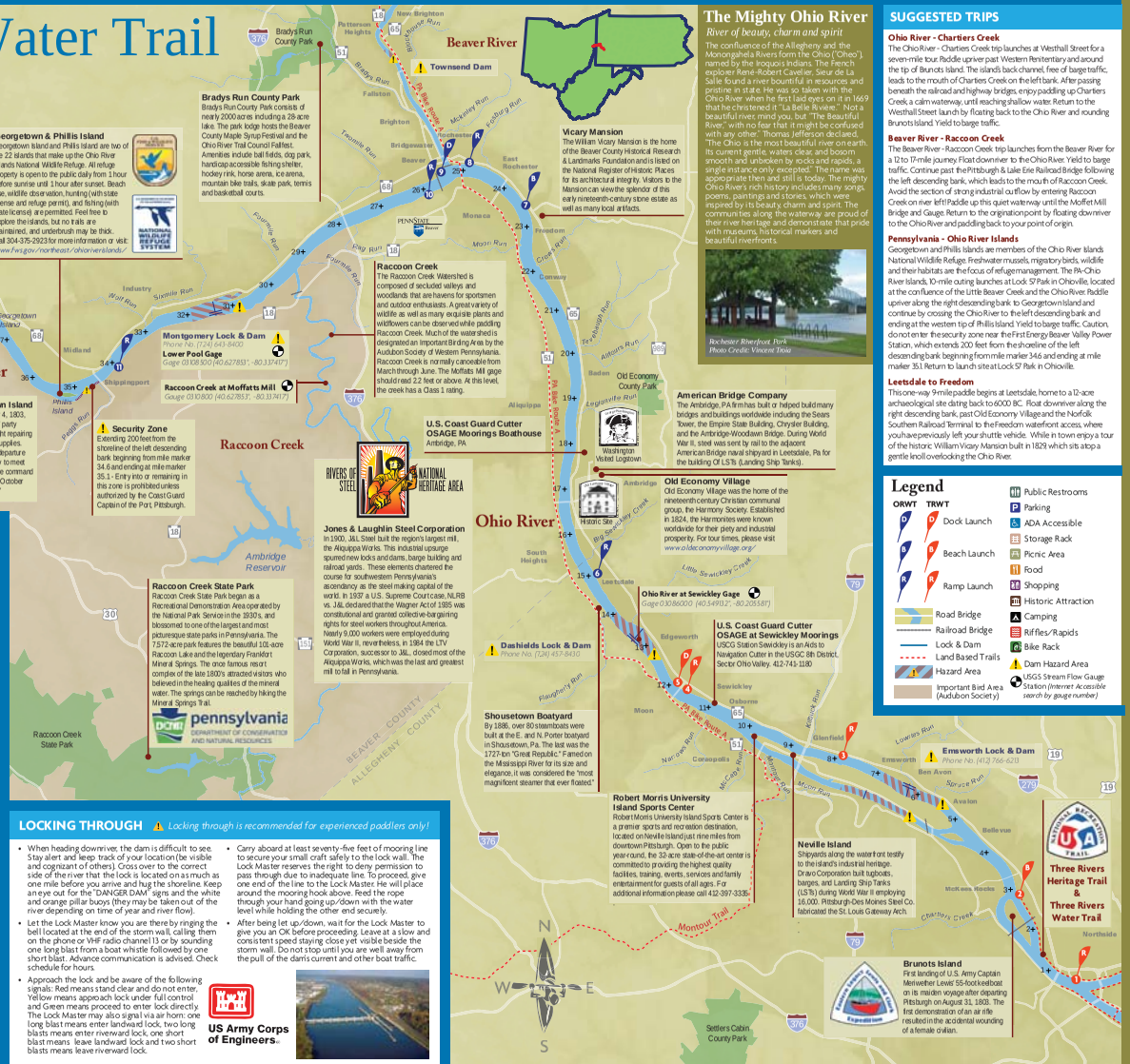
Ohio River Water Trail



The Mighty Ohio River

River of beauty, charm and spirit

The confluence of the Allegheny and the Monongahela Rivers formed the Ohio ("Beautiful River"), named by the Iroquois Indians. The French explorer René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle found a river bountiful in resources and pristine in state. He was so taken with the Ohio River when he first laid eyes on it in 1669 that he christened it "La Belle Riviere." "Not a beautiful river, mind you, but "The Beautiful River," with no fear that it might be confused with any other." Thomas Jefferson declared. "The Ohio is the most beautiful river on earth. Its current gentle, waters clear, and bosom smooth and unbroken by rocks and rapids; a single instance only excepted." The name was appropriate then and still is today. The mighty Ohio River's rich history includes many songs, poems, paintings and stories, which were inspired by its beauty, charm and spirit. The communities along the waterway are proud of their river heritage and demonstrate that pride with museums, historical markers and beautiful riverfronts.

