



# Three Rivers Review

The official newspaper of  
Bluestone National Scenic River  
Gauley River National Recreation Area  
New River Gorge National River

## 2 Visitor Information

The three rivers, and the three parks, managed for you by the National Park Service; weather and other basics

## 3 Beginning Your Visit

Park visitor centers, a good place to begin your visit; featured activities

# Welcome

On behalf of the National Park Service men and women working here in southern West Virginia, I am proud to welcome you to three impressive and exciting units of your National Park System. New River Gorge National River, Gauley River National Recreation Area, and Bluestone National Scenic River offer spectacular scenery and a wealth of recreational opportunities. The diversity of natural and historical resources found in these national park areas is being preserved as part of a larger family of more than 380 nationally significant places which make up the National Park System.

These special places within our National Park System have become sanctuaries for national pride, a sense of place, and renewal of mind, body, and soul. As one of nearly 300 million visitors to America's national parks, we hope that you not only have a safe and enjoyable visit, but that you also take away a deeper understanding and appreciation of your role as stewards of these special places.

Please join in teaching and practicing good environmental stewardship and respect for our cultural heritage, not only when visiting the parks, but wherever you live, work, or play. Only then can we hope to ensure that these same resources that you and I enjoy today will be left *unimpaired* for future generations.

Welcome to New River Gorge National River.

*Calvin F. Hite*

Superintendent

## 4 Park Map

Finding your way, emergency information, and nearby parks

## 6 Out and About

Fourteen special places within the three parks, trail information, and safety first

## 7- 8 Feature Articles

- park geology
- flood events
- natural resource challenges
- Mary Draper Ingles 250th Anniversary
- two visitor centers
- two management plans
- in conclusion

## Park Significance

New River Gorge National River was authorized by Congress in 1978, followed by the establishment of Gauley River National Recreation Area and Bluestone National Scenic River ten years later. Approximately 60,000 acres of public land now protect plants, animal habitat, and remnants of the past, as well as provide for recreational activities. Traditional uses such as hiking, camping, fishing, and hunting continue — but now bird watching, mountain biking, rock climbing, and whitewater boating are equally popular activities.

What is most special about these three river parks? It is the rivers themselves, and the gorges or valleys that each runs through. Changes in elevation from rim to river, as well as the north-south passageways cut by the rivers, have resulted in a rich variety of plant and animal life. Through time, these deep and narrow valleys have proven to be both corridors and barriers to humans. Difficult to cross, they were barriers to early settlement. Later they were the corridors for railroads, which in turn opened the area to the mining and lumber industries. Once valued for their raw materials, now park land is valued as habitat, as a link to a rich history, as a place of scenic beauty, and as a resource for outdoor recreation.

Join in reflecting on the past, celebrating the present, and contemplating the future.



Clouds and fall color envelop the New River Gorge

## Taking Part in Your Park

In 2005 New River Gorge National River begins the General Management Plan (GMP) process. The GMP will define a vision for the future of the park and will guide decisions for the next twenty years. It will determine how best to protect park resources while providing visitors with good experiences.

It has been over twenty years since the first park GMP was prepared. Since then, the park has experienced many changes. Visitation has increased from 231,295 in 1984 to over 1.1 million in 2004. Tourism has become a major industry and employer in the area. An increasingly diverse public now wants to do more things and to visit more often. Over the years, land ownership within the park boundary, as well as the boundary itself, has changed. Increases in public land have allowed the park to provide new facilities, but it is now time to reassess past accomplishments as well as future needs.

Your concerns, interests, and opinions are crucial to the success of park planning efforts. We will keep you informed via the park website, newsletters, open houses, and public meetings. If you would like to be part of the park mailing list, please call (304) 465-6526, or visit the park website at [nps.gov/neri/gmp](http://nps.gov/neri/gmp) and leave your mailing address. We look forward to hearing from you!



Wolf Creek



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

**Bluestone National Scenic River  
Gauley River National Recreation Area  
New River Gorge National River**

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The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

# Your Three Parks

**NEW RIVER GORGE  
NATIONAL RIVER**

New River Gorge National River was designated in 1978, protecting 53 miles of one of the oldest rivers in the world. The “Grand Canyon of the East” averages 1,000 feet in depth and contains one of the most diverse plant species assemblages of any river gorge in the Southern Appalachians. Cultural resources include prehistoric sites as well as remnants from the recent Industrial Age: abandoned coal mines, company towns, tipples, and coke ovens.

