

# MONOCACY SCENIC RIVER WATER TRAIL

## The River With Many Bends

Located in Frederick County, Maryland, the Monocacy River is the largest Maryland tributary to the Potomac River. The Monocacy River is the boundary between Frederick County and Carroll County in its northern reaches. It is also designated as a Maryland Scenic River and has long been popular with paddlers, fishermen, birdwatchers and others.

Easily accessible from the Baltimore and Washington metropolitan areas, the Monocacy River provides many opportunities for visitors to enjoy the natural beauty, tranquility, and cultural and historical resources that are hallmarks of central Maryland.



Rock outcroppings along the Monocacy River

For thousands of years prior to European settlement, Native Americans inhabited this valley, living in riverside villages, fishing, hunting, and farming. The Algonquian-speaking Shawnee called the river the "Monnockkey," the "river with many bends."

In the 17th century, British Explorer, Henry Fleet visited the Monocacy River valley, and remarked "The place is without question, the most healthful and pleasant..." The Monocacy River Water Trail guide has been compiled to help visitors explore this place that Mr. Fleet found so pleasant. Visitors to the river will be greeted by views of distant ridges, rich forests and farmland, rock outcroppings, a diversity of wildlife, and historic landscapes dotted with mills and bridges, and there are many other attractions and points of interest nearby.

With its temperate climate, fertile soil, and ample rainfall, the Monocacy watershed has a long and rich history, marked by a prosperous agricultural economy and a rapidly growing urban population. The river originates in Adams County Pennsylvania, where Marsh and Rock Creeks converge, and spans a length of 58 miles to its confluence with the Potomac River.

The best time to paddle the Monocacy is in spring to mid-summer, and from late fall to winter, unless extreme drought conditions occur. The river has a gentle gradient of approximately 3 feet per mile, which results in an average floating speed of approximately 2 miles per hour. There are ten access sites located along the River that accommodate non-motorized boats such as kayaks and canoes, but many of the access sites have a boat ramp for launching small, motorized boats.

## Recreation and Cultural Heritage



Rose Hill Manor

### Parks and Recreation

Frederick County's Division of Parks and Recreation owns and manages six water access sites along the Monocacy River, but also has numerous parks, facilities, historic sites and recreation programs that are available to the public. Historic Rose Hill Manor Park is located in the City of Frederick not far from the Monocacy River. Built in the 1790s, Rose Hill was home to Governor Thomas Johnson, Maryland's first elected governor, during his retirement. The site currently serves as a hands-on history museum and features the Georgian period Manor house, icehouse, log cabin, blacksmith shop, carriage collection and two barns. For more information, visit [www.RoseHillMuseum.com](http://www.RoseHillMuseum.com).

Fountain Rock Park and Nature Center, located in Walkersville, is historically known for its limestone kilns and quarry operation, as well as watercress and fish farming. The park is rich in wetlands, and contains one of Maryland's strongest springs, which flows at a rate of 1.4 million gallons per day. The Nature Center houses informational displays, discovery boxes, and live animals. Visit [www.Recreator.com](http://www.Recreator.com) to learn more.

### Historic City of Frederick

The City of Frederick has one of the best-preserved historic districts in Maryland. The 50-block district is made up of tree-shaded streets lined with buildings from the 18th and 19th centuries, and brick walks that connect lovely courtyards. Shops, museums, antique stores, cafes, and fine restaurants attract tourists all year long. For more information contact the Tourism Council of Frederick, [www.fredericktourism.org](http://www.fredericktourism.org) or the Downtown Frederick Partnership, [www.downtownfrederick.org](http://www.downtownfrederick.org).



City of Frederick Historic District

### Native Americans

Native Americans inhabited the Monocacy River valley from the earliest occupation of North America. Prehistoric sites have been located along the forested river, dating as early as the Paleo-Indian period (12,000-8,000 B.C.). Early natives were most likely nomadic, foraging and hunting the rich diversity of wildlife found in the area.

### European Settlement-Agriculture

European explorers and traders arrived in the region in the early 1700s. In 1702, a Swiss explorer, Franz Louis Michel visited the Monocacy River valley while searching for silver, and drew a map that clearly depicted the river and Sugarloaf Mountain, which is located in Southern Frederick County.

By 1790, Frederick County was a bustling agricultural community, and the largest wheat producer in the United States. Crops such as flax, corn, orchard fruit, rye, oats, potatoes, and hay were also cultivated. In addition to agricultural productivity, milling and other industries flourished. By 1791, there were a total of 870 mills of various types operating on the Monocacy River and its tributaries, including various saw, grit, paper, and flour mills. Michael's Mill was built in 1739 and operated until the 1950s.

### Transportation and Bridges

Colonial roads were generally poorly marked and maintained, and traveling on them was often hazardous and difficult. Natural barriers such as rivers presented a particular challenge, especially in inclement weather. By 1748, traffic had increased on the Georgetown Road sufficiently to warrant the establishment of a rope ferry located slightly downstream of current MD 355. Archeological excavations have confirmed a nearby tavern, most likely a log building, that provided food and lodging for travelers.

Further advances in the transportation of goods to market came in the late 1820s when the Baltimore and Ohio (B&O) Railroad and Chesapeake and Ohio (C&O) Canal Company were both chartered to connect the east coast markets with the growing trade and commerce of the Ohio River valley. The B&O followed much of the National Road, routed along Bush Creek in eastern Frederick County and the canal followed the Potomac's north shore from Georgetown, in Washington D.C. to Harpers Ferry, in West Virginia. Portions of both the railroad viaduct and canal aqueduct can be viewed by paddlers traveling down the river.

