Delaware & Raritan Canal State Park

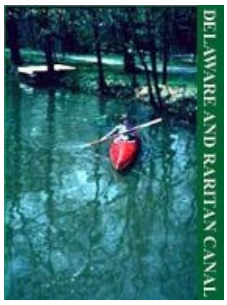

Photo by Paul Steen

THE OFFICIAL NJ STATE PARKS & FORESTS GUIDE
Pocket Ranger®
Download our Free app to access Park Maps & Info!

The Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park is one of central New Jersey's most popular recreational corridors for canoeing, jogging, hiking, bicycling, fishing and horseback riding. The canal and towpath are part of the National Recreational Trail System. The 70-mile linear park is a valuable wildlife corridor connecting fields and forests.

With its 19th-century bridges, bridgetender houses, past and present locks, cobblestone spillways and hand-built stone-arched culverts, the canal is a tremendous attraction for history lovers. The upper reach of the feeder canal wanders through quaint New Jersey towns along the Delaware River such as Stockton and Lambertville. The main canal passes the Port Mercer canal house, through the charming village of Griggstown to Blackwells Mills, ending up in New Brunswick. Canoes can be rented at Griggstown and Princeton from private concessionaires.

Most of the canal system remains intact today and is a reminder of the days when the delivery of freight depended upon a team of mules or steam tugboats. Nearly 36 miles of the main canal and 22 miles of the feeder canal still exist, with many historic structures along the canal.

nj fast facts

Delaware & Raritan Canal State Park

Location:
Central New Jersey
Burlington, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset Counties

Mailing Address:
145 Mapleton Road
Princeton, NJ 08540
609-924-5705

GPS Coordinates
DMS 40° 22' 07.27" N 74° 36' 58.14" W

View map for Bull's island Office and DnR Canal office

Size: 6,595 acres

Fees: No entrance fee.
Link to the Related Fees page

Directions:
Map & Directions via MapQuest

Parking is available in designated parking lots along the canal towpath. The main canal runs from Trenton to New Brunswick with a break at the Route 1 crossing. The feeder canal stretches from Trenton north to Frenchtown along the Delaware River.

The park office is located at 145 Mapleton Road.
From Route 1
Exit at Route 522 east (Ridge Road) heading towards the town of Kingston for approximately 1 mile. Make a left turn onto Division Street. At the stop sign turn left onto Academy Street (Academy Street becomes Mapleton road). The park office and Mapleton Preserve is located .2 miles on the left side of the road across from the Mapleton Nurseries.

From Route 27:
Turn onto Academy Street at the traffic light in Kingston (across from the Kingston Cemetery). Academy Street becomes Mapleton road as it heads towards route 1. The park office and Mapleton Preserve is located .3 miles on the left side of the road across from the Mapleton Nurseries.

Facilities & Activities:

- Cook Natural Area
- Six Mile Run Reservoir Site
- Interpretive Programs
- Trails
- Picnic tables
- Hiking
- Fishing
- Boating/Canoeing
- Cross-country skiing
- Related Links
- FAQ's

Trails:

- Hiking
- Horseback riding
- Mountain biking
- Biking

Nearby Attractions:

- Bull's Island Recreation Area
- Delaware Canal State Park

Keep Your Park Clean

Through the Carry-In/Carry-Out Program you can help us keep your parks clean and beautiful by carrying out the trash you carry in. Bags are provided throughout the site. Thank you for your cooperation and remember to recycle.

Access for Persons with Disabilities

The towpath and recreational facilities at D&R Canal state park are partially accessible for persons with disabilities. Please contact the park office for further information regarding disability access needs. Text telephone (TT) users, call the New Jersey Relay Service at (800) 852-7899.

Park Hours

Open daily sunrise to sunset
Office hours:Monday - Saturday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Park Advisory

The Swan Creek Aqueduct repairs will begin later this month and pedestrian detours may be in effect in Lambertville near Swan Creek. This will be an on-road detour through the streets of the city of Lambertville. Detour signs will be posted.

A temporary detour is in place between Jefferson and Delaware Streets in Lambertville. Visitors will need to use Clinton Street until further notice

Delaware River access point at the Fairview Road and Point Pleasant-Byram parking lots on Highway 29 are closed to the public until further notice.

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is in the process of developing a comprehensive management plan for the Bull's Island Recreation Area upper river camping section, which includes hazardous tree removal and reforestation. The upper river campground/low lying area campsites are closed for public access until the area can be reopened for passive recreational use. The down river campsites are closed for the 2012 camping season pending a second phase tree assessment which will be conducted over the summer. Day use activities in the lower river section, including the boat ramp and picnic area remain open.

The DEP conducted a tree assessment of the entire upper river campground as a result of a large sycamore falling in 2011. The assessment provided evidence of hazardous trees due to root decay from silt buildup related to repeated floods. Most of the trees in the area were found to have compromised root systems.

As a result, the DEP closed all camping areas to protect the public. For the upper river campground which consists of a 5 acre parcel with more than 200 large trees, a management plan is in development to mitigate the public safety hazards with the goal of eventually reopening the area to the public for passive recreation. The management plan will include the removal of trees in the upper river camping area and replanting of the area with smaller growing trees, shrubs and other native vegetation. To adequately refine this management plan and to ensure that impacts of the tree removal to the natural resources, including migratory and nesting birds and other wildlife, are minimized, a coordinated team representing the various technical programs within the DEP are providing input to ensure concerns are addressed and any necessary reviews are conducted and appropriate permits obtained. Plant material that will thrive in this type of environment and not create hazards for public access will be the focus of the plan, with attention to monitoring for, and controlling invasive species. The area will ultimately reopen for passive recreational use. The DEP will make a decision on the lower river camping section once the tree assessment is completed.

