

Little Beaver Creek, OH

By Mary Reed, photos by Attila Horvath



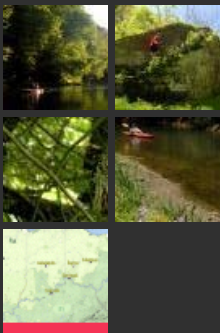
Dip your paddle into Little Beaver Creek and learn what a Wild and Scenic designation means. Add in easy canoe camping and you've got a good spring day or two on the river.

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"It's one of the few rivers in the area where you can really get away from the roads, and there's very little development along the river," says Todd Metz, assistant park manager for Beaver Creek State Park, "It gives you an idea of what a primitive river would have been like."

Little Beaver Creek, OH photo gallery



Run the classic section of the creek by putting in at Gaston's Mill in the center of the park and floating down to the primitive group camp site for a quick 3 ½ miles. If there's enough [flow](#) extend your trip by putting in at the designated parking/put in by the Elkton post office, just upstream from a great blue heron rookery, or continue past the group camp to the town of Fredericktown (ask around before parking so your car doesn't get towed).

Keep your eyes open for the plentiful big birds along the river – the Little Beaver Creek has been named an Important Bird Area by the Audubon Society – including bald eagles, great horned and barred owls, plus nesting mergansers. Though it's

unlikely, hope for a glimpse of black bear or the two-foot-long salamander known as the [hellbender](#). And bring your rod. "Fishing can be good as well ... smallmouth bass is probably the most sought after, then you can catch saugeye and occasional walleye," Todd says.

You don't need a boat (it's all DIY, there are no liveries) to enjoy Little Beaver Creek. The Vondergreen Trail, part of the North Country Scenic Trail, closely parallels the creek from Gaston's Mill to the group camp. The mill anchors a well-kept pioneer village and, all along the creek, there are old locks from the 19th-century Sandy and Beaver Canal.

Where it's at: An hour northwest of Pittsburgh; take I-376 from the Steel City northwest 30 miles to PA-68 (exit 38) west. As you near the Ohio border, turn northwest on Calcutta-Smith Ferry Road 4 ½ miles to a fork in the road, take the right on Bell School Road 3 miles to Echo Dell Road, turn right and follow it to Gaston's Mill in the park.

Contact: Beaver Creek State Park,
www.dnr.state.oh.us/parks or (330) 385-3091

Digs: Reserve the group camp for a one- or two-day float (\$35/night) ohio.reserveworld.com or 866-644-6727; the Sturgis House, in East Liverpool, OH, \$65 and up/night, sturgishouse.com or (330) 382-0194

Grub: The Hot Dog Shoppe in East Liverpool, at the corner of Market and 3rd, (330) 386-6688