Rochester Riverfront Park
Photo Credit: Vincent Troia

SUGGESTED TRIPS

Ohio River - Chartiers Creek

The Ohio River - Chartiers Creek trip launches at Westhall Street for a seven-mile tour. Paddle upriver past Western Penitentiary and around the tip of Brunots Island. The islands back channel, free of barge traffic, leads to the mouth of Chartiers Creek on the left bank. After passing beneath the railroad and highway bridges, enjoy paddling up Chartiers Creek, a calm waterway, until reaching shallow water. Return to the Westhall Street launch by floating back to the Ohio River and rounding Brunots Island. Yield to barge traffic.

Beaver River - Raccoon Creek

The Beaver River - Raccoon Creek trip launches from the Beaver River for a 12 to 17-mile journey. Float downriver to the Ohio River. Yield to barge traffic. Continue past the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Railroad Bridge following the left descending bank, which leads to the mouth of Raccoon Creek. Avoid the section of strong industrial outflow by entering Raccoon Creek on river left! Paddle up this quiet waterway until the Moffett Mill Bridge and Gauge. Return to the original point by floating downriver to the Ohio River and paddling back to your point of origin.

Pennsylvania - Ohio River Islands

Georgetown and Phillis Islands are members of the Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge. Freshwater mussels, migratory birds, wildlife and their habitats are the focus of refuge management. The PA-Ohio River Islands, 10-mile outing launches at Lock 57 Park in Ohioville, located at the confluence of the Little Beaver Creek and the Ohio River. Paddle upriver along the right descending bank to Georgetown Island and continue by crossing the Ohio River to the left descending bank and ending at the western tip of Phillis Island. Yield to barge traffic. Caution, do not enter the security zone near the First Energy Beaver Valley Power Station, which extends 200 feet from the shoreline of the left descending bank beginning from mile marker 34.6 and ending at mile marker 35.1. Return to launch site at Lock 57 Park in Ohioville.

Leetsdale to Freedom

This one-way 9-mile paddle begins at Leetsdale, home to a 12-acre archaeological site dating back to 6000 BC. Float downriver along the right descending bank, past Old Economy Village and the Norfolk Southern Railroad Terminal to the Freedom waterfront access, where you have previously left your shuttle vehicle. While in town enjoy a tour of the historic William Vicary Mansion built in 1829, which sits atop a gentle knoll overlooking the Ohio River.

Legend

ORWT TRWT

- Dock Launch
- Beach Launch
- Ramp Launch
- Public Restrooms
- Parking
- ADA Accessible
- Storage Rack
- Picnic Area
- Food
- Shopping
- Historic Attraction
- Camping
- Riffles/Rapids
- Bike Rack
- Land Based Trails
- Hazard Area
- Road Bridge
- Railroad Bridge
- Lock & Dam
- Hazard Area
- Important Bird Area (Audubon Society)
- USGS Stream Flow Gauge Station *(Internet Accessible search by gauge number)*

THE HAZARDS OF PADDLING THE OHIO RIVER

The Ohio is a magnificent river. For water enthusiasts, nothing beats floating down the Ohio River in a kayak; nevertheless, many hazards exist on the Ohio River such as river crossings, commercial traffic, wind, waves, swift-river current, high water levels, and strainers. The Ohio River provides a wide range of experiences, therefore we suggest that you complete a safety class and professional instruction before paddling the mighty Ohio River. No one should attempt kayaking without proper training.

RIVER CURRENT & WATER LEVELS

Avoid kayaking at high water conditions, which cause strong currents and force debris from the banks into the river. Rainfall also increases the risk of treacherous currents and submerged debris that can cause accidents and injuries. Real time Stream Flow information available at the USGS Water Watch website: *waterwatch.usgs.gov/*

WIND, WAVES, & RIVER CROSSINGS

The Ohio River is very wide and it takes a considerable amount of time and effort to cross via a canoe or kayak. Once out into the river you may experience waves and choppy conditions, especially if it is windy. Due to the winding nature of the river, wind direction changes often. You can minimize the wind's influence on your boat by kayaking directly into the wind.

