

# Canoe the Wayne National Forest



There are three canoeable rivers on the Wayne, the Little Muskingum River on the Marietta unit, the Hocking River on the Athens unit, and Symmes Creek on the Ironton District. All three have access points on public land and provide a tranquil float, ideal for family canoeing.

## Little Muskingum River

The Little Muskingum River northeast of Marietta meanders along through forested hills and pastures. It parallels the Covered Bridge Scenic Byway for most of its length. The area provides a backdrop of historic barns, covered bridges, and century old farmhouses. Although subject to seasonal low water, this is our finest canoeable river in southeastern Ohio.

The river appears muddy, and in fact, the Indian word Muskingum translates to mean muddy river. The river is scenic however, with overhanging trees and traverses some of Ohio's most beautiful countryside. Rural landscapes, cross-road communities, bluffs and rock outcrops, big shady trees, and abundant wildlife will add interest to your trip. Canoers paddle under covered bridges which have spanned the river for over a century.

Four National Forest campgrounds are located on the river's banks within a 27-mile stretch. For those who choose multiple day canoe trips these campgrounds allow floaters to stop, camp, and savor the natural beauty of this area.

## Contact Us

The Wayne has three offices to serve visitors. Office hours are 8 - 4:30 Monday through Friday.

**Athens Ranger District**  
13700 U.S. Hwy 33  
Nelsonville, OH 45764  
Phone: 740-753-0101

Marietta Unit Office  
27515 State Route 7  
Marietta, OH 45750  
Phone: 740-373-9055

**Ironton Ranger District**  
6518 State Route 93  
Pedro, OH 45659  
Phone: 740-534-6500

Federal relay system for the deaf and hearing impaired: 1-800-877-8339

**website: [www.fs.usda.gov/wayne](http://www.fs.usda.gov/wayne)**

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/waynenationalforest>

To help slow the spread of emerald ash borer and other invasive pests, no firewood may be transported onto Wayne National Forest lands, except commercially packaged wood with the USDA inspection label. You may collect a small amount (what can be carried by hand) of down and dead firewood to be used at your recreation site.



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United States Department of Agriculture

