

# Three Rivers Trail - Map and Guide

## A publication of the Pequannock River Coalition

### General Info



The Three Rivers Trail is a recreational boating route along sections of the Pequannock River, Ramapo River, and Pompton River in western Morris County and eastern Passaic County. This area is surprisingly scenic, and rich in wildlife.

This guide provides information on access points, recommended routes and some hazards. Users should note that river conditions change, and they should always seek the most up-to-date information. Other sources of information are listed in this guide.



### Rules of the River

- ◆ Always wear a Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device (PFD).
- ◆ Don't paddle alone! Boating companions make your day on the water safer and more enjoyable.
- ◆ Be aware of river flow conditions. High flows can greatly alter river characteristics, increasing risks.
- ◆ Stay alert! Some hazards are indicated here, but rivers are constantly changing. Fallen trees, shifting channels and other alterations can occur suddenly.
- ◆ Let someone know where you will be floating and when you will return.
- ◆ Carry a spare paddle and a cellular phone in a waterproof covering. In cool weather, bring a change of dry clothes, just in case.
- ◆ Don't litter! Respect private property. Public sites are generally well-marked.

### Other Sources of Information

**Borough of Riverdale** (973) 835-4060

**Borough of Pompton Lakes Environmental Officer**  
(973) 835-0143, Ext. 227

**Pequannock Township Parks and Recreation**  
(973) 835-4225

### Hazards

Boating on any river has risks. Flowing water is not a safe place to learn basic boating skills.

The greatest hazards are two concrete dams on the Pequannock/Pompton Rivers (see map). These dams are dangerous and can be difficult to see from upstream. Posted warning signs may help, but as a precaution keep to the left bank if you are near these dams.

Boaters must stay alert for things like fallen or submerged trees, stumps, and boulders. Negotiating the more narrow side channels on this route (see map) can call for quick turns and some skill in boat handling.

Always check river flow levels before

embarking. We strongly recommend that you not float when any river level is over 70% of the "flood stage" gage height. Keep in mind that rain can increase flows quickly. Check the following sites for river flow info that will affect this route:

#### Pompton River

<http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nj/nwis/uv/?01388500>  
(70% of flood stage gage height is 11.2 feet)

#### Wanaque River

<http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nj/nwis/uv/?01387000>  
(70% of flood stage gage height is 3.5 feet)

#### Pequannock River

<http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nj/nwis/uv/?01382500>  
(70% of flood stage gage height is 3.85 feet)

**Access Points:** Signs posted at these sites will instruct you where to park and launch. Please obey all posted signs! Continued access on these public lands depends on your good behavior.

**1) Freedom Park, Riverdale**—From Newark Pompton Turnpike take Riverdale Road south. Turn left onto North Corporate Drive. At end of drive, park in culdesac. Follow signs to small footbridge and launch area.

**2) Joe Grill Field, Pompton Lakes**—from Newark Pompton Turnpike follow Riverdale Road east to Riverdale Boulevard. Make a right onto Riverdale Boulevard. Make a right onto Willow St. Look for launch and parking signs.

**3) Stiles Park, Pompton Lakes**— From Hamburg Turnpike turn onto Dawes Highway. Make first right onto River Edge Drive. Park is on right. Look for launch and parking signs.



**Dams:** Use caution! The route passes quite close to dam “B” (see map). The concrete dams (B and C) are high and cannot be passed safely by any boat at any river level.

**A—Debris dam**

**B— Concrete Dam**

**C—Concrete Dam**

**Rest stops:** These are good places to take a break on public land along the route. They are generally well-marked.

### ■ ■ ■ Routes and segments:

Having several rivers in this small area can be confusing! Simply put, the Wanaque River is a tributary of the Pequannock River, entering the Pequannock in Pompton Lakes. The Pequannock River and the Ramapo River then join to form the Pompton River.