COMMERCIAL TRAFFIC

The Ohio River is classified as federal waters, and all boaters must comply with the U.S. Coast Guard requirements. These vessels are confined to a shipping channel. Recreational boaters must yield the right of way to commercial vessels. An important constraint is the pilot's "blind spot." The blind spot extends for hundreds of feet in front of the barge. Therefore, do not canoe or kayak in the path of barges. Barges also have limited navigation due to their size and weight and therefore cannot turn or stop quickly. It can take up to three miles for a towboat to stop a string of full barges. In addition, "Wheel Wash" is a strong underwater current caused by a towboat's engines that can result in severe turbulence hundreds of yards behind a large vessel; consequently, recreational watercraft must maintain at least 1000 feet in clearance behind the rear of towboats.

RESTRICTED AREA

The section immediately above and below each lock and dam is designated as a Restricted Area. Waters in these areas are turbulent, unpredictable and deceptively dangerous. Strong currents can easily trap and drown a potential victim without warning. Signs and/or flashing red lights mark the limits of the regulated sectors at each lock and dam. No person, vessel or other floating craft shall enter any such guarded zone at any time and are subject to a summary offense and penalties. Lockmasters enforce the adherence to these laws and, if required, solicit aid from local police. In the interest of public safety, please articulate to other boaters or anglers about the hazards of lock and dam structures.

LOCKING THROUGH

Locking through is recommended for experienced paddlers only!

- When heading downriver, the dam is difficult to see. Stay alert and keep track of your location (be visible and cognizant of others). Cross over to the correct side of the river that the lock is located on as much as one mile before you arrive and hug the shoreline. Keep an eye out for the "DANGER DAM" sign and the white and orange pillar buoys (they may be taken out of the river depending on time of year and river flow).
- Let the Lock Master know you are there by ringing the bell located at the end of the stone wall, calling them on the phone or VHF radio channel 13 or by sounding one long blast from a boat whistle followed by one short blast. Advance communication is advised. Check schedule for hours.
- Approach the lock and be aware of the following signals: Red means stand clear and do not enter. Yellow means approach lock under full control and Green means proceed to enter lock directly. The Lock Master may also signal via air horn: one long blast means enter landward lock, two long blasts means enter riverward lock, one short blast means leave landward lock and two short blasts means leave riverward lock.
- Carry aboard at least seventy-five feet of mooring line to secure your small craft safely to the lock wall. The Lock Master reserves the right to deny permission to pass through due to inadequate line. To proceed, give one end of the line to the Lock Master. He will place around the mooring hook above. Feed the rope through your hand going up/down with the water level while holding the other end securely.
- After being let up/down, wait for the Lock Master to give you an OK before proceeding. Leave at a slow and consistent speed staying close yet visible beside the storm wall. Do not stop until you are well away from the pull of the dam's current and other boat traffic.

US Army Corps of Engineers

(L) and (R) indicate the left or right Ohio riverbank when facing downriver.

All river mileages are measured from the junction of the Three Rivers at the point.