Over one million visitors a year enjoy a full spectrum of recreational activities. The New River is renowned for its warmwater fishery and outstanding whitewater boating. Massive sandstone cliffs challenge rock climbers, while trails and overlooks offer less strenuous opportunities to enjoy the 72,000-acre park.



**GAULEY RIVER  
NATIONAL RECREATION AREA**

Established in 1988, Gauley River National Recreation Area protects 25 miles of the Gauley River and 6 miles of the Meadow River. Dropping 26 feet per mile through a gorge that averages 500 feet in depth, the Gauley is a world-class destination for whitewater boaters.

Only about 37% of the land within park boundaries is in federal ownership; therefore, public facilities, including river access areas, are not well developed. The Tailwaters area below the Summersville Dam offers the only public facilities at this time.

*left:* New River Gorge Bridge

*center:* Whitewater on the Gauley River

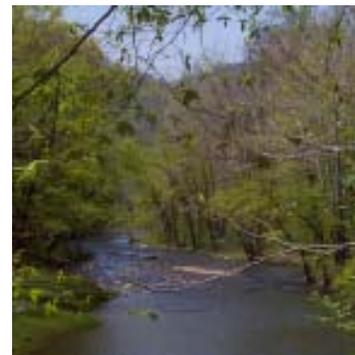
*right:* Bluestone National Scenic River



**BLUESTONE  
NATIONAL SCENIC RIVER**

In 1988, Bluestone National Scenic River was designated a unit of the Wild and Scenic Rivers System, which Congress established to preserve the free-flowing condition of the nation’s rivers. This park includes a 10.5-mile segment of the Bluestone River with virtually no vehicular access into the area. The most common methods of entry are the aerial tram at Pipestem Resort State Park and the trailhead at Bluestone State Park.

A portion of the area is managed by the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources. Wild turkey is the featured species, and the area is popular with hunters.



## Visitor Information

**Weather and Climate**

- Winters are variable, ranging from mild to frigid. Expect anywhere from 50 degrees and mild, to -10 degrees and blizzard conditions.
- Spring is very unpredictable — generally mild and wet, it alternates between beautiful and questionable conditions.
- Summers are always warm, sometimes hot, with thunderstorms likely.
- Fall is generally the driest and most stable season, with cool mornings and mild days.
- Plan your trip to expect rain or thunderstorms, or snow during the winter months.
- The weather can vary greatly from one part of the park to another. This is particularly true during the spring and summer thunderstorm season.
- Thunderstorms can be common. If caught outside during a storm, avoid high points, exposed locations, and open fields.

**Getting Around**

To the Park: by personal vehicle via Interstate 77/64, U.S. Route 19; via airplane with airports in Beckley and Charleston; via train — AMTRAK stops at Montgomery, Thurmond (“flag” stop - reservations required), Prince, and Hinton.

Within the Park: personal vehicle, foot, or boat; bicycle and horseback on designated trails.

**Accommodations**

The park does not provide any lodging facilities, but surrounding towns have a variety of motel, bed & breakfast, and camping offerings. Hawks Nest and Pipestem Resort State Parks have lodges, and Babcock, Bluestone, and Pipestem Resort State Parks have cabins. For a listing of accommodations, call 1-800-CALLWVA, the New River CVB at 1-800-927-0263, or the Southern West Virginia CVB at 1-800-VISITWV.

**Camping**

New River Gorge National River provides opportunities for primitive camping only. Camping areas are located along the river. These primitive camping areas have no drinking water or hookups, and limited restroom facilities. All sites are managed on a first-come, first-served basis. There are no fees for camping, but campers are required to register with a ranger at the earliest opportunity. Stays are limited to 14 days in the same area. Developed campgrounds are available at state parks and private campgrounds throughout the surrounding area.

**In Case of an Emergency**

Call 911 from any phone in the park to report emergencies. Park rangers, as well as county sheriffs and state police, are on patrol throughout the park. Emergency care facilities and hospitals are located in Summersville, Oak Hill, Beckley, and Hinton.

