

About the Trail

The Northwest Lancaster County River Trail is a fourteen-mile, multi-use, public recreation trail adjacent to the Susquehanna River. The trail spans five municipalities as well as land owned by the County of Lancaster and the Lancaster County Solid Waste Management Authority.

Trail Rules

- ⇒ Enjoy the trail at your own risk. The trail is open year round, dawn to dusk, conditions permitting.
- ⇒ Motorized vehicles are prohibited except for emergency and maintenance vehicles.*
- ⇒ The trail is available for walking, bicycling, jogging, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.
- ⇒ Pets must be kept on a leash. Owners are responsible for removing all pet waste.
- ⇒ Keep the trail clean – carry out all waste.
- ⇒ Alcoholic beverages are prohibited.
- ⇒ Use caution when crossing bridges, roads, and railways, because they are actively used.
- ⇒ Stay to the right of the trail and warn when passing.
- ⇒ Please do not disturb natural habitats.
- ⇒ Discharging of weapons on or from the trail is prohibited. Hunting may be permitted on adjacent land.
- ⇒ Other borough, township, or park ordinances shall be in effect.

*Individuals with mobility disabilities should refer to the trail's ADA accessibility policy regarding the use of powered mobility devices on the trail. This policy is available on the trail website or at municipal offices.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the trail, please contact any of the following landowners:

Columbia Borough - 717-684-2467

Conoy Township - 717-367-4927

East Donegal Township - 717-426-3167

Marietta Borough - 717-426-4143

Lancaster County Department of Parks & Recreation - 717-299-8215

In the event of an emergency, please dial 911

Along the Way

From the time of the native peoples, land and water routes along the Susquehanna River were essential to America's early transportation and helped define settlement patterns in the region. The Northwest Lancaster County River Trail follows the route of the historic Pennsylvania Main Line Canal and uses some of the original towpath to create the trail.

Columbia - Located at the trail's southern terminus is the Columbia River Park, in historic Columbia Borough. In addition to beautiful views of the river, the park offers boat and paddlecraft launches, picnic areas, and an outfitter. From the park you can also view remnants of the historic bridge piers which were burned during the Civil War in 1863 to prevent Confederate troops from crossing the river. Columbia is home to museums, galleries, a market house, antique shops, restaurants, a visitors center, and many other attractions.



Chickies Rock County Park - At the south end of the 420+ acre county park, you will pass through Point Rock Tunnel, an abandoned railroad tunnel, carved through 180 feet of solid rock. The trail runs through Kerbaugh Lake, a reclaimed woodland and natural meadow, and along former canal and railroad beds. Towering more than 100 feet above the trail is Chickies Rock, a quartzite rock outcropping. Also in the park, are ruins from several anthracite-fired iron furnaces, which were part of a thriving industry during the mid to late 1800's.



Marietta - Steps from the trail in Marietta are beautiful historic buildings and many great restaurants, pubs, and shops. Historically, Marietta was known for its rich pig iron production and railroads. Along the trail is the Vesta Furnace Office building, which was part of a furnace operation from 1868 to the 1920's. Today the Vesta Furnace building is maintained by the Marietta Restoration Associates. Also near the trail is the engine house from Chickies Furnace No. 2 (1854-1899), which is privately owned.



East Donegal Township – This section of the trail runs through scenic woodland and farmland along the Susquehanna River. The trail travels through Riverfront Park which is a major trail access point and boasts beautiful views of the river, restored wetlands, a large pavilion, boat access ramp, and ample room to picnic and explore nature. The extensive wetland areas of the park were restored with the help of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service's Wetland Reserve Program.



Conoy Township – Just off the trail are the towns of Bainbridge and Falmouth. Bainbridge is home to the Haldeman Mansion, where internationally recognized scientist, Samuel S. Haldeman, was born. The home is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. This part of the trail offers access to Conewago Falls, the river potholes, the Conoy Canal Trail, and views of the York Haven Dam. Falmouth is also known for its annual goat races.



Trail Map & Guide

The Northwest Trail is a joint effort of the following landowners and partners:

Columbia Borough

Conoy Township

East Donegal Township

Marietta Borough

Lancaster Co. Department of Parks & Recreation

Lancaster County Planning Commission

Lancaster County Solid Waste

Management Authority

PA Dept. of Conservation & Natural Resources

Susquehanna Gateway Heritage Area



SUSQUEHANNA RIVERLANDS

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Trail Access Guide