# Wayne National Forest Canoeing



Forest  
Service

FS-R9-021  
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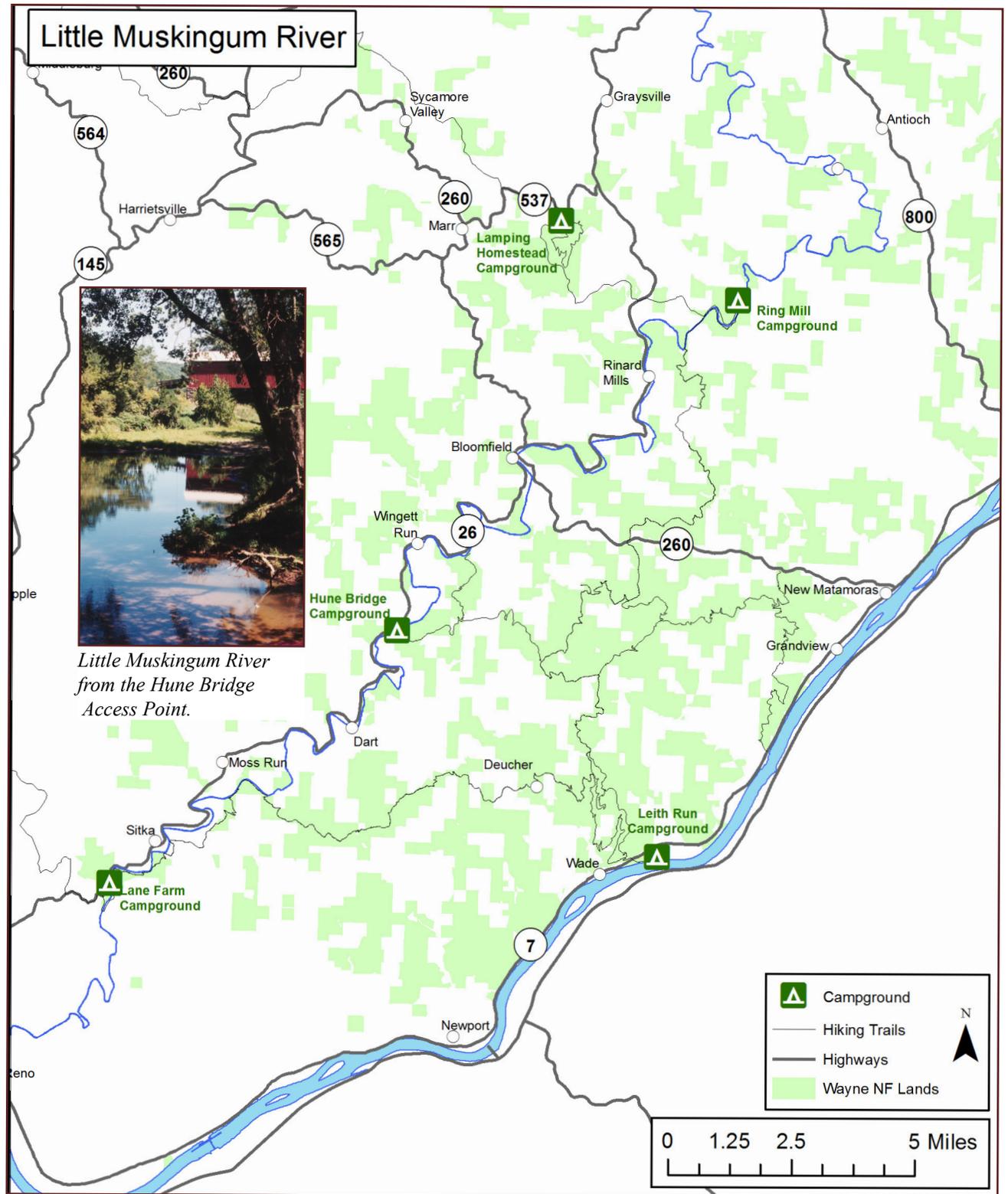
# Access Points and Camping on the Little Muskingum

Four campgrounds provide easy access to the river for fishing or wading and some access for launching canoes. Fishing is generally very good, with 52 species of fish found in the river including the endangered Ohio brook lamprey and stream muskellunge. Fishable species include muskie, large and small-mouth bass, crappie, catfish, and rockbass. The access points are known for offering some of the best small mouth bass fishing on the Wayne. Due to high water damage some of these campgrounds may be temporarily closed for repairs each season.

Each of the campgrounds are also trailheads for hikers to access the North Country Trail. Through these trailheads, hikers and backpackers have access to over 70 miles of trail.



*Little Muskingum River at Moss Run and below Hune Bridge during a river cleanup.*



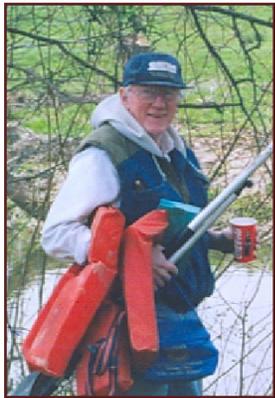
## Hocking River

The Hocking is one of the largest rivers in Ohio, and a portion of it flows through the Wayne National Forest, near Nelsonville and Athens. There are only a handful of national forest tracts with frontage to the Hocking River, and undeveloped boat access is only available in a couple places. Canoes and kayaks are ideal to use on the river.

A website for more information on the Hocking River is at <http://hockingriver.org>. Contact the Hocking Hills Tourism Association in Logan for information on canoe rentals.