**Fees and Permits**

*No entrance fees are charged at any of the three parks.*

Special Use Permits are required for all commercial activities (guiding, filming, etc.). Reservations are required for picnic shelters at Grandview, and group campsites at Burnwood and Dungen. Fees vary. For information concerning Special Use Permits and group campsites, call 304-465-6517. Grandview picnic shelter reservations can be made by calling 304-465-8064.

**Walks, Talks, and Tours**

Ranger-led programs are offered from late spring through fall. They range from special programs and demonstrations to short walks and all-day hikes. Information is available at the park, or on the web at <http://www.nps.gov/neri>.

# Beginning Your Visit

## CANYON RIM VISITOR CENTER

Located on U.S. Route 19, one mile north of Fayetteville, Canyon Rim Visitor Center features geology and bridge construction exhibits as well as a series of photographs and memories of living in the New River Gorge. A theater and bookstore are also available. Views of the gorge, the river, and the New River Gorge Bridge are available from indoors, from a fully-accessible observation deck, and from a boardwalk that descends 100 feet into the gorge via a wooden staircase.

## PARK HEADQUARTERS

A complex of buildings in the town of Glen Jean serves as Park Headquarters, housing the administrative, planning, and resource management functions. The lobby has a display of brochures and maps. Visitor services are limited, but the receptionist or park librarian can provide assistance.

## THURMOND DEPOT

The historic Thurmond Depot has been restored to serve as a visitor center and museum. Exhibits and historic furnishings bring the golden days of railroading back to life. To reach Thurmond, take U.S.

Route 19 to the Glen Jean exit, between Oak Hill and Beckley. Follow the signs to Thurmond, seven miles down WV Route 25, a narrow, winding road.

## GRANDVIEW INFORMATION STATION

Grandview definitely lives up to its name, offering unsurpassed views of the New River Gorge from overlooks and trails along the gorge rim. Near the largest parking area is a summer visitor center with exhibits, a video, and a bookstore. Grandview is located 5 miles north of I-64 at Exit 129.

## SANDSTONE VISITOR CENTER

Serving as a gateway to the southern portion of the park, Sandstone Visitor Center is located just north of I-64 at the Sandstone/ Route 20 exit, Exit 139. The visitor center includes an information desk, small theater, bookstore, tourism corner, native plant garden, and an exhibit hall with a map of the New River Watershed imbedded in its floor. The significance of water and its conservation is the theme of the hands-on exhibits.



Restored train depot at Thurmond

# Park Activities

## BIRDING — ON THE RIM, AT THE BOARDWALK, AND IN THE MORNING

TBA, weekend days throughout the year

Variable locations: Canyon Rim, Grandview, Sandstone Falls

Strolls around the park in the company of birding enthusiasts offer an opportunity to look for and listen to our feathered friends. Binoculars and a field guide if you have them (some will be available), and good walking shoes are recommended.

## A TOUCH OF... NEW RIVER

Saturdays and/or Sundays, May 30<sup>th</sup> through September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2005, 2:30pm-4pm, Canyon Rim Visitor Center

Informal gatherings offer hands-on experiences, which may involve touching a feather and learning a bird song, "mining" some coal, "climbing" a rock, "riding" a kayak, or learning water safety.

## BLUESTONE NATIONAL SCENIC RIVER WALK

Saturdays, June through August 2005, at 10:00am

Mountain Creek Lodge (bottom of the tram), Pipestem Resort State Park

A one-mile walk along the Bluestone River provides an opportunity to enjoy park flora, fauna, and scenery and to discuss local history. Bring good walking shoes, water, and \$1.50 for the return tram ride.

## RANGER ON THE ROCK

June 14<sup>th</sup> through September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2005, 6:45pm-7:45pm

Main Overlook, Grandview

At the rim of the New River Gorge, a park ranger discusses park resources and shares binoculars and brochures to enhance an informal evening visit and the superb views.

## MARY DRAPER INGLES MONTH

July 2nd through July 30th, 2005

Specific times and locations to be announced

Reenactments, a dramatic performance, and other events will allow us to better understand the year 1755, when the New River area was the western frontier. Mary Draper Ingles was taken captive by Shawnee warriors on July 30<sup>th</sup>, 250 years ago.

## Volunteers in the Parks



Volunteers working on a section of the Fayetteville Trail

Volunteers at New River Gorge National River continue to provide valuable service to the park and the environment through their work on resource management projects, trail construction and maintenance, interpretive activities, special events, and cleanup programs. Volunteers of all backgrounds and skills are encouraged to become involved and contribute their talents and enthusiasm towards helping the park.