### Public Lands, Parks and Battlefields



The Monocacy Aqueduct

There are many state and national public lands located in the Monocacy River valley including, the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park (C&O Canal), Monocacy National Battlefield, and the Monocacy Natural Resources Management Area. The C&O Canal parallels the Potomac River, from Cumberland, Maryland to Washington D.C., a distance of 184.5 miles. In its early years, mule-drawn canal boats transported lumber, coal, grain, and other products from the Allegheny Mountains and farmlands of western Maryland to Georgetown. Today, visitors hike and bike the Canal for recreation and to visit the many cultural, historical, and natural sites located along its banks. The C&O Canal is accessible from the southern end of the Monocacy River water trail. To learn more about the C&O Canal visit [www.nps.gov/choh](http://www.nps.gov/choh).

### The Civil War

Frederick County's industrial and commercial importance made it a strategic target during the Civil War. Both Union and Confederate forces were active in the area throughout the conflict, particularly during the Maryland Campaign in 1862 and the Gettysburg Campaign in 1863. Today, the Monocacy National Battlefield comprises 1,647 acres of farmland and forest just a few miles south of the City of Frederick. The Monocacy River flows through the battlefield for 2.5 miles and visitors to the battlefield can access the river from the shoreline at Gambrill Mill.

On July 9, 1864 the battle of Monocacy raged on both sides of the river. A small Union force, led by General Lew Wallace, managed to delay the advance on Washington D.C. by the larger Confederate army, led by General Jubal Early. The day-long battle was the only Confederate victory in Union territory, but the delay provided just enough time for Union troops to reach the U.S. capitol and prevent its capture. Other important events at the Monocacy National Battlefield include the finding of Confederate Special Orders No. 191 in 1862 and the 1864 meeting that devised the Union plan for the Shenandoah Valley Campaign. There are 52 historic structures, 21 archeological sites, and a number of witness trees within the boundary of the battlefield. The battlefield was designated as a Registered Historic



Legore Arch Bridge - Built around 1900 by James William Legore, is the only five-arch, stone bridge in Frederick County.



Civil War Re-enactors

Ground National Heritage Area. The HCWHA promotes the stewardship of historic, cultural, and natural Civil War resources, and shares information about the people, places and stories that led to Civil War. Learn more at [www.heartofthecivilwar.org](http://www.heartofthecivilwar.org).

### Natural Treasures

The Monocacy River supports diverse wildlife, recreational pursuits and scenic enjoyment. The river corridor provides food, shelter and migration pathways that are important to fish, birds, and other wildlife. Several areas along the Monocacy River are habitat to rare, threatened, or endangered species, and the riparian areas contain numerous Wetlands of Special State Concern. These wetlands are of exceptional ecological value, sometimes containing the last remaining populations of native plants and animals.

### Forests, Plants and Animals

Currently, there are approximately 151,085 acres of forestland in Frederick County, which represents 35% of the County's total land area. Silver maple, cottonwood, sycamore, ash, elm, and box elder can be found in floodplain forests. Another interesting aspect of the watershed is its abundant springs and seepages. With the exception of Fountain Rock spring which flows at over 1,000 gallons per minute, most springs are small, but still have an important cooling effect on the streams they enter.



Goldenseal

There are a few remnant forest areas in the Monocacy watershed, including the Monocacy Natural Resource Management Area (NRMA), Sugarloaf Mountain, and areas along the Catoctin Mountain ridge, where rare plants such as rock skullcap, rustling wild-petunia, and scarlet ammannia still persist.



White-tailed Deer Fawn

Maryland DNR has identified 50 plant species and 29 animal species as living in the Monocacy watershed, in their current inventory of Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species. Eleven species are globally rare and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lists 2 species, the bog turtle and the Indiana bat as federally threatened and federally endangered respectively.

Historically, the Monocacy River valley may have supported large herbivores like bison, bear, and elk. Wildlife species commonly seen along the river today include: red fox, gray squirrel, white-tailed deer, woodchuck, raccoon, rabbit, beaver and muskrat.

### Fish, Amphibians and Reptiles

In spite of continued watershed development, the Monocacy offers year-round fishing opportunities. Large-mouth bass are the most abundant sportfish in the upper Monocacy, but throughout other areas of the river a variety of other fish species can be found including: smallmouth bass, black and white crappie, bluegill, pumpkinseed, sunfish, channel catfish, yellow and brown bullheads, common carp, and rainbow trout.



Rainbow Trout

The river environment also provides a moist habitat that is hospitable for amphibians and reptiles. Many different species of these animals can be found, and seen, in the Monocacy River Valley including: frogs, snakes, lizards, turtles and salamanders.

### Waterfowl and Other Birds

A diverse array of waterfowl, birds of prey, and songbird species can be seen while paddling the Monocacy. A commonly found bird is the belted kingfisher, often seen hovering above the river before making a plunge into the water for fish. Once hearing its rattling call, you can easily learn to identify this bird. Graceful wading birds like, the great blue heron and its smaller cousin, the green heron, are often observed in the shallower sections along the river.



Great Blue Heron

One of the greatest concentrations of waterfowl can be seen in the area near Michael's Mill and the Monocacy NRMA, and further south to where the Monocacy meets the Potomac River. Mallards and wood ducks breed locally, and this is one of the

few places in Maryland where Common Mergansers have recently begun to breed. Canada geese are present year round. Transient visitors include the spotted and solitary sandpipers, American widgeon, ring-necked duck and ruddy duck.

Prominent predatory birds include the red-shouldered, red-tailed, and Cooper's hawks and the osprey. The American kestrel, a member of the falcon family, is found hunting nearby fields, and three species of owls have been seen in the watershed - the eastern screech-owl, great horned, and barred owls. In recent years, the American bald eagle has made a comeback, and is sometimes observed along the Monocacy. With its white head, black body, white tail, and large size (its wingspan can reach 8 feet), this bird is easy to identify.



