

Connecting with the Outdoors

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The D&L Trail brings together recreation, people and communities

If you are a bike rider, runner or walker; if you are interested in heritage or the environment; if you are a localvore or just plain community-focused, you want to get outdoors on the D&L Trail this year.

Eighty-six miles of the D&L Trail runs through two state parks (Lehigh Gorge and Delaware Canal state parks) and many sections pass through state forests, game lands and local parks. By working closely with these entities via the D&L Trail Alliance, the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor ensures that the trail makes the most of its surroundings.

Throughout Luzerne, Carbon, Northampton, Lehigh and Bucks counties, this crushed stone path makes use of former rail beds, canal towpaths and creative connectors where the progress of man created newer modes of travel. Sections are named to celebrate local features and culture – such as the Black Diamond Trail or Delaware Canal Towpath – and when strung together make up the whole. No matter the local name or surface, the D&L Trail connects you to nature – to streams, trees and hillsides that replenish the soul and celebrate life.

Now 85 percent complete, the northern terminus of the D&L will touch Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne County, but for now this is the most rugged and undeveloped portion. Nearly 40 continuous miles travel along the Black Diamond Section near Mountain Top, through White Haven, Lehigh Gorge

State Park and into historic downtown Jim Thorpe Borough, Carbon County. This is one of the most scenic stretches as the Lehigh River cuts its 800 foot deep gorge along the western portion of the Pocono Plateau. Lehigh Gorge State Park is characterized by its deep gorge, steep walls, thick vegetation, rock outcroppings, cascading waterfalls, whitewater rafting, impressive high lift canal locks and rhododendron.

Upon arrival in Jim Thorpe, visitors can learn about the fascinating saga of this “Switzerland of America,” renamed in the 1950s to honor the man many call the world’s greatest athlete. There are also shops, festivals and restaurants there as well as live entertainment if you stay overnight.

Heading south from Lehigh, you will travel along the former Lehigh Valley Railroad line and into the Lehigh Valley. River views and historic artifacts are found all along the way, and interpretive waysides fill you in on the details. A highlight here is the Lehigh Gap Nature Center where the true resilience of nature can be seen along the Kittatinny Ridge where the D&L intersects with the Appalachian Trail. A conservation partnership between the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor and the Wildlife Information Center laid the foundation for the planting of warm season grasses that have regenerated hundreds of acres once devastated by industry. Today native plants and wildlife habitat abound with education programming,

trail access and amenities the attraction.

The trail is again continuous from Allentown, Lehigh County, through the city of Bethlehem, the city of Lehigh and the city of Easton, Northampton County, where mountains give way to farms, communities and industry. You’re now in the Lehigh Valley, the heart of the D&L Trail, where you’ll encounter the most intensive development, both historically and in modern times. In its industrial heyday, the valley was a center of America’s industrial strength. Slate, zinc and limestone for cement were processed here, while iron and steel dominated local economies and had a significant impact around the world.

Trailheads strategically located throughout the Valley along the Lehigh Canal Towpath allow trail users to commute via bicycle. Since the D&L Trail is literally located in the backyard of thousands of residents, fitness enthusiasts and families use it as a course for daily running, walking and bicycling. Visitors will enjoy easy access to some of the valley’s most popular destinations, including the attractions of the Historic Bethlehem Partnership and Easton’s National Canal Museum in Hugh Moore Park, the home of Pennsylvania’s only mule-drawn canal boat ride.

The final 60 miles are commonly referred to as the Delaware Canal Towpath. From Easton to Bristol, centuries-old homes, quaint villages, historic sites and Bucks County’s

landmark landscape color the trail experience along the Delaware River.

From its start just outside of Easton, the Delaware Canal portion of the D&L Trail carries you through land unlike any you'll find to the north. Here the trail winds through historic canal villages, such as Point Pleasant and Lumberville. Farms dating back to the 1700s embrace the river, and old stone houses built in the 1800s hug the two-lane road that threads through the region. Daffodils bloom throughout the spring. As you continue south, New Hope, Washington Crossing, Yardley and Morrisville are excellent stops for lunch, a museum visit or an unexpected need.

During the mid- to late 1800s the Delaware Canal stood as the key link in transporting coal and other goods from Pennsylvania's anthracite region to New York, New Jersey and Philadelphia, as well as other parts of the nation and as far away as Europe. Like its sister canal paralleling the Lehigh River, the Delaware Canal is a remarkable feat of engineering. Despite their age and the fact the Lehigh and Delaware Canals ceased operation in 1931, these stretches of still water and historic remnants represent the most intact canal and towpath system in the United States.

Some of the toughest gaps (for trail users and builders) occur as the D&L turns inland toward its terminus at the navigable waters of the Delaware River in Bristol. The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and local partners are tenacious in solving these challenges one by one.

At trail's end, you will find Bristol, the oldest town in Bucks County and the third oldest in Pennsylvania. Its Delaware Riverfront resembles a New England seaport because 1917 brought the Merchant Shipbuilding Corporation. Today, Bristol hosts special events at river's edge, providing a perfect opportunity to stroll, shop or dine within the 50-site Radcliffe Street Historic District. Along the restored riverfront you'll find the Bristol Riverside Theater and Victorian



A BLAST FROM THE PAST The National Canal Museum in Hugh Moore Park is the home of Pennsylvania's only mule-drawn canal boat ride

mansions, including the Margaret R. Grundy Museum. The house was originally built in 1818 and remodeled into a fashionable dream house in 1884.

The 71-acre Bristol Marsh natural area is typical of man-made landmarks coexisting with nature along the D&L Trail. The marsh encompasses part of the freshwater intertidal zone along the shores of the Delaware River where it meets Neshaminy Creek.

In today's world, we always seem to be "connected." But when you walk, bike or run the D&L Trail and into this community and nature – there is a greater opportunity to connect. To experience beautiful places, their stories and rich history. To connect to the things you care about.

About the D&L

The Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor is one of 12 Pennsylvania State Heritage Areas

and 49 National Heritage Areas located across the country. The D&L is a nationally significant region designated by Congress as a place where natural, cultural, and historic resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally-important landscape. It is a grassroots, community-driven approach to the important work of heritage conservation and economic development through connections, preservation, revitalization and celebration. The D&L Trail is a multi-use trail spanning 165 miles from the mountains of northeast Pennsylvania, along rivers and through the Lehigh Valley and Bucks County winds through towns, on main streets and through parks. The Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor is passionate about preserving the environment, sharing the culture of our region and positively impacting our communities. **(B)**

Get out on the Trail, Get into Town

PLANNING A VISIT AND WANT TO KNOW MORE? THE FOLLOWING SITES ARE ALSO HELPFUL RESOURCES.

For interactive maps and more information about the D&L Trail call 610-923-3548 or visit www.delawareandlehigh.org.

- Bristol Marsh, www.heritageconservancy.org/projects/bristol-marsh-an-important-resource-to-bristol-borough/
- Bucks County Visitor Information, www.visitbuckscounty.com/
- Delaware Canal State Park, www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/findapark/delawarecanal/
- Friends of the Delaware Canal, www.fodc.org/
- Historic Bethlehem Partnership, <http://historicbethlehem.org/>
- Jim Thorpe Visitor Information, www.800poconos.com/things-to-do/downtowns/jim-thorpe/
- Lehigh Gap Nature Center, <http://lgnc.org/>
- Lehigh Gorge State Park, www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/findapark/lehighgorge/
- Lehigh Valley Visitor Info www.discoverlehighvalley.com/
- Luzerne County Visitor Information, www.tourmepa.com/page.asp?tid=116&name=Hiking-and-Biking **(B)**