The Volunteer In Parks (VIP) program is the means by which volunteers can assist the park in a way that is mutually beneficial to the National Park Service and the volunteer or volunteer group. For more information, contact the Volunteer In Parks Program Coordinator at (304) 466-0417.



## Facility Hours and Services

Facility	Hours / Season	Services
<b>Canyon Rim Visitor Center</b> 304-574-2115	9:00 am to 5:00 pm Daily (except Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years Day)	information, exhibits, bookstore
<b>Park Headquarters</b> 304-465-0508	8:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday – Friday (except Federal Holidays)	information, library, personnel, administration
<b>Thurmond Depot</b> 304-465-8550	10:00 am to 5:00 pm Seasonal	information, exhibits, bookstore
<b>Grandview</b> 304-763-3715	12:00 pm to 5:00 pm Seasonal	information, exhibits, bookstore
<b>Sandstone Visitor Center</b> 304-466-0417	9:00 am to 5:00 pm Daily (except Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years Day)	information, exhibits, bookstore



## Nearby Parks

**Babcock State Park**

304-438-3003 or 1-800-CALLNWA

**Bluestone State Park**

304-466-2805 or 1-800-CALLNWA

**Camp Creek State Park**

304-425-9481, or 1-800-CALLNWA

**Carmifex Ferry Battlefield State Park**

304-872-0825, or 1-800-CALLNWA

**Hawks Nest State Park**

304-658-5212, or 1-800-CALLNWA

**Little Beaver State Park**

304-763-2494, or 1-800-CALLNWA

**Pipestem Resort State Park**

304-466-1800, or 1-800-CALLNWA

## Junior Ranger

To become a Junior Ranger, boys and girls from ages 6 – 12 complete 10 activities and either go to a ranger program or interview a park ranger. Ask for a Junior Ranger Activity Book at any park visitor center.

## Accessibility

All park visitor centers and boardwalks are accessible.

## Contacting the Park

**Superintendent**

Calvin F. Hite

**Mailing Address**

P. O. Box 246  
104 Main Street  
Glen Jean, WV 25846

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[ner\\_interpretation@nps.gov](mailto:ner_interpretation@nps.gov)