American Bald Eagle

Numerous song birds can be found along the Monocacy, including flycatchers, vireos, warblers, tree and northern rough-winged swallows, eastern bluebird, wood thrush, indigo bunting, scarlet tanager, and our State bird, the Baltimore oriole. From mid-April through May, the woods along the River are alive with these beautiful songsters on their migration northward. Many will breed here and their young can be found throughout the summer.

### Leave No Trace

#### The stewardship principles of Leave No Trace:

- 1) Plan Ahead and Prepare**
  - Know your route and the limitations of yourself and your group.
  - Carry the proper equipment and clothing.
  - Notify someone of the time you intend to return.
- 2) Stay in Designated Areas**
  - Keep to designated trails and public areas.
  - Keep groups small and avoid trampling plants.
  - Protect wildlife and your food - store rations securely.
  - Leave recreation areas and picnic sites cleaner than you found them.
- 3) Dispose of Waste Properly**
  - Clean fish at designated areas.
  - Pick up litter and dispose of all waste in proper receptacles or take it with you.
- 4) Leave What You Find and Be Considerate of Other Visitors**
  - Respect our natural and cultural heritage - leave all items as you found them.
  - Keep noise to a minimum - enjoy the music of nature.
  - Respect private property and the privacy of others.



For more information on Leave No Trace ethics visit [www.lnt.org](http://www.lnt.org), call 1-800-332-4100, or contact your local resource managers for additional guidance.

### Wildlife Viewing Ethics

- 1) Act responsibly.** Stay clear of nests, dens and rookeries. Do not touch or feed wild animals. Do not allow pets to interfere with wild animals.
- 2) Avoid getting too close.** View wild birds and other animals from an appropriate distance. If animals change their behavior, appear nervous, keep looking at you with head up and ears pointing toward you, or if the animal doesn't resume its normal activity, then you are too close.
- 3) Make your observation brief, then move on.** If you are looking at baby birds in a nest, fish in a pond, etc., remember that they can't leave and that you are interrupting normal behavior.
- 4) Don't chase an animal.** Don't chase an animal trying to get a better glimpse or photo. Don't follow animals or behave in any way that might be seen as "harassment." And don't allow your pets to do it either.
- 5) Move quietly and slowly.** At popular viewing sites limit your movement and noise level so you do not distract the wildlife. Loud noises, sudden movements or an unannounced approach can startle and cause stress to animals.
- 6) Do not use calls or whistles, or try to rouse animals in any way.** This can interrupt breeding cycles, drive birds from their territories, or make animals "call shy" so they don't respond to the real thing.
- 7) Divide large groups of people into small groups.** Small groups of people are less disturbing, usually talk more quietly, and tend to act in a more responsible way than big groups do.



Girl looking through binoculars



Eastern Bluebird

### Paddling and Boating Safety Tips

The Monocacy River has a variety of conditions that provide opportunities for paddlers of all levels. Those new to the water can take part in group paddle trips offered by the County and more experienced boaters can create their own adventures that can range from a few hours to all day. Be prepared before you get on the water and review these guidelines.

- Wear a properly-fitted, U.S. Coast Guard approved, lifejacket while on the water. (See [Maryland Boating Regulations](http://MarylandBoatingRegulations.gov) below)
- Boating safety increases with numbers. Boat with others and carry a spare paddle.
- Know your route and any potential hazards along it. Review maps, river levels, and weather conditions before launching. Be aware of obstacles such as fallen trees, debris, islands and rocks which you may encounter along the route. Check Maryland streamflow conditions at the USGS website [waterdata.usgs.gov/md/nwis/rf](http://waterdata.usgs.gov/md/nwis/rf).
- Dress appropriately for the weather and water conditions in addition to air and water temperatures. Always wear protective footwear.
- Carry a supply of food and water adequate for the length of your trip. Stay hydrated and protected from the sun year-round to minimize the danger of dehydration and heat exhaustion.
- Keep your weight centered and as low as possible at all times, especially when entering and exiting a boat. Never paddle farther from shore than you are prepared to swim.
- If your boat flips over, remain calm. Hold onto your paddle and the boat if possible. Try to reach a calm, shallow spot or the shoreline, then empty the boat and re-enter.
- Be alert to possible weather changes. Thunderstorms can be common during the warm weather months and are usually accompanied by temperature drops, increased winds and dark clouds. Get off the water immediately if you see lightning.



Paddle with others

For more information on paddling and boating safety visit <http://cegaux.org> or <http://dnr.maryland.gov/nrp/Pages/BoatingSafety/home.aspx>

### Maryland Boating and Fishing Regulations

**Please Note:** On the Upper Potomac River and its tributaries, including the Monocacy River, all boaters, rafters and tubers must wear life jackets at all times from November 15 through May 15.

**Personal Flotation Devices:** Boats propelled by oars or paddles are required to carry one PFD of either Type I, II, III, or V, for each person on board, regardless of length. All motorized craft 16 - 65 feet must carry a Type I, II, III, or V, for each person on board, plus one extra Type IV. Children under age 13 must wear a US Coast Guard approved PFD at all times in any boat under 21 feet. (MD State Law).