Three Rivers Water Trail

- **0.0** Point State Park - Fort Pitt Museum
- **0.1R** North Shore Attractions - Heinz Field, Carnegie Science Center, USS Requin submarine, Rivers Casino
- **0.1R** **1 Heinz Quay launch** ♿ 🚻 🍔 Along North Shore Riverfront Park at Heinz Field. Take out for North Shore attractions. Long Carry from stadium parking lots. *(40.444815°; -80.015098°)*
- **0.7 L** **1 Marine Terminal** - Beware commercial traffic!
- **0.8 L** Saw Mill Run
- **0.8** West End Bridge, 1932
- **1.6** Brunots Island
- **2.3** Ohio Connecting Railroad Bridge, 1915
- **2.6 L** Chartiers Creek
- **2.7 R** Western Penitentiary
- **2.8 R** **2 Westhall Street Launch** P ♿ 🚻 Next to Western Penitentiary. A short ramp leads to a pebble beach. *(40.47181°; -80.04343°)*
- **3.1R** **1 Sewage Treatment Plant** - Beware strong outflow!
- **3.3** McKees Rocks Indian Mound - Historic Site
- **3.3** McKees Rocks Bridge, 1931
- **4.9** Davis Island
- **4.9** Neville Island
- **5.3** Fleming Park Bridge, 1955 (Ohio River back channel)
- **5.4** Pittsburgh, Charties & Youghiogheny Railroad Bridge, 1894 (Back channel)
- **6.3** **1 Emsworth Lock & Dam** - Going downriver, approach from river right. 412-766-6213
- **6.8** **1 Emsworth Dam** - Ohio River back channel, no lock use main channel.
- **7.9 L** Dravo Corporation Shipyard - Historic Site
- **7.9 R** **3 Killbuck Launch** 🚻 P At the end of E. Beaver Street, Glenfield. PA Fish & Boat Commission access area - PFBC or DCNR launch permit required. *(40.51429°; -80.12028°)*
- **8.4 L** Memorial Park, Neville Island
- **8.6 L** Fairfield Inn Suites, Neville Island
- **8.7** I-79 Pittsburgh Naval & Shipbuilders Memorial Bridge, 1976
- **8.7** I-79 Neville Island Back Channel Bridge, 1976
- **8.8 R** Greater Pgh Aquatic Club - Ohio River back channel
- **9.1R** Riverside Park, Glenfield
- **9.5R** Paradise Beach - Ohio River back channel
- **9.6** Coraopolis - Neville Island Bridge, 1994-95
- **9.7** Robert Morris University Island Sports Complex
- **11R** U.S. Coast Guard Station
- **11.6 R** **4 Chestnut Street Launch** P 🚻 At the end of E. Beaver Street, Glenfield. PA Fish & Boat Commission access area - PFBC or DCNR launch permit required. *(40.53368°; -80.18529°)*
- **11.6** Sewickley Bridge, 1981
- **11.8 R** Walnut Beach - Historic Site
- **11.8 R** **5 Walnut Street Launch** P 🚻 🚲 🚻 Access to Sewickley Riverfront Park. A 400' carry leads to a dock and pebble beach. 0.5 mile walk to the Beaver St. business district. *(40.53362°; -80.18852°)*
- **12 R** Sewickley Riverfront Park
- **12.4 R** Sewickley Community Center