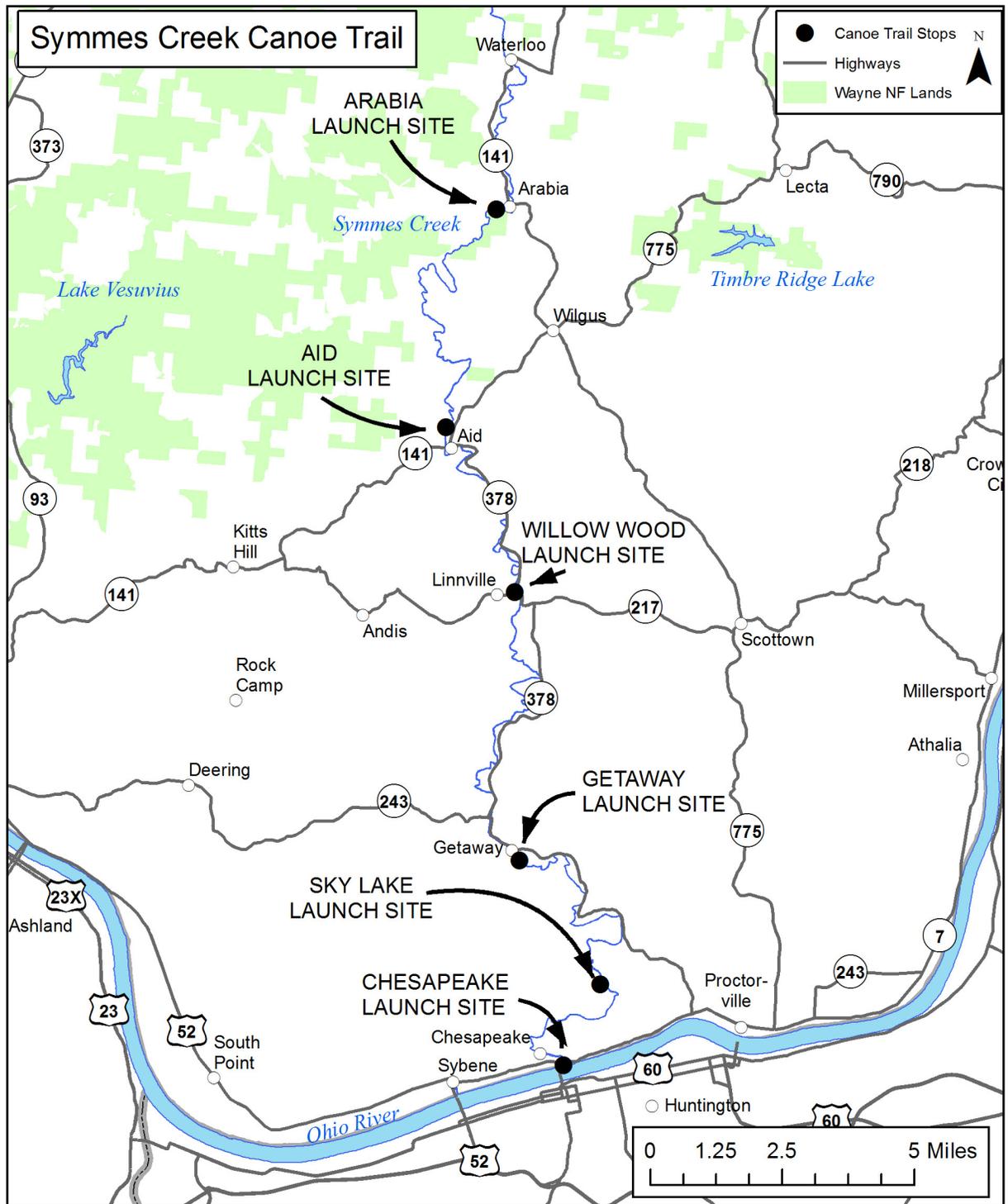
## Symmes Creek

Symmes Creek is a Class 1 water trail, traveling 99 miles through Lawrence County, Ohio and is ideal for a family canoe trip. Thirty-one miles of it are easily canoeable. Thirty species of fish, including muskie, bass, crappie and catfish can be found in Symmes Creek, which is also home to 18 species of mussels, including 3 Ohio threatened and endangered species. Boaters on Symmes Creek can expect to see abundant wildflowers and rock outcrops as well turkey, deer, beaver, songbirds, raptors and a host of other wildlife as they travel through striking forests and scenic farmlands.