**Boat Registration:** All boats, whether commercial or recreational, must be registered in Maryland if it is: equipped with any kind of primary or auxiliary mechanical propulsion; not currently registered with the U.S. Coast Guard (documented); and is being used principally in Maryland. Registering your vessel in Maryland involves applying for a Certificate of Title as well as a registration. A single application form is used for both and can be presented in person or mailed to one of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Service Centers. For more information visit <http://dnr.maryland.gov/boating/Pages/registration.aspx>

**Fishing Licenses:** Maryland's recreational fishing requirements and rules are divided into Tidal (Chesapeake Bay and its tidal tributaries) and Non-Tidal. A Non-Tidal Fishing License is required for both resident and non-resident to fish in the Monocacy and its tributaries. Annual licenses require a fee for Maryland residents and non-residents, which allows fishing from January 1 through December 31. A 3-day or 5-day license can also be purchased for a reduced fee. For more information visit [http://dnr.maryland.gov/Pages/service\\_fishing\\_license.aspx](http://dnr.maryland.gov/Pages/service_fishing_license.aspx)



Wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket

## For More Information

Frederick County Division of Parks and Recreation  
355 Montevue Lane, Suite 100  
Frederick, MD 21702-8213  
phone: 301-600-1646  
email: [parksandrecreation@frederickcountymd.gov](mailto:parksandrecreation@frederickcountymd.gov)  
or visit [www.Recreator.com](http://www.Recreator.com)



Maryland Department of Natural Resources  
Chesapeake and Coastal Service  
Public Access and Water Trails Planning Program



580 Taylor Avenue, Suite E-2, Annapolis, MD 21401  
DNR coordinates the creation of a statewide system of public water access sites and water trails and provides technical, planning and design assistance to local governments and other partners. For more information visit <http://dnr.maryland.gov/ccs/Pages/pawt.aspx>



### In Case of Emergency

In case of emergency, contact the Sheriff's Department Dispatch at 911 and specify that you are in Frederick County, Maryland or call the Maryland Natural Resources Police at 410-260-8888.

Project coordination, design and mapping for this publication were provided by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Chesapeake and Coastal Service in partnership with the Frederick County Division of Parks and Recreation, the Tourism Council of Frederick County, the National Park Service Monocacy National Battlefield, and the Monocacy Scenic River Citizens Advisory Board.

The facilities and services of the Department of Natural Resources are available to all without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, national origin or physical or mental disability.

Call toll free in Maryland, 1-877-620-8DNR ext. 8780. TTY users call via the Maryland Relay. Accommodations for individuals with disabilities will be provided upon request. Seven days advance notice is requested.

Photos by Frederick County Division of Parks and Recreation and others as noted. Cover photo, maps and design by Lisa Gutierrez.

# MONOCACY SCENIC RIVER WATER TRAIL in Frederick County, Maryland



## The River With Many Bends

Maryland Department of Natural Resources  
Frederick County Division of Parks and Recreation

# MONOCACY SCENIC RIVER WATER TRAIL

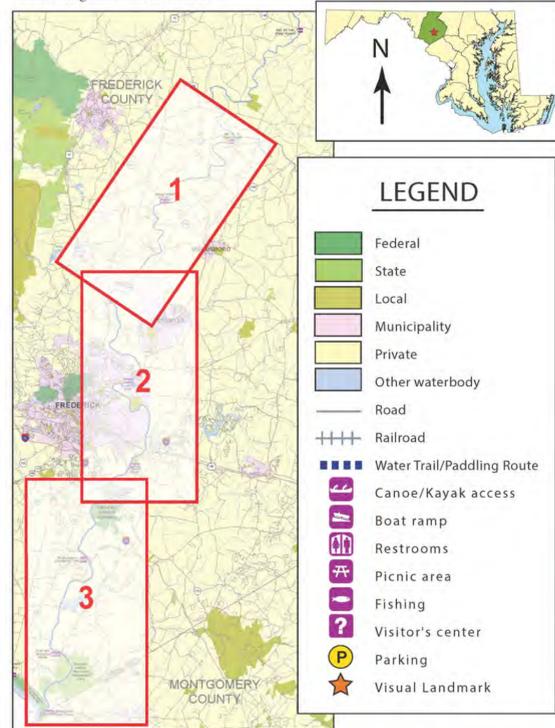
## The River With Many Bends

This guide spans 41.8 miles of water trail along the Monocacy River and depicts a diverse mix of opportunities for paddlers of all levels. The trail has been divided into three segments, identified on the index map below, but visitors can make their trips shorter or longer according to their time and ability.

The Monocacy is usually runnable in the spring and mid-summer, and from late fall through winter, unless extreme drought conditions occur. The river has a gentle gradient of approximately 3 feet per mile which results in an average floating speed of approximately 2 miles per hour. There are nine access sites located along the trail and all are suitable for non-motorized craft such as kayaks and canoes, but small fishing boats (jon boats) equipped with trolling motors can be launched at locations marked with the boat ramp symbol if river levels are sufficient. Due to the generally shallow and rocky nature of the Monocacy River, use of large motorized boats is not recommended.

- 1 MARYLAND RT. 77 - ROCKY RIDGE TO DEVILBISS BRIDGE
- 2 DEVILBISS BRIDGE TO GAMBRILL MILL
- 3 GAMBRILL MILL TO THE MONOCACY BOAT RAMP

These maps are meant to be used as a reference for existing public boating access sites and facilities. It is strongly recommended that you consult a range of other detailed maps, charts and supplemental information geared to your specific needs when planning for or undertaking extended excursions.



### Check River Levels Before you Go

Remember that river travel involves risks so safety is of utmost importance. Although the Monocacy is well known as a flat, slow moving river appropriate for novice paddlers, it is also subject to rapidly changing water levels during or following heavy rain. Be sure to check river levels before launching.

Hazardous water levels can be caused by wave action, water velocity, and wind. These conditions are dangerous to non-white-water vessels, tubers, swimmers, and others using the river. River levels of 5 feet or above are considered hazardous for recreational use and should not be attempted. Hazardous conditions on the Potomac River may also exist on its tributaries including the Monocacy. For more information on Monocacy River conditions call the National Weather Service at 703-996-2200.