Ohio River Water Trail

- **13.5** **1 Dashields Lock & Dam** - Going downriver, approach from river left. 724-457-8430
- **13.5R** Morrow Pontefract Park
- **13.9 L** Shouse Park
- **14.2 L** Shousetown Boatyard - Historic Site
- **15 R** Leetsdale Archeological Site - Historic Site
- **15 R** **6 Leetsdale Launch** P At the end of Petrun Road, Leetsdale. PA Fish & Boat Commission access area - PFBC or DCNR launch permit required. *(40.5698°; -80.22149°)*
- **16.7** Ambridge-Woodlawn Bridge, 1926
- **17 R** Old Economy Village - Historic Site
- **18.7 R** Legionville and Logstown - Historic Site
- **23.2 R** Beaver County Historical Research & Landmarks Foundation - William Vicary Mansion
- **23.4 R** **7 Freedom Launch** P 🚻 🚲 🚻 8th Street, Freedom. *(40.68476°; -80.23560°)*
- **23.4 R** Lazaro's Pizza, Freedom.
- **24.2** Monaca East Rochester Bridge, 1999
- **24.9 R** **8 Rochester Launch** 🚲 P At the end of New York Road, Rochester. PA Fish & Boat Commission access area - PFBC or DCNR launch permit required. *(40.69363°; -80.28183°)*
- **25** Monaca Rochester Bridge, 1986
- **25.2 L** Monaca Riverfront Park
- **25.2 L** P&LE Railroad Station - Sixth Street, Monaca
- **25.3 R** Beaver River
- **25.3 L** New Philadelphia Society Church - Historic Site
- **25.4 R** Bridgewater Crossing Riverfront Park
- **25.4 R** **9 Bridgewater Crossing Dock** P ♿ & 🚻 🚲 At Bridgewater Crossing Riverfront Park at the end of Mulberry Street Extension in Bridgewater. *(40.694993°; -80.292285°)*
- **25.5** Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Railroad Bridge, 1910
- **25.5 R** **10 Monaca Launch** 🚲 P At Atlantic Avenue, Monaca. *(40.69177°; -80.28949°)*
- **25.7** Beaver Riverfront Park
- **26.2 R** Fort McIntosh - Historic Site
- **27.9** I-376 Beaver Valley Expressway Bridge, Vanport. Built 1970
- **29.1R** Merrill Lock No. 6 - Historic Site
- **29.4 L** **1 Industrial Facility** Beware strong outflow!
- **29.4 L** Raccoon Creek
- **30.5R** Ohioview Peninsula Access Road
- **31 R** Ohioview Peninsula
- **31.4 R** Montgomery Slough
- **31.5** **1 Montgomery Lock & Dam** - Going downriver, approach from river left. 724-643-8400
- **34.1 L** **11 Shippingport Borough Launch** 🚲 P At the end of Johnson Drive, Shippingport. Marked for Borough residents only. *(40.61018°; -80.42536°)*
- **34.5** Shippingport PA Route 168 Bridge, 1968
- **34.6 L** **1 Security Zone** - See map callout for instructions.
- **35.1** Phillis Island - National Wildlife Refuge
- **37.5** Georgetown Island - National Wildlife Refuge
- **38.1** Smith Ferry Petroglyphs - Historic Site
- **38.8 R** Smith Ferry Oil Fields - Historic Site
- **39.3 R** Little Beaver Creek
- **39.3 R** **12 Ohioville Lock 57 Park Launch** 🚲 🚻 P Mouth of Little Beaver Creek. *(40.64193°; -80.51218°)* Beginning Point of the U.S. Public Lands Survey
- **39.7 R** Babbs Island - Private Property
- **42.3 R** Ohio Valley Boat Club
- **42.4** US Route 30 - Lincoln Highway, Jennings Randolph Bridge, 1977
- **42.9 L** **13 Chester City Park Launch** 🚲 🚻 🚻 P At the end of Loud La Avenue, Chester, West Virginia. *(40.61394°; -80.56776°)*
- **43.4 L** Holiday Yacht Club
- **43.4 L** Smith Landing Campground
- **43.5 R** **14 East Liverpool Broadway Wharf Launch** 🚻 P At the end of Broadway Street, East Liverpool, Ohio. *(40.64913°; -80.57583°)*
- **43.4 L** East Liverpool Yacht Club
- **44.2** Homer Laughlin China Company Newell Toll Bridge, 1905
- **46.4 L** Kennedy Park Marina, Inc.

(L) and (R) indicate the left or right riverbank when facing downriver.

LEGEND: CR - crappie, C - catfish, HS - hybrid stripers, M - muskie, LM - largemouth bass, SB - striped bass, SM - smallmouth bass, S - saugers, WH - white bass, ALL - all species.

