

Marysville to West Fairview Trip Notes

This paddle trip starts at our shop in Marysville, and ends at the mouth of the Conodoguinet Creek in West Fairview. The trip is approximately 6 miles long, and takes an average time of 2 to 4 hours. Inactive time, paddling intensity, water level, and wind conditions will affect your time.

You will be starting at the Marysville Heritage Park Access Ramp, just below our shop, 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.

As soon as you launch, paddle toward the opposite shore of the river. You want to reach the river-left shore well upstream of the Rockville Bridge (stone arch railroad bridge). At moderate water levels (not many rocks blocking your path), aim almost straight across. At low water levels (many rocks blocking your path), aim just a bit upstream of the end of the bridge. Be sure to cross **BELOW** any rocks that are in your direct path.

The clearest route approaching the bridge is very close to the river-left shoreline, about 6 to 10 boat lengths off shore. Pass under approximately the 5th arch from the river-left shore (whichever arch is clearest passage). Stay about 10 boat lengths off shore for the Lower Ledge. At most water levels, the easiest route for the Lower Ledge is to hug the river-left shoreline, to the left of the big rock. At low water levels you will have to pass on the right of the big rock...aim for the "whitewater", but watch for the rock in the center of the last wave.

After passing through the lower ledge, paddle River Right, and pass to the right of McCormicks Island (the large island that extends above the Interstate 81 Highway Bridge.) During Spring and early Summer, be sure to check out the nesting birds at the Wade Island Rookery. (Please be as quiet as possible at this point to avoid disturbing nesting birds, and respect the "no trespassing" signs on the Rookery island, as well as any other posted islands along your trip.) When stopping to explore non-posted islands, be mindful of shoe eating mud, prevalent poison ivy, and slippery river banks.

Approximately 1/2 way down McCormicks Island you will begin to see the large condominium with the blue/green roof on the hillside below you. Aim for the condominium during the duration of your trip as you progress downstream. You will pass to the left of the wooded islands, navigating a river wide ledge (light rapids) approximately 1/2 mile above the take-out. (During low water levels do your best to pass through this shallow area, continuing to paddle toward the right, but staying to the left of the wooded islands.) You will lose sight of the condominium for a short period of time while coming through this area.

The takeout ramp is around the corner to your right, at the mouth of the Conodoguinet Creek. You will see the condominium just below you, and two bridges crossing the Creek. Use the paved concrete ramp as the surrounding shoreline is soft and messy (think Goose X!#X!)

When you reach the ramp, unload your boats promptly and move them and your gear so that they are not blocking the ramp. Call us on your cellphone (or from a payphone 1 block up and 1 block over from the takeout ramp) and we will dispatch a driver to pick you up.

Please dispose of any trash in the receptacle at the ramp. Recycling bins for aluminum & plastic beverage containers are available at our shop.

Have fun, and enjoy your trip!

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!