on the river in any vessel, including inner tubes.

Every person in a boat or using an inner tube must have a PFD within reach, not tied to the vessel.

Each person's PFD must be the proper size and in good condition.

Violators will be fined!



Boating Use proper techniques

Kneel when canoeing in rapids to keep your weight low. This helps avoid capsizing. In rapids, aim for the downstream "V".

Paddle on opposite sides of the canoe. Hold onto your paddle, not the boat.

Paddle around Eel Weirs. Avoid these large, "V"-shaped wooden and rock traps (*right*), usually constructed by late summer.

Always be courteous on the river. You may encounter a variety of river users on your trip. Please respect their rights and act responsibly.

If you capsizes...

Don't panic. Stay upstream of the boat so it does not pin you against a rock.

Don't attempt to stand in rapids. Get on your back and keep your feet up and pointed downstream to push off obstacles.

Never swim against the current. Backstroke and let the current assist you to shore.



Swimming, Wading Beware of dangers along the river

Most drownings on the Delaware River have been swimming-related.

The Upper Delaware includes swift currents, rapids, eddies, sudden drop-offs, slippery rocks, and floating or submerged debris.

There are no designated or life-guarded swimming areas on the Upper Delaware River.

Wear a PFD (life jacket) and appropriate footwear while swimming, wading, or floating.

Never try to stand in rapids. Your foot could get trapped between submerged rocks. The current could push you over and hold you under even if you are wearing a PFD.

Do not jump or dive from cliffs, rocks, or bridges into the river; the water may be shallow and objects may be submerged.

Never attempt to swim across the river.



Protect the River and Others Around You

Regulations Obey them all and respect all resources

Boating and alcohol or other drugs don't mix. Never impair your judgment while on the river. Laws on underage drinking, possession of illegal drugs, disorderly conduct, and littering are strictly enforced!

Observe fishing limits and seasons. Display your fishing license properly; fishing regulations are enforced. Do not fish from any bridge.

Respect private property. More than 85 percent of the land along the river is privately owned.

Do not remove or deface cultural artifacts or natural features.

Don't litter. Be sure to tie all gear—except PFDs—to your boat. Carry-in, carry-out. No glass containers on or near the river.

If you have questions or need assistance, look for National Park Service rangers or volunteers, who are here to help.

