PADDLING IN VALLEYS OF THE SUSQUEHANNA

The Susquehanna River Trail Association is a great place to start for the resources you need for a paddling trip along this region’s portion of the 50 miles of the Susquehanna River (see the SRTA website).

The 21-mile overnight from Selinsgrove (Isle of Que boat launch) in the Valleys region to Millersburg (Dauphin County) provides an overnight on one of the island campsites developed as part of the River Trail. Details are available on the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership website.

For a day on the water, Milton (an 82-acre island stewarded by the Friends of Milton) and Shikellamy state parks are only 13 miles from each other along the Susquehanna. Put in at Milton, spend a leisurely day moving downstream to Shikellamy— and if you time your trip right you might be in time for a Friends of Shikellamy marina brunch!

Of course, the Susquehanna isn’t the only body of water worth dipping a paddle into. The Montour Preserve, managed by the Montour Area Recreation Commission, is home to one of the best swimming holes in the region, and to 165-acre Lake Chillisquaque where quiet recreational pursuits have a home.

REFERENCES
(For state parks or forests, visit DCNR.PA.gov)

On the Water:
Susquehanna River Trail Association: SusquehannaRiverTrail.org
Susquehanna Greenway Partnership: SusquehannaGreenway.org
Montour Preserve: MontourPreserve.org

Backpacking:
Roaring Creek Tract, Weiser State Forest
Friends of Weiser-Roaring Creek Track (watch the web—coming soon)

Cycling:
Buffalo Valley Rail-Trail: BVRec.org/Buffalo-Valley-Rail-Trail
Susquehanna River Valley VB: VisitCentralPA.org/Things-to-Do/
Outdoor-Recreation/Bicycling
Columbia-Montour VB: iTourColumbiaMontour.com/Things-to-Do/
Outdoor-Recreation/Hiking-Biking-and-Racing
MTB Project by REI: MTBProject.com

Day Hiking:
Friends of Milton: Facebook.com/Friends-of-Milton-State-Park-1575494816104878

The Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation’s Pocket Guide to Recreation in The Valleys of the Susquehanna

Featuring places and activities from the August 2018 issue of Explore PA: Pennsylvania’s Outdoors in Your Inbox

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BACKPACKING IN THE VALLEYS

The 9,000 acres of the Roaring Creek Tract was added to the Weiser State Forest in 2003. Since then, the nearly 40 miles of shared use trails have come to provide a little bit of something for nearly all hikers and mountain bikers (no horses please; recreation in the Tract is managed for water resource protection). There is plenty of room for getting away from it all, and for volunteer involvement. The new (2018) Friends of Weiser-Roaring Creek Tract have made it their mission to help in the planning and development of a comprehensive trails system in the Tract. There are a variety of services in each town making the trail lawns easy to find. There is a network of services in each town providing a nice east-west link between the lovely towns of Mifflinburg and Lewisburg. A visit to R.B. Winter State Park would be the capper to a day of hiking or the Susquehanna’s day. A visit to R.B. Winter State Park would be the capper to a day of hiking or the Susquehanna’s day.

CYCLING IN THE VALLEYS

The 9.5-mile Buffalo Valley Rail-Trail parallels Route 45 in Union County providing a nice east-west link between the lovely towns of Mifflinburg and Lewisburg. There are plenty of services in each town, making the trail lawns easy to find. The Columbia-Montour Visitors Bureau provides a guide to the region’s bike trails. A visit to R.B. Winter State Park would be the capper to a day of hiking or the Susquehanna’s day.

ROAD CYCLING IN THE VALLEYS

Road cyclists in this part of the world benefit from a pleasant fact—drivers are used to giving leeway to Amish buggies! Add the geologic feature that gives the region its nickname (“valleys”) and you have cycling heaven. The Susquehanna River Valley Visitors Bureau provides cue sheets for five area rides originating in Lewisburg ranging in distance from 15 to 42 miles. The Columbia-Montour Visitors Bureau provides a guide to the region’s bike trails. A visit to R.B. Winter State Park would be the capper to a day of hiking or the Susquehanna’s day.

DAY HIKING IN THE VALLEYS

As noted elsewhere, Milton State Park is an 82-acre island in the Susquehanna River. It is circumnavigated on land by a series of trails forming a loop that provides a variety of hiking opportunities for all ages and abilities. A visit to R.B. Winter State Park would be the capper to a day of hiking or the Susquehanna’s day.

Looking to do a little mountain biking? Check out Bald Eagle State Forest where at least 40 trails intersect through McCall’s Dam and R.B. Winter State Parks. The Black Gap Figure 8, for example, offers 22.4 miles of an average 2% grade (up to 12%) and plenty of ups and downs. A visit to R.B. Winter State Park would be the capper to a day of hiking or the Susquehanna’s day.

Photo by: Lisa Gordon Warth