The Symmes Creek watershed is one of Lawrence County's largest, draining the central area of the county from north to south. The Forest works closely with the Symmes Creek Restoration Committee (SCRC) to manage this creek. This group was incorporated in May of 1977 as a not-for-profit corporation. They remove logjams and promote public interest in the water quality in Symmes Creek.

SCRC, working with the Wayne National Forest, the Lawrence County Commissioners and the Symmes Valley Schools have established the Arthur S. Ferguson, Jr. Canoe Trail in 2004. The canoe trail honors the group's founder (pictured at right). It is a 31-mile stretch of Symmes Creek between Waterloo and Chesapeake, Ohio and takes two days to travel.



*Symmes Creek in fall.*

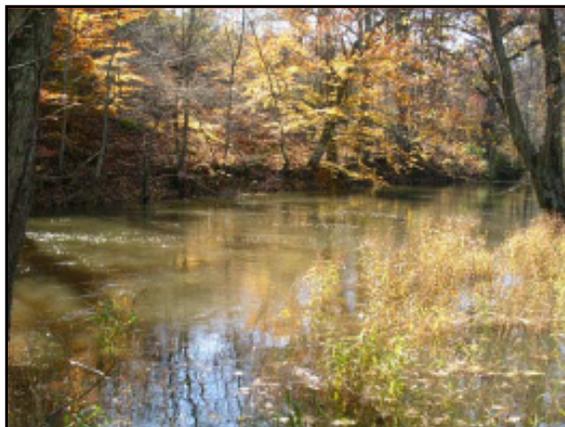
## Access Points on Symmes Creek

There will eventually be 6 access points along the 31-mile Symmes Creek canoe trail. Three of these sites are now constructed and currently being used. The others are in the process of being developed.

Site	Status	Mile #
1. Waterloo, OH	Proposed	0.0
2. Arabia, OH	Complete	4.5
3. Aid, OH	Complete	12.8
4. Willow Wood, OH	Complete	18.4
5. Getaway, OH	Complete	26.4
6. Sky Lake, OH	Complete	32.5
7. Chesapeake, OH	Complete	36.2

## Completed Sites

*Arabia* - This launch site on the Wayne National Forest. There is public parking and a launch ramp available. A grocery store and restaurant are located one mile away on SR 141.  
Lat/Long: 38.6619, -82.47794



*Aid* - This launch site is located 0.5 mile north of Aid, Ohio and 0.5 mile south of Symmes Valley Schools on SR 141. Lat/Long: 38.60113, -89.494745

*Willow Wood* - This launch is just north of the Willow Wood Bridge at the intersection of SRs 378 and 217. Lat/Long: 38.55652, -82.469387

*Getaway* - This launch is on SR 243 immediately south of the CR 17 bridge. Canoes are launched by means of a small watercourse that intersects Symmes Creek. Lat/Long: 38.48582, -82.46759

*Sky Lake* - This site is at Sky Lake fishing Lake approximately 2.5 miles north of SR 7 on CR 32. Lat/Long: 38.453135, -82.438209

*Chesapeake* - The launch at Chesapeake (shown below) is located at the mouth of Symmes Creek. It is 0.25 mile north of SR 7 on CR 123. The ramp has a 30-foot wide boat ramp, and parking for over 50 cars, as well as a grassy area for picnicking.  
Lat/Long: 38.429824, -82.451395

## CANOEING GUIDANCE

### SAFETY

- Canoeing should be a fun adventure if you use caution for a safe trip. Watch for poison ivy along the banks and bad weather.
- Water levels can rise quickly after rains so be alert for possible flooding.
- Tell someone when and where you are going and when you plan to return.

### FISHING

Fishing is licensed and regulated by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources.

### TRESPASSING

Much of the land along the rivers is in private ownership. To insure you stop on public land you should obtain maps from one of our offices, which shows the river at a larger scale and indicates location of public ownership.

### DRINKING WATER

Carry a supply of drinking water with you. Do not drink from springs along the river.

### PACK IN - PACK OUT

If you can carry it in, you can carry it out. Go one step further and carry out trash that less thoughtful people have left behind. Leave only your footprints on the banks.

