Put-In: West side of State Route 747 bridge in the Port Union area of West Chester Township, at the northern dead end of Old SR 747, by railroad

Take-Out: Twin Creek Preserve, 2072 Best Place, Sharonville, 45241, a short distance south of Crescentville Road, off the end of Best Place, just south of soccer fields

Distance: About 4 miles
Time: At least 3¼ hours

Challenges:
- probable log jams
- at least six beaver dams
- narrow stream channel in some places
- slow current and shallow waters during dry seasons
- strainers – branches and fallen trees amid the current
- rugged manmade riffles where foot entrapment can occur amid the rip rap (marked by )

These segments of East Fork Mill Creek and Mill Creek have rugged manmade riffles at Twin Creek Preserve.

River Mile (from the Ohio River) marked

POINTS OF INTEREST
A: Confluence of un-named tributary along SR 747 to the north
B: Confluence of un-named tributary along SR 747 to the south
C: Access spot for canoes, at the end of Old SR 747, by railroad
D: SR 747 bridge over the Mill Creek
E: Project site for stream restoration and floodplain wetland
F: Project site for stormwater retrofit bio-retention ponds
G: Rialto Road bridge over the Mill Creek
H: Confluence of un-named tributary just below Rialto Road
I: Muhlenhuser Road bridge over the Mill Creek
J: I-75 overpasses above the Mill Creek
K: Windisch Road bridge over the Mill Creek
L: Crescentville Road bridge over the Mill Creek
M: Upstream end of manmade riffles that are hard to navigate
N: Location of a pond where small floating wetlands are installed
O: Upstream end of Twin Creek Preserve, a major restoration site
P: Upstream end of manmade riffles that are hard to navigate
Q: Confluence of Beaver Run from Forest Park and Springdale
R: Access spot for canoes, near walking trail at Twin Creek Preserve
S: Confluence of East Fork Mill Creek from West Chester Township
T: Downstream end of Twin Creek Preserve
U: Norfolk Southern Railroad bridge over the Mill Creek
V: I-275 overpass above the Mill Creek
This Mill Creek Access Map is intended to help users discover the many faces of the Mill Creek in Southwestern Ohio. Several local agencies and organizations worked together to develop this map. The resurgent urban stream is a two-century comeback from two centuries of abuse and neglect. Paddling the Mill Creek is the most effective way of experiencing stream improvements accomplished by the Mill Creek Alliance, the Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati, local governments and many other stakeholders in the Mill Creek Watershed.

This Access Map was prepared by volunteers from publicly available information and personal knowledge. None of the information here is incomplete, inaccurate, or misleading. You use this information and engage in any activities on the Mill Creek entirely at your own risk.

Paddling is a dangerous activity and the information provided here is not a substitute for actual knowledge and skill. Conditions on the Mill Creek can change rapidly. The Mill Creek Yacht Club, the Mill Creek Alliance, and their respective members, officers, employees, agents, and trustees are not liable for any injuries or damages related in any way to your use of this Access Map or the Mill Creek. You are responsible for your own actions on or around the Mill Creek, and assume total responsibility for yourself and any others with you.

Safety Tips

WEAR YOUR LIFE JACKET! Most boating fatalities occur because a person wasn’t wearing a life jacket. A properly fitted life jacket or personal flotation device (“PFD”) can save your life, but it only works if you wear it. The Mill Creek is shallow in spots, and deep in others. Drowning can occur in shallow water, especially if you have lost consciousness. Ohio law requires that every canoe or kayak carry a PFD for each person on board. We recommend that you wear your PFD.

DON’T BOAT ALONE! Paddle with a group, not by yourself. It’s more fun that way, anyway. Leave a “float plan” for your trip with a friend or relative.

DON’T PADLE UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF DRUGS/ALCOHOL! It’s illegal and un-safe.

PADDLE SAFELY! Know your skill and fitness levels. Stay within them.

BE PREPARED! Plan your trip well and help avoid hazards and have more fun.

• Know the location of all dam and other hazards. Scout conditions when you are uncertain.

• Be prepared to portage (carry around) hazards. If in doubt, get out and scout!

• Dress appropriately. Be prepared for weather and water conditions. Consider the temperature of the water as well as the air temperature. Dress for the cooler of the two.

• Wear footwear that is easy to remove.

• Be prepared to swim. If the water looks too hazardous to swim, don’t boat on it.

• Check creek levels. Stream gauging information is available on the United States Geological Survey’s web site at http://waterdata.usgs.gov/oh/sid/.

