

French Creek Water Trail

A Community Treasure

Map & Guide



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For more information or questions regarding the French Creek Water Trail, call the French Creek Valley Conservancy (FCVC) at (814) 337-4321 or visit www.frenchcreekconservancy.org. Visit FCVC's website for an online, interactive map of the French Creek Water Trail.

What is a Water Trail? Water trails are recreational waterways on lakes, rivers, or oceans between specific points, containing access points and day-use and camping sites for the boating public. Water trails emphasize low-impact use and promote resource stewardship. Explore the French Creek Water Trail, a unique Pennsylvania water trail.

PA BOATING REGULATIONS

- A U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device (PFD or life jacket) is required for each person on board.
- From Nov 1 to Apr 30, boaters must wear a life jacket on boats under 16 feet or any canoe/kayak.
- Life jackets must be the correct size & in good condition.
- Children under 12 must wear a life jacket on boats 20 feet or less, & on all canoes/kayaks. Others are encouraged to wear one.
- Unpowered boats must have a white light for visibility between sunset & sunrise or during restricted visibility.
- Unpowered boats must carry a whistle/similar device for signaling to avoid collision.
- Boats using PA Fish & Boat Commission or State Parks or Forests areas must be registered or display a valid launch permit (available at www.fishandboat.com).
- Operating under the influence of alcohol or drugs is illegal & strictly enforced. For more details, visit the PA Fish & Boat Commission website www.fishandboat.com.

PADDLING SAFETY TIPS

- Wear your life jacket.
- Never boat alone.
- Expect to get wet.
- Wear wading shoes.
- Be prepared to swim.
- Be prepared for the weather.
- Scout ahead whenever possible.
- File a float plan with a reliable person.
- Never take your boat over a low-head dam.
- If you collide with an obstruction, lean toward it.
- Kneel to increase your stability before entering rough waters.
- Portage (carry) your boat around sections you feel uncertain about.
- Keep painter lines (ropes tied to bow) & any other ropes coiled & secured.



Legend

Paddle Craft Launches

Motorized Launches

River Mile

Hazards

Active Dam

Riffles

Hospitals

USGS Flow Gauges

Restrooms

Free, Leave-no-Trace Camping

Private Campground

Conserved Lands

Federal Lands

State Lands

Local Parks

French Creek Water Trail

French Creek Tributaries

State Roads

Active Railroads

Ernst Trail

Trails

Caution Information

French Creek is fairly narrow and susceptible to down trees (strainers) that are a potentially serious threat and can change year to year. Several riffles are identified on the map that can be navigated with minimal paddling experience. Two borderline Class I rapids are identified at miles 19 and 3. Avoid the upstream side of bridge abutments.

Monthly Average Information for Utica, PA

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Avg. High (F)	33°	37°	46°	58°	70°	78°	82°	81°	73°	62°	50°	38°
Avg. Low (F)	16°	18°	25°	35°	44°	53°	58°	58°	50°	40°	32°	23°
Avg. Precip. (in)	3.0	2.6	3.1	3.4	3.6	4.3	4.4	4.2	4.4	3.7	4.0	3.6
Sunrise (AM)	7:44	7:14	7:31	6:40	6:01	5:46	6:00	6:29	7:00	7:32	7:09	7:39
Sunset (PM)	5:16	5:54	7:27	8:01	8:32	8:55	8:52	8:19	7:29	6:38	5:00	4:51
Gauge (ft)	5.17	4.86	5.44	4.93	4.15	3.49	3.23	2.65	2.88	3.55	4.34	5.15

Sunrise and Sunset are the 15th of each month - including daylight savings time.
A general min. USGS gauge level at Utica is 2.5', though some stretches are passable year round.
Call the French Creek Valley Conservancy at (814) 337-4321 for more information.

French Creek Water Trail Lower Section Public Access Sites

River Miles are used to identify locations of various sites along the creek. River Mile 0 is at the confluence of French Creek and the Allegheny River. "River Left" and "River Right" are used to indicate which side of the stream a site is on. Orient yourself looking downstream to determine left and right. PFBC (PA Fish and Boat Commission) launches require boat registration (other states accepted) or launch permit from a state park office or PFBC.

	Joe Cat Launch Path to Ramp - River Right	Lat 41.652211 Lon -80.160080	In Meadville from Spring Street, cross the Spring Street Bridge over French Creek. Turn right onto Lincoln Avenue. Follow to the stop sign and turn right onto Rogers Ferry Road. Follow around the curve to Wadsworth Avenue (Launch on the left). Unload boats and carry in/out only. Park at Wadsworth Church or Lincoln Avenue Ball complex.
	Bicentennial Park Paved Ramp - River Left	Lat 41.637222 Lon -80.162222	From US Routes 6/19 in Meadville, turn west onto Mead Avenue, then left onto French Street (just before Mead Avenue Bridge - look for historic log cabin), then right into the park. Access is straight ahead. Pavilion, picnic tables, kayak/canoe rack, and seasonal restrooms available.
	Wilson Chutes Gravel Ramp - River Left	Lat 41.589167 Lon -80.149722	PFBC. Follow US Route 322 E approximately 2.3 miles southeast of Meadville, turn right onto Wilson Chutes Road, then left into the parking lot before Wilson Chutes Bridge.
	Shaw's Landing Gravel Ramp - River Right	Lat 41.540833 Lon -80.104167	PFBC. Follow US Route 322 E 6.1 miles southeast of Meadville, turn right onto Town Hall Road (sign may say Creveling), then across bridge over French Creek, turn left onto Wightman Road (dirt) and follow 0.5 miles. Access is adjacent to Conneaut Outlet.
	Cochranton Boro Paved Ramp - River Left	Lat 41.518768 Lon -80.053506	From the traffic light in Cochranton, follow PA Route 173 S 0.5 miles. Just past the railroad tracks, turn right into Cochranton Borough Park. Access is on the left. Parking and picnic takes available.
	Utica Path - River Left	Lat 41.438957 Lon -79.955780	About 7.5 miles west of Franklin on US Route 322, turn left at a paved crossroads with a sign for Utica (Foster Road). After driving 2.4 miles down hill, look for the parking area on the right immediately after the railroad tracks and before you cross French Creek.
	Cranberry Twp Trailhead Path - River Left	Lat 41.387548 Lon -79.817730	From Franklin, cross the Allegheny River on US Route 322 E. Make first right hand turn into the bike trailhead about 500 feet past the bridge. Primitive "Leave No Trace" camping and seasonal porta potties available. Approximately 0.5 mile walk to Franklin.
	Franklin Paved Ramp - River Right	Lat 41.381389 Lon -79.820116	PFBC. Located in Franklin, take US Route 322/Liberty Street East and turn left onto 8th Street (continuing on US Route 322). Turn right onto Elk Street. Access is on your left between 3rd Street and 4th Street.

