



National Wild & Scenic Rivers in the Delaware River Basin



Map depicting stretches of the Delaware River and tributaries included in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

The **National Wild and Scenic Rivers System** was signed into law in October 1968. This law, known as the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, states:

“It is hereby declared to be the policy of the United States that certain selected rivers of the Nation which, with their immediate environments, possess outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar values, shall be preserved in free-flowing condition, and that they and their immediate environments shall be protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.”

The U.S. has 3.5 million miles of rivers, but only about 13,413 river miles (less than one half of one percent) are included in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

In the Delaware River Basin, three-quarters of the non-tidal Delaware River, one Delaware River tributary and sections of several other tributaries are included in the national system:

- **Upper Delaware River:** Designated in 1978, this 73-mile section from Hancock, N.Y. to Milrift, Pa. is also known as the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River, a unit of the National Park Service (NPS).
- **Middle Delaware River:** Added to the system in 1978, this 40-mile section from just south of Port Jervis, N.Y. to Stroudsburg, Pa. is also known as the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, a unit of the NPS.
- **Lower Delaware River:** Added to the system in 2000, this 38.9-mile section links the Delaware Water Gap and Washington Crossing, Pa. Also included in this designation are 28 miles of selected tributaries: the Tincum, Tohickon, and Paunacussing creeks. This section is known as the Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River, which is a Partnership Wild and Scenic River, also a unit of the NPS.
- **Maurice River:** Added to the system in 1993, a total of 35.4 miles of this N.J. Delaware Bay tributary is a Partnership Wild and Scenic River, a unit of the NPS. Also included in this designation are sections of several Maurice River tributaries: Menantico and Muskee creeks and the Manumuskin River.
- **Musconetcong River:** Added to the system in 2006 & expanded in 2022, 28.5 miles of this N.J. Delaware River tributary is a Partnership Wild and Scenic River, a unit of the NPS.
- **White Clay Creek:** Added to the system in 2000 and expanded upon in 2014, the entire White Clay Creek Watershed is included as a Partnership Wild and Scenic River, a unit of the NPS. This is the first National Wild and Scenic River protected in its entirety.

DRBC: Managing, Protecting & Improving the Basin’s Water Resources Since 1961

The Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) is a federal-interstate compact agency created in 1961 to manage the water resources of the Delaware River Basin without regard to political boundaries. The commission’s members are the governors of the four basin states (Delaware, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania) and the Commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers North Atlantic Division, who serves as the federal representative.

The commission was formed in response to major water resource challenges requiring regional solutions, and to this day is a successful model for federal-state collaboration.

DRBC programs include water quality protection, water supply allocation, regulatory review, water conservation, drought management, watershed planning, flood loss reduction, and education/ outreach.

Highlights of DRBC accomplishments include the following:

- * DRBC’s Special Protection Waters program protects the existing high quality waters of the river’s non-tidal watershed;
- * DRBC regulations have helped to improve dissolved oxygen levels in the Delaware River Estuary;
- * DRBC’s Pollutant Minimization Plan regulations have helped to significantly reduce PCB loadings to the river; and
- * DRBC has been recognized for its comprehensive water conservation, drought management, and watershed planning programs.

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