• Assess the risk of flash flooding. Consider the impact of current or predicted rainfall.

• Scout conditions when you are uncertain.

Conditions on the Mill Creek can change rapidly.

Hazards Found on the Mill Creek

In order to have a safe canoe or kayak trip, a boater must be aware of possible hazards on the Mill Creek. Scout the creek before you use it, and plan your trip to avoid any hazards. Use care when wading or portaging. Possible hazards include sudden drop-offs, hidden holes, slippery algae, submerged obstacles and jagged objects.

POULATION: The Ohio EPA recommends no contact with waters of the Mill Creek because it can have high levels of fecal coliform bacteria and other pathogens from time to time, especially within 72 hours of a heavy rainfall. Raw sewage can also contaminate water with viruses and other pathogens. After heavy rains, many Hamilton County streams, including the Mill Creek, do not meet Ohio state standards for recreational activities such as wading or swimming. For more information about CSOs see www.projectecosource.com, which is a website offered by the Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati (MSD).

Ways you can help reduce stormwater runoff, which in turn reduces flooding and CSOs:

• Install rainbarrels, a cistern, or a stormwater harvesting system.

• Avoid planting trees or shrubs near the sewer lines. Roots can penetrate and break sewer lines.

Other Tips

• Stay alert. Look for obstacles in the stream, especially rocks, metal and rebar.

• On the banks watch for poison ivy, unstable or slippery ground, holes, loose rocks, broken glass, sharp objects, etc.

• Don’t drink the water. Don’t rub your eyes or put fingers to your mouth. Protect any open wounds.

• When portaging, follow experience and instructions provided by the Mill Creek Alliance.

• Remember to stay with the canoe. Don’t stray too far ahead or behind your canoe. That may tip you out or damage the boat.

• Avoid planting trees or shrubs near the sewer lines. Roots can enter, block, & damage sewers.

• Keep storm drains clear of debris, dirt or other waste.

Precautions for paddling this segment of the Mill Creek

• Stay dry. Bring extra clothing even if you don’t expect it to rain. Mill Creek can be crowded, and you may not be able to paddle in some places. At Twin Creek Preserve’s manmade riffles, you will encounter rip rap boulders, starting at map locations M or P. Be careful not to fall amid the slippery obstacles to enter your foot in a narrow space. Ankle protection is advisable. Do not hesitate to use your paddle as a walking stick. Crouch low so your hands can quickly stop a fall. Many of the boulders are lippy, so you should test their stability before stepping on them. This trip also deserves vigilance for logjam, strainers and barely submerged obstacles, which can flip a passing canoe or kayak.

Here are 14 important safety tips for paddling on the Mill Creek:

1. Use life jackets when you can and zippered, tie or tucked.

2. Pair up with an experienced paddler if possible.

3. Stay together. Don’t pass the leader (in the front) or get behind the Sweeper (in the back).

4. Most accidents occur while getting in and out of a canoe. To reduce your contact with the canoe, be careful not to fall amid the slippery obstacles to enter your foot in a narrow space. Ankle protection is advisable. Do not hesitate to use your paddle as a walking stick. Crouch low so your hands can quickly stop a fall. Many of the boulders are lippy, so you should test their stability before stepping on them. This trip also deserves vigilance for logjam, strainers and barely submerged obstacles, which can flip a passing canoe or kayak.

5. If you tip or fall, stay with the canoe. Do not try to swim to the shore. That may tip you out or damage the boat.

6. When portaging, follow experience and instructions provided by the Mill Creek Alliance.

7. Avoid drinking from the water. Don’t rub your eyes or put your fingers to your mouth. Protect any open wounds.

8. Don’t drink the water. Don’t rub your eyes or put your fingers to your mouth. Protect any open cuts or scrapes. (Hand sanitizer, waterproof gloves and some boots are available).

9. On the banks watch for poisons, unstable or slippery ground, holes, loose rocks, broken glass, sharp objects, etc.

10. Stay alert. Look for obstacles in the stream, especially rocks, metal and rebar.

11. In fast water, if possible, stay upstream of your canoe and keep your feet pointing downstream in case you hit something.

12. Use carefully where the water is shallow. Avoid going too far out or too close to shore. Use caution with the current.

13. Keep your canoe out of harm’s way. Set your canoe as high as possible, and adjust the current so that the current can pass the canoe and you can paddle against it. If possible, stay upstream of your canoe and keep your feet pointing downstream in case you hit something.

14. Note the route taken by experienced paddlers in front of you and feel free to ask for their help at any time. The Mill Creek Yacht Club thrives on mutual aid.