River levels can be viewed at the US Geological Survey gauge at Jug Bridge in Frederick or visit <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/usa/nwis/uv/01643000>.

- To start a paddle trip from the Maryland Route 77 Bridge, the gauge should read 350 cubic feet per second (cfs) or show a water level of at least 2.1 feet.
- To start a trip from Devilbiss Bridge, the gauge should read at least 215 cfs or show a water level of 1.7 feet.

It is mandatory to wear a US Coast Guard approved life jacket while boating on the Upper Potomac River and its tributaries, including the Monocacy River. All boaters, rafters and tubers must wear life jackets at all times from November 15 through May 15 each year. During all other times, there must be one wearable life jacket per person on board. Children under age 13 must wear a US Coast Guard approved life jacket at all times in any boat under 21 feet. (MD State Law).

A future river access is planned at the Maryland Route 140 bridge, which will allow for fishing and viewing of the Monocacy River. This site will be managed by the Frederick County Division of Parks and Recreation in cooperation with the Carroll County Department of Recreation and Parks. Please call 301-600-1646 for further information.

## 1 MARYLAND ROUTE 77- ROCKY RIDGE TO DEVILBISS BRIDGE

**Total Distance:** Approximately 11.7 miles  
**Difficulty:** This section of the Monocacy River is shallow, generally flat, narrow and intimate. The general conditions along this route make it appropriate for novice paddlers. The route can be made shorter by taking out at Creagerstown Park which is 6.25 miles from Rocky Ridge. Those seeking a longer more challenging route should continue to Devilbiss Bridge approximately 11.7 miles downstream from Rocky Ridge.

A canopy of trees provides shade during the first few miles of this route. Millers Bridge (the Rt. 77 bridge) is visible just upstream from the Rocky Ridge access point which is the northern trailhead of the Monocacy River Water Trail. The river meanders gently through woodlands, past small islands, low rubble shorelines and some high rock outcroppings. Stay to the right as you float past and enjoy the series of small riffles which will help move you downstream.

Approximately 3.25 miles downstream from Rocky Ridge, paddlers will pass under Legore bridge, a five-arch, stone structure built in 1900. From this point it is approximately 3 miles to the next access point at Creagerstown Park. Belted Kingfishers and Great Blue Herons can often be seen crisscrossing the river as visitors float by. White Tailed Deer might be seen grazing along the shoreline and occasionally crossing the river.

### MARYLAND ROUTE 77 - ROCKY RIDGE

**GPS:** 39°36'12.52"N 77°17'37.08"W  
**Managed by:** Frederick County Division of Parks and Recreation, 301-600-1646  
**Amenities:** There are no facilities or amenities at this location. Parking is minimal, and consists of a small gravel area along the road shoulder on the southwest side of the river. There is room for approximately 4 cars. The access is gared and portage of approximately 1/8 of a mile along a dirt trail is required to reach the river. Larger groups wishing to launch from this site require a permit from the Frederick County Division of Parks and Recreation. Call 301-600-1646.  
**Hours and fee:** Dawn to dusk. No fee required.  
**Directions:** Take Route 15 north from Frederick to Thurmont. Exit onto Route 77 East Main Street. Turn left on Rocky Ridge Road to remain on Route 77 East. Continue approximately 6 miles to the Monocacy River. Access point is on the right side (southside) of the road  
**Address:** 10611 Rocky Ridge Road, Thurmont, MD 21788

### CREAGERSTOWN PARK

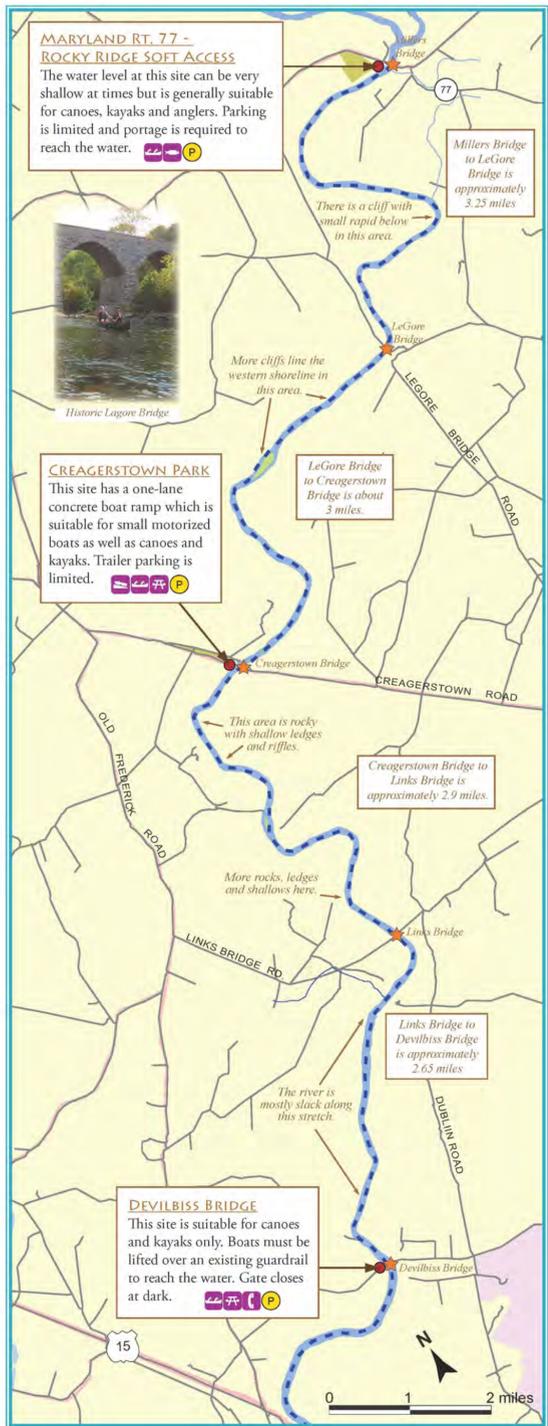
**GPS:** 39°33'49.11"N 77°21'5.58"W  
**Managed by:** Frederick County Division of Parks and Recreation 301-600-1646  
**Amenities:** Small gravel parking lot with 10 spaces, picnic table, playground, one narrow concrete boat ramp and soft access under the bridge.  
**Hours and fee:** 8 am to sunset, year-round. No fee or permit required.  
**Directions:** 3 miles south of Thurmont on Route 550/Creagerstown Road. The park is on the left before the Monocacy River bridge.  
**Address:** 12014 Penterra Manor Lane, Thurmont, MD 21788