**Internet**

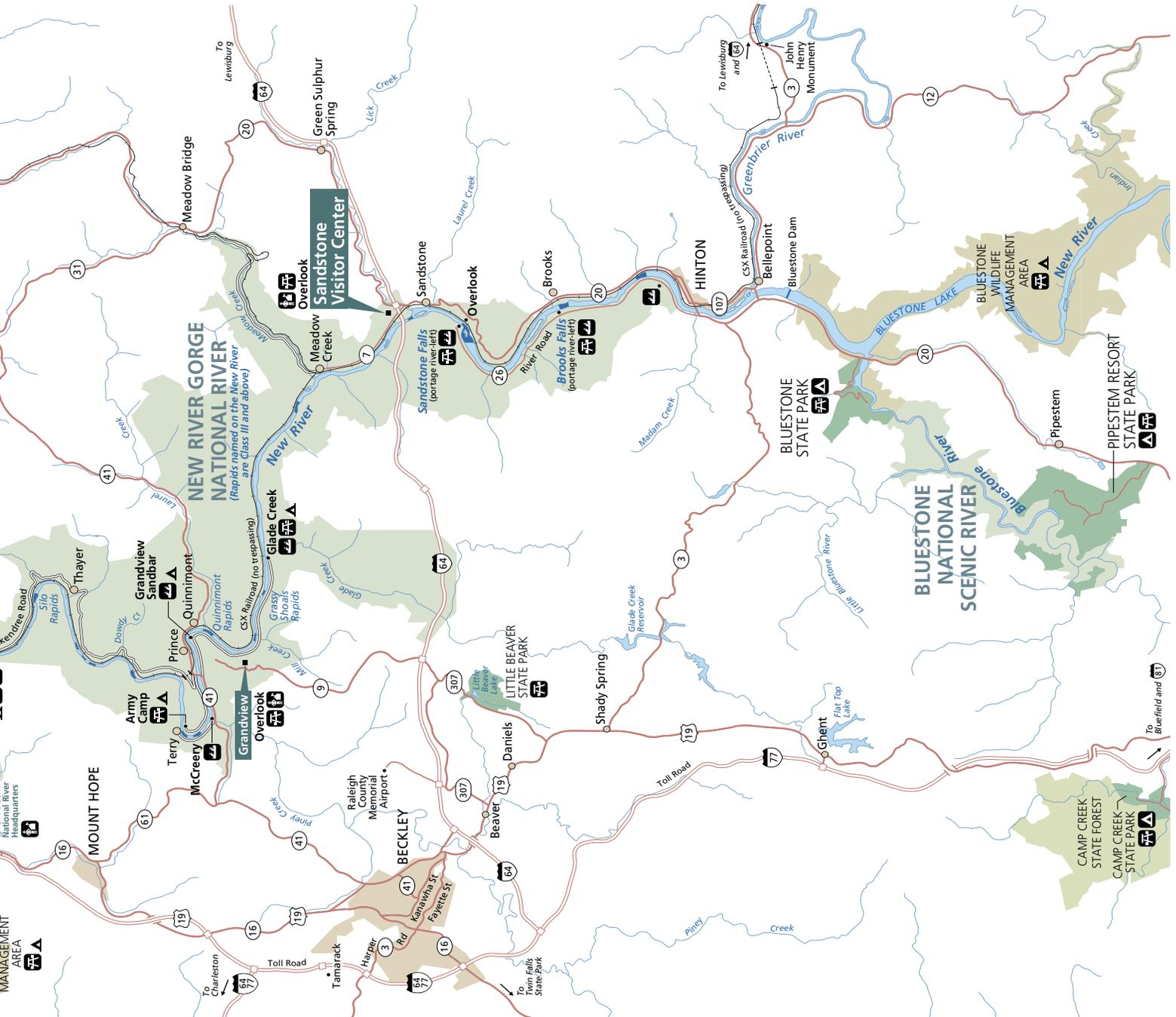
<http://www.nps.gov/neri>

**Fax Number**

304-465-0591

**Park Headquarters**

304-465-0508



# Sights to See

A visit to your national park is best begun with a conversation with a park ranger. The staff at the Canyon Rim or Sandstone Visitor Centers, as well as at the summer season Thurmond Depot or Grandview Contact Station, and at Park Headquarters (open weekdays only), will happily supply information concerning the special places of the park, which include the following, listed in a north-to-south order.

## GAULEY TAILWATERS

The tailwaters area below the Summersville Dam affords a close-up view of the river and the nearby hydropower plant. Water releases from the dam create the Gauley whitewater season, which begins the first weekend after Labor Day.

## NEW RIVER GORGE BRIDGE

The largest single span steel arch bridge in the Western Hemisphere, this engineering feat carries Route 19 across the gorge north of Fayetteville. Two walks provide views of the bridge, the gorge, and the river. The bridge and its base jumpers are the focus of Bridge Day, the third Saturday in October.

## ENDLESS WALL

From Fern Creek parking area, a 2.4-mile trail leads to views from vantage points above Endless Wall at Fern Point and Diamond Point. The long sandstone wall along the rim of the gorge is favored by rock climbers.

## FAYETTE STATION

Winding down under the New River Gorge Bridge and into the gorge, Fayette Station Road descends to the river. Roadside exhibits will describe life in the gorge, while a parking area at the bottom affords views of the rapids and often of rafters.

## KAYMOOR MINE AREA

Within the gorge along the Fayette Station Road, the two-mile Kaymoor Trail leads to the old mine site of Kaymoor. Access from the rim at Kaymoor Top is via the Miners Trail, a steep ½ mile descent. Wayside exhibits tell the story of this historical mine and community.

## THURMOND HISTORIC DISTRICT

The sidewalks of the town of Thurmond lie between railroad tracks and the front steps of its commercial buildings. The historical train depot, exhibits, and remaining structures assist in visualizing this railroad center of the early 1900s, once among the greatest railroad towns along the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway.

## STONE CLIFF AREA

In the vicinity of Thurmond, both the Dungen and Stone Cliff areas offer opportunity for fishing, hiking, camping, or a picnic near the river.

## GLADE CREEK AREA

The gravel Royal Road was severely flood damaged in 2003. The first mile, however, gives access to the foundations of Royal, a once-busy coal town, as well as Grandview Sandbar, with one of the few beaches along the New River.