- **0.0** Point State Park *(40.4412°; -80.0095°)*
- **0.4 R** Docked submarine: SM *(40.44489°; -80.01863°)*
- **0.6 L** Sandbar under bridge: SM, M, W, S *(40.4453°; -80.0246°)*
- **1.7** Head of Brunot Island: S, W *(40.4622°; -80.0371°)*
- **1.8 L** West End Bridge to Railroad Bridge: SM *(40.4548°; -80.0373°)*
- **2.5 L** Chartiers Creek confluence: M, HS *(40.4642°; -80.0502°)*
- **2.5 L** Chartiers Creek channel: LM, CR *(40.4642°; -80.0502°)*
- **3.1** 100 yards out from Alcosan Discharge to McKees Rocks Bridge: ALL *(40.4756°; -80.0475°)*
- **4.5** Davis Island north bank: SM *(40.4867°; -80.0623°)*
- **5** Ohio River main channel, between Emsworth Dam and 1 mile up river: SM *(40.4964°; -80.0749°)*
- **6.5 L** Restricted area below dam to rock bank below Exxon tank farm: SM, W, S, WB, HS, C *(40.5039°; -80.0929°)*
- **6.1** Emsworth Dam back channel: SM, W, S, WB, HS, CR, C *(40.49828°; -80.0962977°)*
- **7.1 R** Ohio River back channel. Corrugated steel wall: SM, C, W, S *(40.5019°; -80.1072°)*
- **7.9** Emsworth Dam back channel to Interstate 79 Bridge: SM, W, S, WB, HS, CR, C *(40.4958°; -80.1184°)*
- **8.0 R** Ohio River back channel. Neville Island Hole in lagoon: M *(40.5083°; -80.1122°)*
- **8.6** Killbuck Run confluence: SM, W, S, WB *(40.5158°; -80.1314°)*
- **9.5 L** Montour Run: SM, W, S, WB *(40.5141°; -80.1461°)*
- **11.2** Old lock wall, rocky upstream end of wall: SM, S, M *(40.5288°; -80.1767°)*
- **12.1 L** Narrows Run: SM, BS *(40.5375°; -80.1945°)*
- **12.5 R** Between Sewickley Bridge and restricted zone of Dashields Dam: SM *(40.5399°; -80.1875°)*
- **13.5** Dam tailwaters: W, S, HS, SM, WB, C *(40.5594°; -80.2080°)*
- **13.6 R** Little Sewickley Creek: W, SM, WB, M *(40.5594°; -80.2080°)*
- **14.1 L** Raugherty Run: SM, W, S, WB, C, HS *(40.5575°; -80.2173°)*
- **15.4 R** Big Sewickley Creek: SM, W, WB, HS *(40.5773°; -80.2345°)*
- **17.0 L** Two water discharges, 70 yds apart: HS, WB, S, W, SB, SM *(40.5992°; -80.2178°)*
- **17.6 R** Economy Run: SM, M, W *(40.6024°; -80.2341°)*
- **18.3 R** Old Lock 4: SM *(40.6164°; -80.3130°)*
- **18.7 L** Logstown Run: SM, CR, M *(40.6183°; -80.2372°)*
- **20.7 R** Old coal dock and pilings: SM, SB *(40.6471°; -80.2161°)*
- **22.1 R** Crows Run: S, W, M *(40.6666°; -80.2502°)*
- **22.5 L** Creek mouth: M, SM *(40.6719°; -80.2519°)*
- **23.0 R** Freedom Wall: M *(40.6788°; -80.2535°)*
- **23.6 R** Dutchman Run: SM, W, S, M, C *(40.6852°; -80.2562°)*
- **23.6 L** Near pilings: SM, SB *(40.6858°; -80.2588°)*
- **25.0** Between Monaca and Rochester Bridge and Railroad Bridge: SM *(40.6964°; -80.2844°)*
- **25.2 L** Monaca Waterworks Park: SM, LM *(40.6929°; -80.2852°)*
- **25.4 R** Water Plant discharge: SM, LM *(40.6976°; -80.2856°)*
- **25.5 R** Beaver River to Dam: ALL *(40.6964°; -80.2888°)*
- **26.1L** Between Railroad Bridge and Beaver Valley Expressway Bridge: SM *(40.6826°; -80.3014°)*
- **27.9 R** Two Mile Run: W, S, SM *(40.6799°; -80.3123°)*
- **29.3 R** Lock 6: M, W, S, SM *(40.66867°; -80.3501°)*
- **29.6 L** Raccoon Creek: LM, CR *(40.6601°; -80.3491°)*
- **29.6 L** Below Pumphouse *(40.6628°; -80.3496°)*
- **29.8 L** Water Discharge: HS, SP, LM, CR *(40.6578°; -80.3564°)*
- **30.8 R** Upstream of Montgomery Dam: LM *(40.6515°; -80.3702°)*
- **31.6** Dam Tailwaters: WS, SM, WB, HS, C *(40.6483°; -80.3880°)*
- **35.2** Around Phillis Island: SM *(40.6232°; -80.4317°)*
- **37.6** Around Georgetown Island: SM *(40.6438°; -80.4742°)*
- **38.7 R** Upper Dry Run: SM *(40.6449°; -80.5006°)*
- **39.5 R** Little Beaver Creek Confluence: LM, CR, W, S, M *(40.6410°; -80.5099°)*
- **39.7 R** Along bank: SM *(40.6393°; -80.5115°)*
- **42.5** Either side SR 18 Bridge: C, HS, WS *(40.6211°; -80.5646°)*
- **42.7 R** Slab Rock: SM *(40.6185°; -80.5656°)*
- **42.9 L** Middle Run: SM, SB, HS, WB *(40.6150°; -80.5669°)*
- **43.4 R** East Liverpool Launch: SM, HS *(40.6147°; -80.5758°)*
- **43.5 L** Outside bend of river, rock cover: SM *(40.6135°; -80.5811°)*

ACCESS AND AMENITIES ALONG THE WAY

FISHING OPPORTUNITIES