### DEVILBISS BRIDGE

**GPS:** 39°30'26.44"N 77°22'38.76"W  
**Managed by:** Frederick County Division of Parks and Recreation 301-600-1646  
**Amenities:** Small asphalt parking lot with 8 spaces, appropriate for hand-carried non-motorized boats only. Launching from earthen riverbank requires lifting your boat over the parking lot guardrail. There are no restrooms or other facilities at this location. Be aware that the riverbank gets very slippery when it is wet.  
**Hours and fee:** November-February, by permit only. March-October, 8am to sunset, gate closes at dark. No permit or fee required.  
**Directions:** 6 miles north of Frederick on Route 15; right (east) on Devilbiss Bridge Road. Access point is on the left just before the bridge.  
**Address:** Devilbiss Bridge Road, Walkersville, MD 21793

### A Note on River Shuttles

To enhance your water trail experience make plans to shuttle your vessels ahead of time. The idea of a shuttle is to have your vessel at the upstream point of access and your vehicle at the downstream destination. This is easily done with two or more vehicles. Employ a friend or hire a professional shuttle service to take you to your starting point.



## 2 DEVILBISS BRIDGE TO GAMBRILL MILL

**Total Distance:** Approximately 16 miles  
**Difficulty:** This section of the river is generally flat, shallow, rocky, and slow moving which makes it appropriate for novice paddlers. The route can be made shorter, by taking out at Riverside Park which is approximately 7.8 miles from Devilbiss Bridge. Experienced paddlers seeking a more challenging experience can continue to Pinecliff Park which is 6.2 miles from Riverside or to Gambrill Mill which is 2 miles downstream of Pinecliff Park.

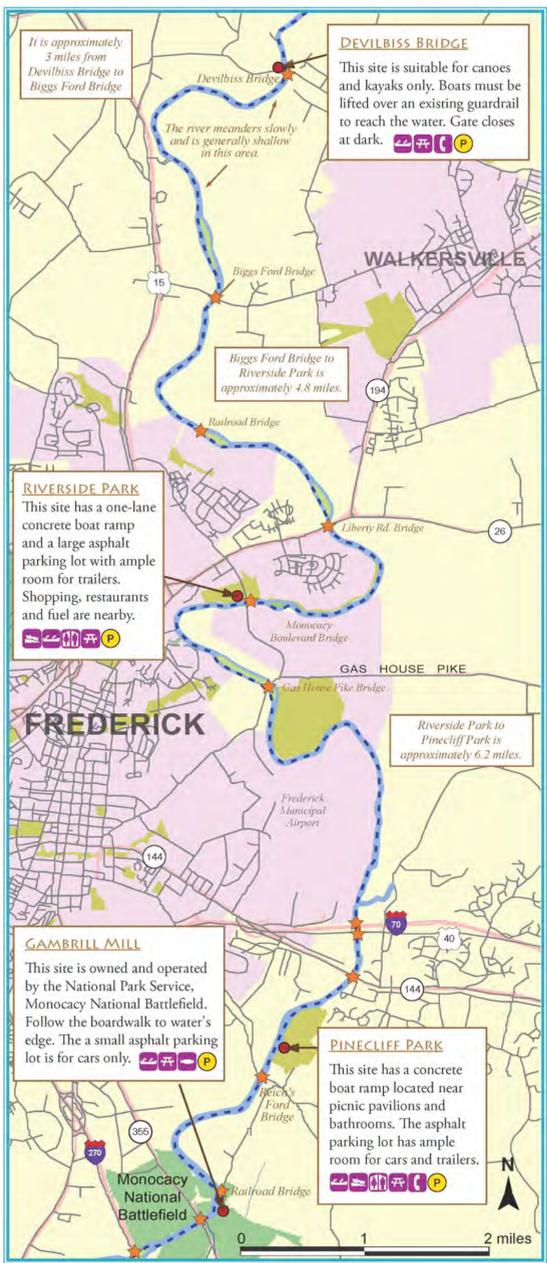
Access to this segment of the water trail starts at Devilbiss Bridge and features wooded shorelines marked by occasional rock outcroppings. This segment also flows through the City of Frederick and features several long, low-lying islands in the river. When encountering islands, be sure to scout your route and steer toward the side with the greater flow of water. Sometimes what looks like an island may actually be an outcropping of trees.

