



LEHIGH CANAL & TOWPATH TRAIL GUIDE BETHLEHEM TO FREEMANSBURG

The towpath is easily biked, jogged or walked, for a distance of approximately 3 ½ miles, in each direction. Or, park at either end, and do shorter distances. Access is possible at the Minsi Trail bridge, near the middle, but parking is on the street nearby.

Suggested start is at the Ice House, on Sand Island, in Bethlehem, where there is parking and access, via Lehigh St. Restrooms and drinking water are next to the tennis courts. See also the Monocacy Trail Guide for details on Sand Island, and a similar guide for the towpath to Allentown. Copies are available at the Ice House. The abandoned CNJ (Central Railroad of NJ) parallels the towpath and canal on the left, as does the Lehigh River on the right.

For an extension of the towpath, past Freemansburg, see the excellent trail guide provided by the Old Freemansburg Assn. Copies can be obtained at the mule barn. It is (approximately) another 9 miles to Easton from there.

The canal is navigable by canoe as far as the Moravian Village. Thereafter, it is little more than a trickle, until approximately 2 miles, where it is again navigable to the Freemansburg dam.

The trail is mostly packed gravel, and somewhat open, as far as the picnic shelter. Thereafter, it becomes mostly packed dirt, with more tree cover, but either is easy to bike or walk.

Lock No 42, in Bethlehem, is partially restored, and is part of an extensive city recreational facility. A permanent dam serves to keep water in the canal. It is navigable all the way to Allentown. An interesting aqueduct carries water over the Monocacy Creek, which enters the river at the base of Sand Island.

Lock No 43 is un-restored. Much of the canal bed in this section has been filled with gravel and debris from various old storm-water drainages. At 1.3 miles, there are some remarkable pipe tunnels that were recently installed, to carry storm-water beneath the canal and towpath.

Lock No 44 is one of the best-restored areas on the canal. While the lock itself has not been restored, the lock tender's house and mule barn are a significant achievement. The canal enters the river here, as does the Nancy Run creek. See if you can figure out how it gets beneath the canal and towpath. Somewhat before reaching the lock, there is a pleasant picnic area, accessible by footbridge, across from the parking area, which is just off of Main St, in Freemansburg.

Highlights along the path are noted on the map, but additional small secrets reveal themselves to the observant person, especially in the natural world. Have a wonderful time exploring the towpath.

Participating partners:

City of Bethlehem, Charles Brown, Parks & Recreation

Delaware & Lehigh Navigational Canal Heritage Corridor

Monocacy Creek Watershed Assn

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