The Department will continue to update its website message on Bull's Island Recreation Area as information becomes available. Thank you.

Please call the park office at 609-924-5896 before visiting.

D&R Canal Dredging Project

highlights

Abbott Marshlands Stewardship Council

2013 Annual Report

Park Maps

Park Map
High resolution for printing purposes; Print Size: 8.5 x 14
File Size: 2067KB

GPS Parking Lot Coordinates
Use to locate the available D & R Canal State Park parking areas.

D&R Canal State Park Path in Trenton NJ

D&R Canal State Park map through Duck Island - Lock 1 and Lock 2

DELAWARE AND RARITAN CANAL COMMISSION

APPLICATION for INDIVIDUAL APPROVAL and WAIVER

Prallsville Mills, Route 29, Stockton

This charming 19th-century mill complex contains both grist and linseed oil mills. The site is leased and operated by the Delaware River Mill Society, which sponsors concerts and other programs on site. For information about programs, call (609) 397-3586.

Griggstown, Franklin Township, Somerset County

The wooden canal bridge, the Mule tender's Barracks, the Bridge tender's House and station and the site of the Griggstown Mill are situated along the canal. Canoes can be rented at a private canoe rental concession on the canal. The Griggstown Lock is less than a mile south on the towpath. A short walk brings you to grassy fields with picnic tables and grills.

Blackwells Mills, Franklin Township, Somerset County

The Bridge tender's House, wooden bridge and mill site are reminders of the area's active past. Several annual events are held at the house. Picnic tables and grills are located around a large field with views of the river. This historic site provides access to the canal, towpath and river.

Griggstown and Blackwells Mills are located between the Millstone River and the D&R Canal and can be reached off Route 533, Millstone River Road in Hillsborough or from Canal Road in Franklin Township. Both historic sites provide access to the Millstone River as well as the canal and towpath.

Trail heads for Six Mile Run Reservoir are nearby. Horse trailer parking is available.

Cook Natural Area *(26 acres)*

This area displays a deciduous lowland hardwood forest adjacent to the Heathcote Brook in Kingston. A short trail takes visitors to the forest and small ponds.

Six Mile Run, Franklin Township, Somerset County

The Six Mile Run Reservoir Site, is one of Central New Jersey's most hidden recreational resources for hiking, biking, horseback riding and Hunting. The 3000 acre reservoir site, rich in cultural and historic significance, is also a valuable oasis of wetlands, forests, farmlands and old fields.

Six Mile Run Hunting Map
(High resolution for printing purposes)
File Size: 355KB

Six Mile Run Reservoir Site Trail Map
(High resolution for downloading/printing purposes)
File Size: 724KB

Interpretive Programs

The Park staff offer a variety of historical and natural interpretive programs throughout the year. Contact the park office for a schedule of programs. Program fees may apply.

PROGRAM REGISTRATION FORM

Trails

The towpath and multi-use trails are great for all ages and physical abilities. Both the Main Canal Trail, which runs 34 miles in length, and the Feeder Canal Trail at 31.5 miles are ADA accessible.

Picnicking

Picnic table and grills are located at some of the access points and near a few of the historic sites. Informal picnicking is allowed along the canal. Open fires are not permitted. Charcoal fires are restricted to the grill in the picnic areas.

Hiking

The historic towpath found along the feeder and main canal is suitable for hiking, jogging and biking. Horseback riding is permitted on the main canal only. Motorized vehicles or ATV's are not permitted on trails in the park. In addition to the canal trail, patrons can access trails at the Six Mile Run Reservoir Site, Kingston greenway and Cook Natural Area Trails from the park office located in Kingston as well as one trail found within the Bull's Island Natural Area.

Fishing

Fishing is permitted the entire length of the canal. Anglers can find bass, sunfish, catfish, perch and pickerel within the canal as well as trout, which the Division of Fish and Wildlife stocks the canal with each spring. Fishing

is also permitted in the Delaware River. All canal and river fishing is subject to the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife regulations.

Boating

The D&R Canal State Park offers five boat launches into the Delaware River. Launches are located at:

Kingwood Township, Hunterdon County
Byram, Hunterdon County
Bulls Island, Stockton, Hunterdon County
Lambertville, Free
Fireman's Eddy, Hopewell Township, Mercer County

Boat Launches are available from sunrise to sunset year round.

A Launch Ramp fee is in effect from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Canoes, kayaks, boats, vessels and personal watercraft (e.g. jet-skis) that are transported in any manner are subject to launch ramp fees. Required daily or annual permits can be purchased at the Bulls Island Main Office at 2185 Daniel Bray Highway, Stockton, NJ 08859. For further information, call 609-397-2949.

There are no motor restrictions on the river, but all the New Jersey boating regulations apply.

There are restrictions on boating and canoeing on the canal. Only electric motors, car top launch, and canoes are permitted, which, can be rented from private concessionaires in Griggstown and Princeton.

Launch Ramp Permit Information Sheet

Related Links

- Bull's Island Recreation Area
- Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park and Canal Commission
- Delaware Canal State Park
- D&R Greenway Land Trust
- Delaware River Scenic Byway Map

FAQ's (Frequently Asked Questions)

Is camping permitted along the canal?	*No, Bull's Island Recreation Area is the only location to camp.*
What are the park hours?	*Park hours are sunrise to sunset.*

back to top

Questions regarding our parks and forests can be directed to Michele Buckley of the State Park Service.

Copyright © State of New Jersey, 1996-2004
Department of Environmental Protection
P. O. Box 402
Trenton, NJ 08625-0402

Last Updated: September 23, 2013