The highway and railroad bridges along this section will help to mark your progress. The first bridge you will encounter is Biggs Ford bridge which is approximately 3 miles from Devilbiss. Just below Biggs Ford there is a small rocky area of swift water. Stay to the left as you pass this. Just 1.3 miles further, is a railroad bridge which marks your approach to the City of Frederick. Continue 1.7 miles further, and just past a large island, to the Rt. 26 bridge. After passing under the Rt. 26 bridge you will encounter a large bend in the river. Although the river corridor remains natural, commercial shopping areas in the City of Frederick are very close by. Keep an eye out for the Monocacy Boulevard bridge which is approximately 1.8 miles down Rt. 26 and immediately before the Riverside Park boat ramp which will be on the right-side shoreline.

As you continue downriver towards Pinecliff Park, the river is mostly slack which requires a good deal of paddling. This section is very open and there is little shade, so be sure you have sun protection, a hat, and sunscreen. The double spans of the Rt. 40 / I-70 bridges will pass overhead approximately 3.2 miles downstream from the Gas House Pike bridge and the Rt 144 Bridge (Old National Pike) come into view almost immediately after as you make your way south towards Pinecliff Park just 1.35 miles away.

### DEVILBISS BRIDGE

**GPS:** 39°30'26.44"N 77°22'38.76"W  
**Managed by:** Frederick County Division of Parks and Recreation 301-600-1646  
**Amenities:** Small asphalt parking lot with 8 spaces, appropriate for hand-carried, non-motorized boats only. Launching from earthen riverbank requires lifting your boat over the parking lot guardrail. There are no restrooms or other facilities at this location. Be aware



that the riverbank gets very slippery when it is wet.  
**Hours and fee:** November-February, by permit only. March-October, 8 a.m. to sunset, gate closes at dark. No permit or fee required.  
**Directions:** 6 miles north of Frederick on Route 15; right (east) on Devilbiss Bridge Road. Access point is on the left just before the bridge.  
**Address:** Devilbiss Bridge Road, Walkersville, MD 21793

### RIVERSIDE PARK

**GPS:** 39°26'37.21"N 77°22'58.43"W  
**Managed by:** City of Frederick Department of Parks and Recreation, 301-600-1493  
**Amenities:** Large asphalt parking lot with trailer parking, ADA accessible spaces, and a portable restroom. The single lane concrete boat ramp is best suited to launching canoes and kayaks, but small fishing boats with trolling motors can launch here if the river levels are suitable. The site is adjacent to soccer fields and close to shopping, restaurants and fuel.  
**Hours and fee:** Dawn to 10 p.m.  
**Directions:** U.S. Route 15 North to Exit 16, Liberty Road/Maryland Route 26 east. Go approximately 1 mile and turn right at Monocacy Blvd. Go .2 miles and turn right just past the WalMart Shopping Center, and immediately left into the park.  
**Address:** 1801 Monocacy Boulevard, Frederick, MD 21701

### PINECLIFF PARK

**GPS:** 39°23'21.16"N 77°22'42.91"W  
**Managed by:** Frederick County Division of Parks and Recreation, 301-600-1646  
**Amenities:** 95-acre county park with lighted ball fields, picnic areas, restrooms, tor lot, bank fishing, and nature trail. The park has a 400-car parking lot; there are no painted-line parking spaces for trailers, but they are allowed on the east side of the parking lot (along the grass near Shelter #2). ADA accessible parking spaces are located near the restrooms and picnic shelters. Water fountains and trash cans are also at the picnic shelter. When you launch from Pinecliff Park, you will pass under Reichs Ford Road bridge and immediately encounter some small riffles.  
**Hours and fee:** April 1 to October 31, 8 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. November 1 to March 31, 8 a.m. to sunset. No permit or fee required.  
**Directions:** Interstate 70 to Exit 55, Reichs Ford Road south; continue 1 mile over the Monocacy River and turn left (east) onto Pinecliff Park Road. Turn right into the park; the boat ramp is on the left, just past Picnic Shelter #2.  
**Address:** 8350 Pinecliff Park Road, Frederick, MD 21704

### GAMBRILL MILL AT MONOCACY NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD

**GPS:** 39°22'10.72"N 77°23'16.79"W  
**Managed by:** National Park Service, Monocacy National Battlefield, 301-662-3515  
**Amenities:** The Monocacy National Battlefield is a 1,647-acre historical preserve managed by the National Park Service. The Monocacy River access point at Gambrill Mill is a (soft) shoreline area and access requires portage along a narrow boardwalk approximately 300 feet long, to reach the riverside. A boat dolly or other wheeled transport is recommended. This site has an asphalt parking lot with space for 20 cars.  
**Hours and fee:** The park is open during daylight hours. No fee is required.  
**Directions:** From I-70 take Exit 54 (Market Street, Maryland Route 355), and head south onto Route 355. The main Visitor Center for the Battlefield is located approximately 1.5 miles on the left at 5201 Urbana Pike. Continue 1 mile past the Visitor Center to reach the Gambrill Mill site which will be on the left.  
**Address:** 4632 Araby Church Road, Frederick, MD 21704 (Park Headquarters)

## 3 GAMBRILL MILL TO MONOCACY BOAT RAMP

**Total Distance:** Approximately 13.6 miles  
**Difficulty:** The upper portions of this segment are appropriate for paddlers of all skill levels, but the area below Monocacy National Battlefield features some challenging sections of rapids. Gambrill Mill to Buckystown is 4.2 miles. Buckystown to Park Mills is 5.8 miles and Park Mills to the Monocacy Boat Ramp is 3.6 miles. Be aware that following rain events, the water is faster and deeper, and paddling conditions will be more difficult.

