

Duncannon to Marysville Trip Notes

This paddle trip starts at Duncannon and ends at our shop in Marysville. The trip is approximately 8 miles long, and takes an average time of 3 to 5 hours. Inactive time, paddling intensity, water level, and wind conditions will affect your time.

You will start on the river-right side of the river. River-right and river-left are defined as right and left, respectively, when facing downstream.

The preferred route, shown on the map, depicts the recommended route for moderate and low water levels. In the Dauphin Narrows area the preferred route, which is far river-left, must be followed at all water levels.

For very low water level, there is an alternate route shown for the Duncannon area; here you'll find easier passage near the river-right shore. Once below the Six Arch Bridge, head sharply toward the river-left shore, then follow the preferred route, staying left of all wooded islands until you are through the Dauphin Narrows.

At moderate water levels and outside the Dauphin Narrows area, feel free to explore the river, cruise the shore lines, paddle the many channels between the islands, or float down the middle. Also feel free to explore the islands themselves. Respect any private property signs and be mindful of the prevalent poison ivy and very, very slippery river banks.

A communication tower above the highway on the river-left shore and the last group of small to medium sized, wooded islands mark the half way point of this trip. Approximately 3 miles below the communication tower is the Dauphin Narrows -- a short stretch of class 2 rapids. The old bridge piers and the Lady Liberty Statue make this area easy to identify. The rapids are easily run on the far left. Before you enter this area, you must get to the river-left shore and you should pass far to the left of all standing piers. Stay a couple boat lengths from shore as you encounter 3 sets of small waves. There are a few rocks and ledges to avoid. As you progress, the nearby shoreline will turn into a concrete wall. Keep your paddles in the water, the boat pointed downstream, aim for the largest waves, and have fun!

Should you choose to run the Dauphin Narrows anywhere but along the river-left shore, you will chance damaging, destroying, or losing the boat (which you are responsible for). You also chance injury and the loss of your possessions.

After going through the third set of waves, return to the river-right shore for the takeout. During times of shallow water, it is best to cross directly below the Dauphin Narrows. At any water level this provides the best view of the statue and the Narrows. Follow the river-right shoreline to the takeout.

The takeout ramp is on river-right, half way between the Dauphin Narrows and the Rockville Bridge (the first river bridge you'll see). The ramp is 1 mile upstream of the bridge and it is the only paved boat ramp in this area. You will also see a set of wooden steps leading up from the ramp.

When you reach the ramp, carry your boats up onto the grassy flat spot on the downstream side of the ramp (near the manhole covers), and flip them upside down against each other. Carry your paddles and lifevests (personal floatation devices or PFD's) up through the tunnel. Take the first set of stairs on the left (opposite the orange and white stripes) to reach our parking lot. Leave the paddles and PFD's on our porch and check in with us at the sales counter.

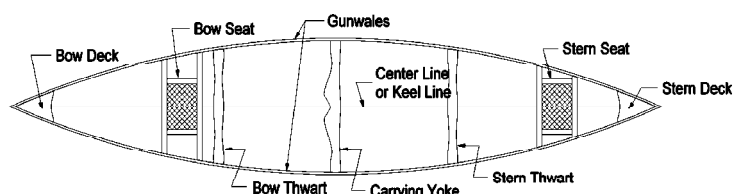
Properly dispose of any trash in the receptacle at the ramp or at our shop. Recycling bins are available on our porch.

Trip Necessities

Make sure that all important and/or expensive items (i.e., eyeglasses, wallets, car keys, cameras, binoculars, etc.) are waterproofed and secured to either you or the boat. Customers are encouraged to lock valuables in their car and leave their keys with our staff behind the sales counter. Good waterproof sunblock is necessary -- we have it available for sale in the shop. Take plenty of drinking water or sports drinks -- other beverages often accelerate dehydration and should be supplemented.

During colder weather and/or with cold water temperature there is a very good chance of experiencing hypothermia in the event of a capsizing. Appropriate clothing should be worn: wetsuit, synthetic fleece, wool, a windbreak covering, or a combination of these garments. Cotton garments (jeans, sweatshirts, etc.) are NOT suitable for these conditions! In addition, a full change of clothing for each paddler should be carried in a dependable, waterproof bag.

Do not take Styrofoam coolers or glass containers on the river. Soft or hard coolers are permitted. However, make sure they are securely closed (tie shut with cord if necessary). Please do not litter! If you don't have a litter bag with you, please ask -- we will provide one. Keep all loose debris in the bag, keep the bag tied shut, and secure the bag to the boat. In the event of a capsizing you will not have time to retrieve garbage.



Paddling Tips

Canoes and kayaks, contrary to public opinion, are not "tippy." However, they do require more care than a slower, wider, flat-bottom boat. When embarking or disembarking, position the canoe parallel to the shore, hold onto the gunwales, step on the center line of the boat only, and keep your weight low. Do not pull the end of the canoe up a steep bank or ramp with people onboard. Do not try to board with a boat in this position either -- it will flip.

Paddle on opposite sides of the canoe -- then, should the canoe start to tip, one person is always in position to stabilize (brace) the boat with his paddle. The most common cause of capsizing is hitting an exposed or slightly submerged rock sideways and leaning upstream, away from it. Should you hit or even stop on a rock or log, lean downstream toward the obstacle, NOT away from it. Gently rock the boat, or carefully push-off with the paddle, and the water will, in most cases, free you on its own. Lean upstream, and you will be sure to swim!

When on the water, Pennsylvania law requires that PFD's be worn at all times by children 12 years of age or under, and by non-swimmers. Additionally, we urge all others to wear PFD's, especially when running trickier stretches and during cold weather. Even good swimmers will have their hands full dealing with a canoe, paddles, coolers, children, etc. -- without having to tread water as well.

If you do flip the boat, STAY CALM! Hopefully you will be wearing your PFD. Hold on to your paddle and try to catch the boat. Then just ride with it until you can safely swim the boat to a calm, shallow section of river or behind a rock, empty the boat, and reenter it. ALWAYS STAY UPSTREAM OF THE BOAT so that you don't get smashed between the boat and a rock. DO NOT TRY TO STAND UP IN FAST MOVING WATER -- you may get a foot trapped under a rock or log and be pulled under. Situations such as these are easier to deal with if people within a group keep track of and stay close enough to help each other. Large groups should designate a "lead" and "sweep" boat (those with the most experience) and keep other boats between these two. It is also helpful to pair up boats (the buddy system) within a large group.

In rough water and/or windy conditions your canoe will be more stable if you kneel down -- we provide kneeling pads for this purpose. Should you stop along the shore or an island, use the provided bow line to tie the boat off. This and any other line should always be securely stowed before continuing your trip. Loose ropes are very hazardous in the water. Tie items to the canoe with minimal length cordage. Never tie a rope to yourself or another person, ESPECIALLY a child!

Be careful, HAVE FUN, and enjoy your day on the river!