## GRANDVIEW OVERLOOKS

The “grand” views are the most significant feature of Grandview. Three overlooks afford panoramic views of the New River 1,400 feet below. Five walking trails wind through rhododendrons along the rim of the gorge.

## CLIFFSIDE AMPHITHEATER

The outdoor amphitheater at Grandview is home to Theatre West Virginia. Summer performances are scheduled nightly except Mondays and include *Honey in the Rock*, *Hatfields and McCoys*, and a Broadway musical, which is *The Wizard of Oz* for the 2005 summer season. Call (800) 666-9142 for information.

## SANDSTONE FALLS OVERLOOK

From Sandstone Visitor Center, Route 20 winds up Chestnut Mountain. After three miles, a roadside pull-off with a short path affords a high-angle view of Sandstone Falls, which spans the New River below.

## RIVER ROAD AND BROOKS FALLS

Traveling along the river to Sandstone Falls must be a leisurely trip as the nine-mile road is narrow and uneven. A midway stop at Brooks Falls offers views of a river “hole” and nearby ledges.

## SANDSTONE FALLS

At Sandstone Falls, a fully-accessible 1100-foot-long boardwalk leads to an island observation deck. Along the way, exhibits and additional viewing areas feature the river-wide, 25-foot-high falls, the largest on the New River.

## BLUESTONE TURNPIKE

Following the Bluestone River for 8 miles in the path of an old riverbank road, the Turnpike is a hiking and biking trail that connects Pipestem Resort State Park and Bluestone State Park. The first mile is attractive to visitors who have ridden the Pipestem tram down to the river.

## Trail Suggestions

### Canyon Rim Area

Mileages given are one way

Endless Wall	2.4 Miles	Moderate   Hiking
Kaymoor	2.0 Miles	Moderate   Hiking
Long Point	1.6 Miles	Moderate   Hiking
Cunard – Kaymoor	6.7 Miles	Moderate   Hiking/Biking
Laing Loop	1.2 Miles	Easy   Hiking

### Thurmond Area

Thurmond–Minden	3.4 Miles	Easy   Hiking/Biking
Brooklyn – Southside	6.0 Miles	Moderate   Hiking/Biking

### Grandview Area

Tunnel	0.4 Mile	Moderate   Hiking
Canyon Rim	1.4 Miles	Moderate   Hiking
Castle Rock	0.5 Miles	Difficult   Hiking

### Upper Gorge Area

Glade Creek	5.6 Miles	Easy   Hiking
Sandstone Falls	0.5 Mile	Moderate   Hiking
Bluestone Turnpike	8.0 Miles	Moderate   Hiking/Biking

This is a selection of the many park trails available. Complete information is available at park visitor centers, by writing the park, or on the internet at <http://www.nps.gov/neri/trails.htm>

# Out and About

The three parks offer a great variety of outdoor activities — biking, fishing, hiking, paddling, rock climbing, or sightseeing. Please enjoy the parks, but also take steps to protect both yourself and the park environment. Always respect privately-owned land!



## Safety First

- Railroad lines throughout the park are active and are private property. Do not cross railroad tracks or trespass on railroad rights-of-way.
- Know the weather forecast and plan/dress accordingly.
- Take drinking water, and do not drink water from streams or rivers.
- Poison ivy is common. *Leaves of three, let it be!*
- Be aware of two species of poisonous snakes, the copperhead and timber rattlesnake.
- Hunting is allowed within the park — wearing blaze orange is recommended during hunting season.
- Many recreation activities (paddling, climbing, etc.) require special equipment, knowledge, and skills — contact a park ranger or qualified instructor for more information.
- Always wear a life jacket/PFD (Personal Floatation Device) when in or near the river.

# New River Rocks!

When you stand at an overlook in the New River Gorge, you notice the steep canyon walls and sandstone cliffs that characterize the area. The V-shaped canyon of the New River is an outstanding natural feature of West Virginia. It was caused by erosion that has occurred over a very long period of time, forming the cliffs and canyon walls. You can see the ongoing effects of erosion in the large rocks and slides that have tumbled from the cliffs and down into the river.