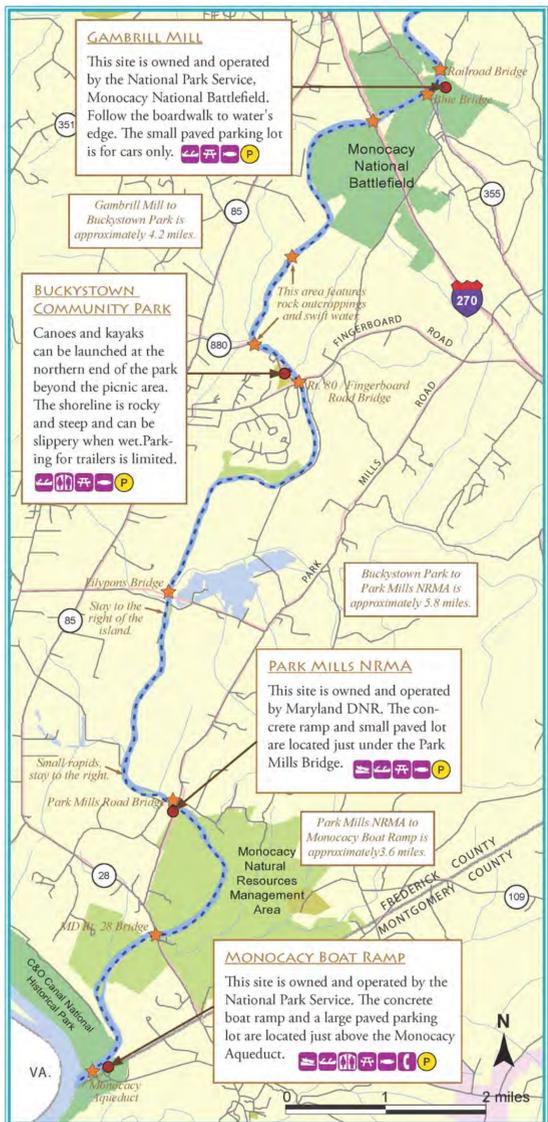
### GAMBRILL MILL AT MONOCACY NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD

**GPS:** 39°22'10.72"N 77°23'16.79"W  
**Managed by:** National Park Service, Monocacy National Battlefield, 301-662-3515  
**Amenities:** The Monocacy National Battlefield is a 1,647-acre historical preserve managed by the National Park Service. The Monocacy River access point at Gambrill Mill is a (soft) shoreline area and access requires portage along a narrow boardwalk approximately 300 feet long, to reach the riverside. A boat dolly or other wheeled transport is recommended. This site has an asphalt parking lot with space for 20 cars.  
**Hours and fee:** The park is open during daylight hours. No fee is required.  
**Directions:** From I-70 take Exit 54 (Market Street, Maryland Route 355), and head south onto Route 355. The main Visitor Center for the Battlefield is located approximately 1.5 miles on the left at 5201 Urbana Pike. Continue 1 mile past the Visitor Center to reach the Gambrill Mill site which will be on the left.  
**Address:** 4632 Araby Church Road, Frederick, MD 21704 (Park Headquarters)

### BUCKEYSTOWN COMMUNITY PARK

**GPS:** 39°19'39.08"N 77°24'55.70"W  
**Managed by:** Frederick County Division of Parks and Recreation, 301-600-1646  
**Amenities:** 5.5-acre community park with picnic area, tor lot, shelter, grills, volleyball area, horseshoe pits, large multi-sport field, 26-space parking lot, and portable restroom. There are several social trails down the steep bank to the river. The best location is immediately behind the playground.  
**Hours and fee:** 8 a.m. – sunset, year round. No permit or fee required.  
**Directions:** South from Frederick on Route 85/ Buckystown Pike. Left (east) on Route 80/Fingerboard Road. Park is on the left immediately before the Monocacy River bridge.  
**Address:** 7221 Michaels Mill Road, Buckystown, MD 21717

### Respect Private Property and Do Not Trespass



### PARK MILLS ROAD BRIDGE (MONOCACY NRMA)

**GPS:** 39°15'46.74"N 77°26'9.26"W  
**Managed by:** Maryland Park Service, Seneca Creek State Park, 301-924-2127  
**Amenities:** Monocacy River NRMA is comprised of 1,800 acres of natural areas and farmlands along the Monocacy River. There is a small asphalt parking lot with 20 spaces (no ADA spaces) and a concrete boat ramp, but no restrooms or other amenities.  
**Hours and fee:** Dawn to dusk (park closes at sunset). No fee or permit required  
**Directions:** 10 miles south of Frederick; take Route 85 south to Route 28 east. Turn left (north) on Park Mills Road, and continue to the River. Look for break in guardrail on left side of the road, immediately before crossing over the river.  
**Management Address:** Monocacy River Natural Resources Management Area c/o Seneca Creek State Park, 11950 Clopper Road, Gaithersburg, MD 20878

### MONOCACY BOAT RAMP

**GPS:** 39°13'28.21"N 77°27'0.01"W  
**Managed by:** National Park Service, C&O Canal National Historical Park, 301-739-4200  
**Amenities:** Concrete boat ramp, large asphalt parking lot with spaces for 35+ cars, and a vaulted toilet. The boat ramp is just upstream from the historic Monocacy Aqueduct and close to the C&O Canal which has additional parking, interpretive signage, a vaulted toilet, and ADA parking spaces.  
**Hours and fee:** The park is open during daylight hours. No fee is required, but larger groups and special events may require a permit, call 301-739-4200 for additional information.  
**Directions:** South from Frederick on Route 85 to Route 28 east. Turn right (south) on Mouth of the Monocacy Road, and follow to the end of the road.  
**Management Address:** C&O Canal Headquarters, 1850 Dual Highway, Suite 100, Hagerstown, MD 21740

The access sites on this map are public lands available to all. Be aware that privately owned lands exist along most of the Monocacy River. Please respect private property.