Clarion River Public Access Sites—Upper Section

River miles are used to identify the locations of various sites along the river. River mile 0 is at the confluence of the Clarion River and the Allegheny River. “River Left” and “River Right” are used to indicate which side of the river a site is on. Orient yourself looking downstream to determine left and right. River miles for the East and West Branches continue from the mileage on the main stem with “E” added for the East Branch and “W’ added for the West Branch.

Launch Permits: PFBC (PA Fish & Boat Commission) and DCNR (PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources) launches require local registration (other states accepted) or a launch permit from a state park office or PFBC. Corps (US Army Corps of Engineers), ANF (Allegheny National Forest) and PGC (Pennsylvania Game Commission) do not require launch permits.

**Caution Information**

Motorboat traffic can be heavy on the East Branch Lake during the summer months. The East and West Branches of the Clarion River are more susceptible to stream-wide strainers and have limited access. The East Branch has swift water. On the main stem of the Clarion River, there are four class I to I+ rapids that can be navigated by scouting ahead. Be prepared:

- River mile 108.7 E: Low bridge clearance at Glen Hazel Road
- River mile 104.5 E: Stream-wide low hanging cable
- River mile 103 E to 102.5 E (confluence): RIVER CLOSED to public use where it flows through the Domtar Mill in Johnsonburg. No portage available. Paddlers should take out at Bendigo State Park due to no public access on the East Branch in Johnsonburg.
- River mile 107.8 W: Stream-wide low hanging cable
- River mile 88.6: Railroad trestle bridge abutments with possible STRAINERS caused by trees wrapped around the piers.

**Boat Launch (number is approximate river mile)**

**Canoe Launch (number is approximate river mile)**

**Mileage from Mouth of Clarion River**

**Caution**

**Rapids (number is approximate river mile)**

**USGS Stream Flow Gauge Station**

**Canoe Livery / Outfitter (contact for access)**

**Public Phone**

**Hospital**

**Visitor Information Center**

**Restroom**

**Campsites**

**Cabins**

**Lodging**

**Public Library**

**Point of Interest (see reverse for descriptions)**

**Restaurant**

**Trailhead**

**North Country National Scenic Trail**

**Trails**

**Active Railroad**

**National Wild & Scenic River - Recreational Designation**

**National Wild & Scenic River - Scenic Designation**

**County Tonsiary**

**Municipality**

**Corps of Engineers**

**Allegheny National Forest**

**State Parks**

**State Forest**

**State Game Lands**

**2 Miles**

### Launch Sites

**115 E River Right Instanter Boat Launch DCNR**

Latitude: 41°36'21" Longitude: -78°33'34"

Located in Elk State Park on the north end of the East Branch Lake, this launch provides access for motorboats and paddlers. The accessible area is north of the East Branch Dam and consists of a sheltered parking area and picnic facilities.

**111 E River Right East Branch Boat Launch Corps**

Latitude: 41°33'49" Longitude: -78°35'37"

Located on Corps of Engineers land near the East Branch Dam, this launch provides access for motorboats and paddlers. Facilities include parking, a public restroom, and a drinking fountain. This is the last take-out on the East Branch because public use is not permitted where it flows through the mill in Johnsonburg.

**107 E River Left Bendigo State Park Take-out DCNR**

Latitude: 41°31'42" Longitude: -78°37'46"

This hand-carry launch is located at Bendigo State Park. Facilities include picnic areas, restrooms, and a drinking fountain. This site can be very congested on spring and summer weekends. Launch fee waived during dam construction.

**110 W River Right Wilcox Canoe Launch Jones Township**

Latitude: 41°34'45" Longitude: -78°41'21"

This hand-carry launch is located next to the town's parking lot and adjacent to the Allegheny National Forest. Facilities include a launch ramp, a picnic area, and a restroom. This site is closed during dam construction.

**94 E River Right Country Squirrel Outfitters Private**

Latitude: 41°25'16" Longitude: -78°44'44"

Located in Ridgway where the Clarion River crosses PA 948. The launch is privately owned, however, the public may get permission from Country Squirrel Outfitters to use the launch. Parking can be limited during peak paddling seasons.

**85 E River Left Portland Mills Canoe Launch PGC**

Latitude: 41°49'42" Longitude: -78°44'12"

Located on SGL 44 upstream of the town of Portland Mills. This site provides easy access to the river and includes a public restroom. This site is closed during dam construction.

**80 E River Left Arroyo Canoe Launch PGC**

Latitude: 41°23'22" Longitude: -78°52'52"

Located on SGL 44 across the river from the town of Arroyo, this launch allows access to paddlers. Facilities include a parking area, a picnic area, and a public restroom. This site is very congested on spring and summer weekends.

**76 W River Right Irwin Run Canoe Launch ANF**

Latitude: 41°24'00" Longitude: -78°54'20"

This hand-carry launch is located next to the town's parking lot and adjacent to the Allegheny National Forest. Facilities include a launch ramp, a picnic area, and a restroom. This site is closed during dam construction.

**74 W River Right Halton Canoe Launch PSC**

Latitude: 41°24'04" Longitude: -78°55'57"

This hand-carry launch is located on SGL 26 in the town of Halton. There is parking for 10-15 cars. A restroom is located onsite. Walk-in camping is permitted upstream of the parking lot.
Water trails are recreational waterways on a lake, river, or ocean between specific points, containing access points and day-use and/or camping sites for the boating public. Water trails emphasize low-impact use and promote stewardship of the resources. This unique Pennsylvania water trail:

**FOR YOUR SAFETY AND ENJOYMENT:**
- Always wear a life jacket.
- Obtain proper instruction in boating skills.
- Know fishing and boating regulations.
- Be prepared for changing conditions.
- Be alert for river hazards.
- Carry proper equipment.

**THE CLARION RIVER**

The Clarion River meanders through more than 115 miles of narrow sheep-sorrel valleys and hardwood forests. Located in the Pennsylvania Wilds in the northeastern corner of the state, it passes through Elk County and Clarion County and joins the Allegheny River in Clarion County. The Clarion River’s Water Trail Guide is divided into three sections: Arroyo-Iron Run (Iron Run to Clarington), the Middle (Iron Run to Mill Creek), and the Lower (Mill Creek to the mouth of the Allegheny River).

Over the last two hundred years of European settlement, the history of the Clarion River has been a complex story of resource exploitation, degradation, resilience, and recovery. The first European settlement was the Francis Fort on the Clarion River during the latter part of the 18th century and into the 19th century. Timber cut along the river was sent down the river for the local ironworks and sometimes as far as New Orleans. At the same time, industries such as coal mining and paper manufacturing also exploitation.

Today, the Clarion River is a popular paddling and fishing destination. Wildlife, wading animals, and insects provide a picturesque backdrop for outdoor recreation. Outstanding features include a nationally recognized old-growth white pine and hardwood forest, and a federally designated stretch of Wild & Scenic River. Adjacent public lands provide abundant opportunities for camping, hiking, biking, wildlife watching, picnicking, and just enjoying the scenery. The Clarion River is now recognized as a true natural treasure with a rich industrial history and an outstanding destination for outdoor recreation. Once declared the most polluted river in the state, the river’s water quality has experienced a tremendous turnaround due to the efforts of local industry, government and non-profit organizations.

**CLARION RIVER NAVIGATION COMPANY**

‐ Avoid making noise and boisterous behavior. Remember, sound carries across water much further than it carries on land. Many landowners enjoy the river’s peace and solitude so display the lighthouse symbol by your campsite.
‐ Use privately owned land with permission. Remember, landowners own the river’s edge, not the river.
‐ Avoid night navigation.
‐ Use only those stretches of the river that are designated as being suitable for navigation.
‐ Maintain a speed of no more than 5 miles per hour.
‐ Keep a lookout for and give priority to other watercraft.
‐ Leave no litter on the river.
‐ Do not deliberately set your boat aground.

**POTENTIAL HAZARDS ON THE RIVER:**
- **Waters:** Water going over a dam creates an underwater obstacle that can pull you under and make it difficult to find your way back to the surface. Never underestimate the power of moving water.
- **Current:** Strong current can pull you down and over a dam, down a steep drop, or into a rapid.
- **Flow:** Always flow with the current; do not try to flow against it.
- **Rapids:** These areas are very hazardous. Remember that rapids are not always apparent.
- **Knee-deep water:** The water is too shallow to stand in.
- **Boil-outs:** The water is boiling and the boat will be pitched where you are.
- **Rapid:** The water is moving very fast. Never go near a rapid.
- **Shadows:** These areas are usually dangerous and should be avoided.
- **Driftwood:** The water can become very shallow and the current can make it impossible to paddle through.
- **debris:** These areas are usually dangerous and should be avoided.

**BOAT RENTALS, GUIDES AND LIVERSY**

- **Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission rules and regulations apply.**
- **Alley Branch, Edge Branch, Black Branch, and Iron Branch.**
- **Public Boat Launch and Marina.**
- **Alley Branch, Black Branch, and Iron Branch.**
- **Pennsylvania Great Outdoors Visitors Bureau.**

**RESPECT THE PRIVACY AND RIGHTS OF LANDOWNERS**

Although the access points highlighted in this guide are open to public access, there are areas that are not open to public access. Respect the privacy and rights of landowners by not entering private property unless you have permission. Remember: sound carries across water much further than it carries on land. Many landowners in the river’s peace and solitude so display the same amount of courtesy that you would expect in return. A friendly wave or quiet greeting is always welcome.

**FISHING, CAMPING, HUNTING AND ATV’S**

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**CLARION RIVER WATERTAIL UPPER SECTION**

Map & Guide

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