Nuttall sandstone on the rim at Endless Wall

The gorge cuts through the Appalachian Plateau, and exposes 3200 feet of very old rocks. Most of the rocks that you can see exposed in the gorge are sandstone and shale. In the lower gorge, the New River cuts through the hard Nuttall sandstone, a unique sandstone type that is 98% quartz. The area of the lower gorge around Batoff Mountain is one of the best exposures of Sandstone in the area; these rocks are among the oldest found in the gorge.

The New River was the main headwaters of an ancient watercourse called the Teays River, which flowed west to an immense inland sea that covered the central part of North America millions of years ago. Because the New River existed before the Appalachian Mountains, it was able to cut into them as fast as they were uplifted and this very old river maintained its ancient course. The New River is the only river that cuts through the ridge and valley province of the Appalachian Mountains instead of draining from or around them. That's what made the river valuable as a way to connect the eastern United States to the central states, and why the CSX Railroad mainline runs through the gorge today.

As it formed the gorge, the river sliced into and through thick coal-bearing rocks, exposing them. This made the coal relatively easy to remove and led to the indus-



Coal seam along the Kaymoor Trail

trialization of the New River Gorge. Some of the coal found in the New River Gorge is considered globally significant because of its exceptional quality and purity.

The National Park Service is working on several projects to better understand the geologic resources of the gorge. One is a survey of the fossils found in the rocks of the gorge. Studies like these help the park service protect the important resources of the area.

- excerpted from *A Natural Resource Assessment for New River Gorge National River*, by Carolyn Mahan.

# Resource Issues

As a geographically old river that flows into the state from the south, the New River is an important natural migration corridor into West Virginia for plant species native to the Southern Appalachians. Unique habitats, including canyon rims and walls, islands, waterfalls, wetlands, and expanses of deciduous forest, support a wide variety of plants and animals.

The ten miles of the Bluestone River is relatively unspoiled and undeveloped. Exposed rocks of shale, limestone, and sandstone add to the impressive deciduous forest landscape.

The Gauley River passes through narrow canyons and valleys where extremes in elevation, topography, and microclimate support a variety of plants and animals.



Knotweed, one of the non-native species that threatens native vegetation

Threats to the natural resources of the three parks are similar. Many acres were previously disturbed, whether from surface or deep mining, oil and gas extraction, or logging. Disturbance has allowed aggressive non-native species like Japanese knotweed and kudzu to dominate certain areas. Park recreational uses, although less impacting than many uses, have resulted in non-native fish introductions, damage to lichens, and loss of riparian vegetation.

Habitat fragmentation and loss are two of the most significant threats to the biological integrity of the park. Oak forest, rim rock pine, flatrock, and gravel bar communities are in decline.

As park boundaries are not fences, park threats may originate from adjacent lands, whether from surface and underground mining, dams, agricultural runoff, or commercial and residential development. Poor water quality, from sewage contamination, dissolved metals, sedimentation, or gob pile leaching, is of particular concern for aquatic plant and animal life and water-based recreation.

# Water, Water, Everywhere

Here at New River Gorge National River, Bluestone National Scenic River, and Gauley River National Recreation Area, water is not only our life, it is our business. The three parks together contain some of the most significant water-related resources and water-based recreational opportunities in the National Park System. In our work to protect and preserve these resources, we often find our best laid plans, in this case our trails and roads, washed away by the awesome power of water.

Flooding is an inevitable natural process and we try to avoid all construction in the floodplains of the river corridors. In recent years, heavy rainfalls have caused massive flash flooding of the small tributary creeks and streams. This flooding dramatically illustrates the "watershed" concept.

Devastating back-to-back flood events in the summer of 2001, which brought 5- to 11-inch rainfall totals in a few hours, placed most of the park in Federal Disaster Area status and destroyed many trails, roads, and river access areas, and inundated parts of Park Headquarters. By the summer of 2002, when some of these areas were being

reopened, severe storms again damaged the park. Heavy rains recurred in November 2003.

Highway construction teams and trail crews continue to repair damaged areas. Check for current conditions prior to a planned visit to the following... Kaymoor Trail, Kaymoor-Cunard Trail system, Southside Junction Trail, Glade Creek Road, Big Branch Trail, and Bluestone Turnpike Trail.



