

Mobile connections

Driving tour highlights 22 stops in Susquehanna watershed

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The Susquehanna River's banks long have been inhabited, and the waters that flow in the river always have been part of Pennsylvania's history.

"The cultural history of the Susquehanna River is centuries long, and the impact of the river is longer still when you consider geological time," said Erin Pierce, program coordinator of the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership.

The partnership created a 95-mile Middle Susquehanna Greenway Driving Tour that meanders through a designated area.

"This driving tour takes you back through time with a rich narrative history of human settlement, geological formations, the river and surrounding landscapes," Pierce said.

The tour includes 22 stops or sights highlighted along its 95 miles.

It visits historic, economic and geographic connections between the Susquehanna River corridor and the Chesapeake Bay, Pierce said.

The tour organizers said each tour involves about 2 1/2 hours of driving time. Because patrons are encouraged to spend as much time as they like at each stop, tour organizers recommend spending anywhere from a half to a whole day doing the tour.

The tour is narrated throughout, and each audio track gives a background of each stop.

"The audio narration brings river researchers, local residents and their unique stories right into your car. It's like having your own private and exclusive outing with a handful of local experts leading the way," Pierce said.

Some stops, such as the Packwood House in Lewisburg and the Priestley House in Northumberland, may be open for tours or special exhibits.

The audio can be downloaded to MP3 or CD players.

"You can customize the tour to start at any point along the way," Pierce said.

A guide book is available online and can be downloaded and printed or used on a handheld device.

Inside the book, each stop has

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- Narration with theories given by Jennifer Elick, chairwoman of earth and environmental sciences at Susquehanna University, and Ben Marsh, professor of geology and environmental studies at Bucknell University.
- Susquehanna River is named for its earliest inhabitants, the Susquehannock people who were Iroquoian-speaking American Indians. Bucknell Professor of History and Humanities Katie Faull gives a fascinating oration of the cultural ties and conflicts between American Indians and early European settlers.
- Learn about Chief Shikellamy, the French

and Indian War, and the building of Fort Augusta in what now is modern-day Sunbury.

• Learn about the river being a corridor of commerce to the Chesapeake Bay since American Indian times, which transported products of timber, farm products, coal and minerals.

• Stops in Northumberland and Sunbury reveal how the resources of the river drew inventors Joseph Priestly and Thomas Edison to its shores to advance their work.

• Other stops include the Millersburg Ferry, Duncannon's Old Sledworks and drive-by narration on the beautiful sycamore trees near Halifax that are a memorial to soldiers of World War I.

▶ IF YOU GO

Tour stops are numbered 1 to 22, beginning with Stop 1 at the Packwood House Museum and historic district in Lewisburg.

From there, the tour heads south on Route 15 to the Shikellamy Overlook, then crosses the river with stops in Northumberland and Sunbury.

Drive down the east side of the river on Route 147 South for about 40 miles. Head west on Route 22/322 where you will cross the Susquehanna River and stop in Duncannon.

Head back up the west side of the river on Route 11/15 North for the 35-mile drive back to Selinsgrove.

a "QR" code, a digital reading quick response code that can be used by smart phones, iPads or tablets for the audio narration at each stop.

"Since mobile technology is becoming more widely utilized to understand the world around us, we wanted to create a tour that includes smart phone users so that a wide audience can enjoy and experience the tour," Pierce said.

Smart phones will play the track after scanning the QR code from the guide book, when a service area is available.

The stops gives tourgoers a wide variety of historic, economic and geographic stories of the Susquehanna River landscape, Pierce said.

"Thus, the tour provides a little bit of something for everyone. You'll ponder roadcut geology, picture the historic movement of goods up and down the river, and have time to stop and explore the many unique museums, buildings and river views along the way," she added.

Organizers recommend a state road atlas or GPS unit to navigate.

Each year the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership holds a photo contest and those taking

the tour are encouraged to take photos along the way and submit them.

The tour has been available since 2011 and was made possible by funding from the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network, the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and in-kind contributions of many local supporters.

"We produced this driving tour to tell just a few of the stories of this ancient and tremendous resource that has always been the lifeblood of our region. While the length and shallowness of the river makes it our nation's longest non-navigable river, the depth of influence the Susquehanna has had on building, feeding and nurturing a fledgling country in the New World, remains true even today," said Trish Carothers, executive director of the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership.

The tour was designed to help connect people through story and visual context to the Susquehanna River, Pierce said.

"The Susquehanna Watershed provides half of the fresh water entering the Chesapeake Bay and drinking water to over 6 million people," she said. "The Susquehanna Greenway protects and enhances this resource with riverfront parks, trails and conserved areas stretching over 500 miles along the River. It is Pennsylvania's longest greenway, and a special place to live, learn about and explore."

The Middle Susquehanna Greenway Driving Tour is free to download at <http://susquehanna.greenway.org/tours>.

Those who do not have the capability to download and burn the audio tracks to a CD may purchase one audio CD by sending a personal check for \$10 with your phone number and return address to Susquehanna Greenway Partnership, Attn: Driving Tour, 201 Furnace Road, Lewisburg, PA 17837, or follow the payment instructions online. Make sure your car CD player can accept burned disks before sending your order.