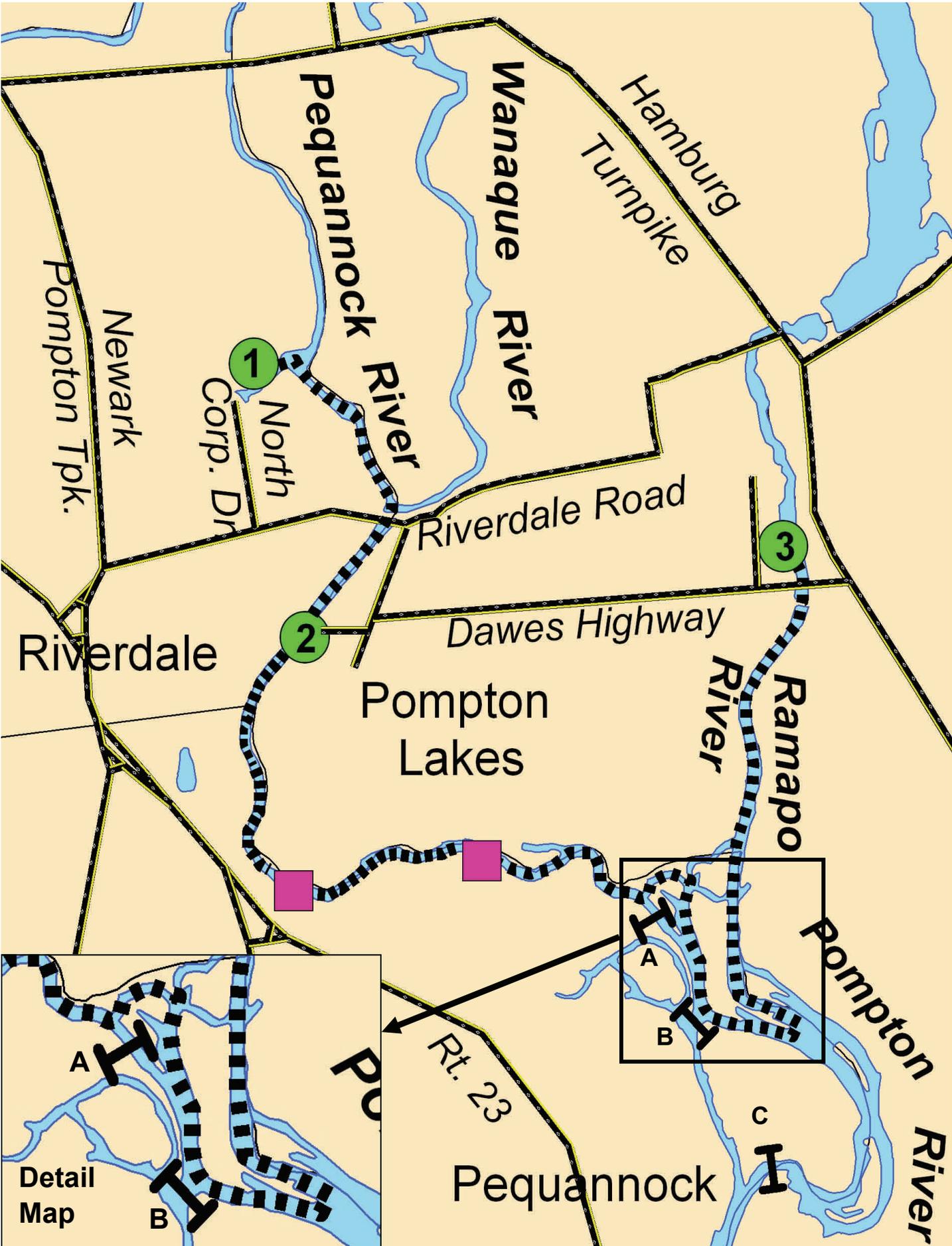
The most popular routes are Freedom Park (1) to Stiles Park (3) and Joe Grill Field (2) to Stiles Park (3). Allow several hours for these trips. Launching at Freedom Park is best at higher river levels, when the flow on the Pequannock River is greater than 25 cubic feet per second.

Along these routes you will cross from the Pequannock to the Pompton/Ramapo using 2 side-channels. See the Detail Map and look for signs along the way

The segment from the junction of the Pequannock and Pompton Rivers to Stiles Park is about a mile of upstream paddling on the Ramapo River. The current is very slow, but some exertion is required.

In times of low water be prepared to walk your boat through occasional areas of shallow water. Remember that 2 vehicles are needed for these trips—one at the launch point and one at the take-out.





## Natural Highlights

Although this route is in a suburban setting, it offers surprising opportunities for scenic appreciation and wildlife viewing.

Majestic trees such as sycamore, yellow poplar (tulip), silver maple, pin oak and basswood line the river banks.

Look for aquatic mammals in and around the water including river otter, muskrat, and mink. Beavers occasionally visit this area but are not currently resident.

Deer abound, and coyotes are frequently sighted. A wide array of waterfowl can usually be seen, particularly in spring and fall. This is prime habitat for wood ducks who nest in hollow trees and nest boxes. Black-crowned and yellow-crowned night herons (both threatened species in NJ), great blue herons, and small green herons stalk the river shallows. Kingfishers are commonplace and even ospreys are sporadic visitors.

Common reptiles include painted turtles, snapping turtles and banded water snakes. A rarity is the wood turtle, another threatened species in New Jersey.



**Wood Turtle**

Even mollusks can surprise you. Did you know we have clams in our rivers? You will see thousands of the tiny shells from fingernail clams on sections of the river bottom. For anglers, fishing for bass, panfish and pickerel can be quite good.

We encourage you to make the most of this wonderful environment. Enjoy! And please report any threatened species you observe to the NJDEP. Call them at 609-292-9400.



**Mallard Ducks**

## River Conservation

The Pequannock River Coalition is working to keep our waterways clean and healthy. We conduct river clean-ups, water monitoring, and a broad range of other programs (such as producing this guide) to promote, restore and protect our waterways. New members and volunteers are always welcome. For more information visit our website at [www.pequannockriver.org](http://www.pequannockriver.org).

**Want to help? Please join us!**



**Yes, I'd like to help! Here's my donation.**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Membership Level:** Protector (\$500) \_\_\_\_\_

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Guardian/Family(\$25) \_\_\_\_\_ Regular (\$15) \_\_\_\_\_

**Send to: Pequannock River Coalition**

P.O. Box 392, Newfoundland, NJ 07435

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