High water in Glen Jean



Park employees collect water quality data

# Mary Draper Ingles

## 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

The New River area was the far western frontier of English settlement 250 years ago. England and France were at war for control of North America, the French and Indian War. Like all wars, it brought horrors to the civilian peoples caught in its path. In July of 1755, a small farming settlement near present day Blacksburg, Virginia was attacked by warriors of the Shawnee nation, allied with France. Four were killed; five were taken captive. Among the captives were Mary Draper Ingles and her two sons.

The captives began an intense forced march to the home villages of the Shawnee in Ohio. There the boys were adopted into the tribe, while Mary and her newborn daughter were given in servitude to a

French trader. In October, Mary and an “old Dutch woman” escaped into the wilderness in the face of oncoming winter. Following the Ohio, Kanawha, and New Rivers eastward to Mary’s home was their only hope of survival. Forty-four days and five hundred miles brought them to Drapers Meadows, where Mary was reunited with her husband and lived to raise five more children.

A series of summer and fall events along the three rivers will allow us to remember the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mary Draper Ingles journey and to better understand this time in American history. Request an activity schedule at park visitor centers, park headquarters, by phone at (304) 465-6524, or at [www.nps.gov/neri](http://www.nps.gov/neri).



Award-winning exhibits at Sandstone Visitor Center

### SANDSTONE VISITOR CENTER

Sandstone Visitor Center anchors New River Gorge National River on the south. The center was constructed in 2003 on the site of a former quarry and later a school, adjacent to Interstate 64. To landscape the disturbed area, planners selected native plants. The slopes around the building are becoming grasslands once again, while the area immediately next to the visitor center is being planted as a native plant garden. A team of three native plant enthusiasts is creating a natural-looking landscape that will require minimal mowing and no fertilizer, pesticides, or watering.

Within the building, it is also all about water. Dominating the exhibit area is a map of the New River Watershed embedded in the tile floor. The exhibits — the map, the surrounding gorge-like structures, the touchable artifacts, and the touch screen computers — are award winners. The National Association of Interpretation recognized the excellence of the Sandstone Visitor Center exhibits in 2004.

### CANYON RIM VISITOR CENTER

Canyon Rim Visitor Center anchors New River Gorge National River on the north. It is no coincidence that the center was constructed in 1990 adjacent to the New River Gorge Bridge. Both the visitor center exhibits and the bridge are part of the story of the New River Gorge as both a corridor and a barricade for travel. In 1977, the bridge reduced a challenging 45-minute trip down and up narrow winding roads to a simple one-minute crossing of the gorge.

The New River Gorge and its bridge were chosen as the subject of the design for the West Virginia state quarter, available in fall 2005. The quarter design combines the natural physical beauty of the state and the engineering wonder of the bridge.



Prescribed burn at Brookside

## Two Management Plans

### FIRE MANAGEMENT PLAN

A 2005 *Fire Management Plan* for New River Gorge National River outlines a program to manage fire on park lands. Fires within the park are generally caused by humans, spread primarily through leaf litter, are less than ten acres in size, and occur most severely from October through December.

The plan includes a quick response to fire to protect human life and property and to minimize damage to park resources. The plan also includes (a) appropriate suppression of unwanted wildland fire, (b) reducing potentially hazardous fuel levels by mechanical means, and (c) using prescribed fire to manage hazardous fuels.

### CLIMBING MANAGEMENT PLAN

Since 1978, New River Gorge National River has grown from a backwoods climbing area to a large eastern climbing center. More than 1,600 routes on the Nuttall sandstone exposed along the rim of the gorge are used.

However, increased use has impacted soils, plant communities, and possibly wildlife. Increased use has also brought complaints of conflicts between user groups. The 2005 *Climbing Management Plan* for New River Gorge provides guidance for the next five years. The plan will ensure the protection of park resources while continuing to provide opportunity for quality climbing experiences.



Falls on Glade Creek

## In Conclusion

It is the New, Gauley, and Bluestone Rivers... the abundance of fishes in their waters, the paths along their banks, and the cliff walls above them... that are wonderful places to play—to boat, to fish, to hike, to climb, to sightsee, to picnic, and to camp.

Parks certainly qualify as “places to play in and places to pray in, where nature may heal and cheer and give strength,” as John Muir once said. Here, too, are places to reflect on the changes that these river gorges have seen... once valued for their industrial raw materials... now valued for scenic beauty, animal habitat, and their perpetual roles as national parks.



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior