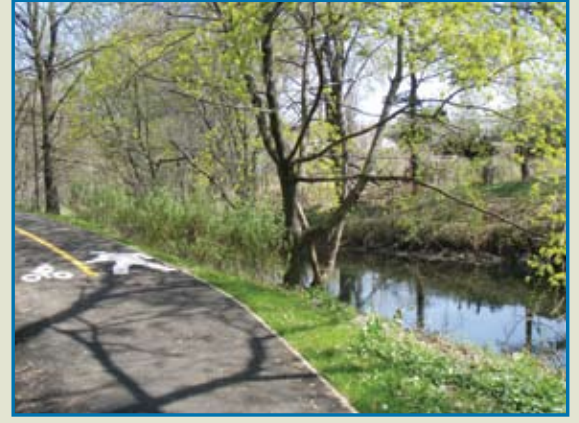
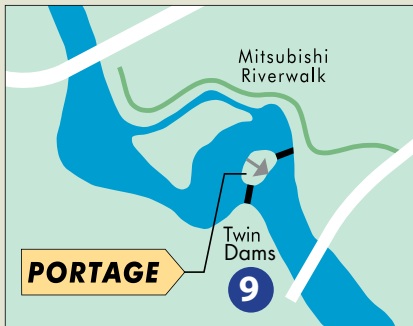


# Bronx River Blueway



Greenway and Blueway trails



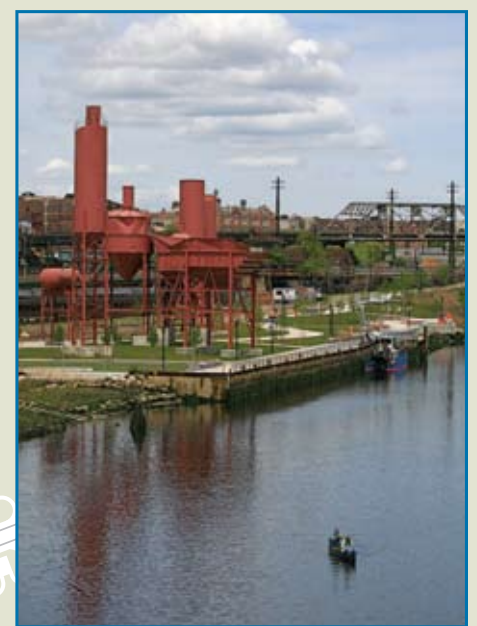
Landing at New York Botanical Garden Portage (Point #7)



Launch at base of Twin Dams, Bronx Zoo (Point #9) Photo: Jonathan Barkey



Until the fish passage is built in River Park with a walkway for paddlers, boats must be lowered from the top of the dam. (Point #10)



Concrete Plant Park



- Point of interest
- Restrooms
- Parking
- Barbeque area
- Playground
- Access point
- Bronx River Greenway (sections still in development)

0 Mile 0.5


More details and updates at [www.bronxriver.org](http://www.bronxriver.org)

© 2010


**WELCOME TO THE BRONX RIVER,** one of New York City's natural treasures. The river's headwaters are located near the Kensico Dam in Valhalla, N.Y, fifteen miles north of the Bronx border. This guide covers the eight-mile stretch flowing through the Bronx and is designed to help paddlers navigate the river safely and enjoy the experience.

#### POINTS OF INTEREST AND ACCESS POINTS

Note: Unless otherwise noted, references to left and right are made for a paddler heading downstream, or south.


**1**  **SHOELACE PARK** is a one-mile ribbon of city parkland along the east (left) bank of the Bronx River and part of the Bronx River Greenway. The northernmost paddler access point in the Bronx is near the 219<sup>th</sup> St. entrance to the park. At the top of the stairs leading down to the parkhouse from Bronx Blvd. is a granite obelisk dedicated to the neighborhood men lost in World War I. The New York City Department of Parks & Recreation has installed a rain garden at the base of the monument to capture and filter polluted stormwater run-off before it reaches the river. Across the river is the Bronx River Parkway, which originally followed the eastern border of Shoelace Park, along what are now Bronx Blvd. and the upper park pathway. When the original parkway was completed in 1925, officials also created the Bronx River Parkway Reservation, a series of parks intended to restore and protect the Bronx River as a recreational resource. Before that time, the river banks here were primarily industrial. **SEE OTHER ADVISEMENTS RE: 211<sup>th</sup> STREET**

**2** **GUN HILL ROAD BRIDGE** spans the river's last remaining "oxbow" formation, a naturally occurring U-shaped bend caused when fast currents erode one bank while slower-moving water deposits sediment on the other. At one time the river had many oxbows, but they were erased as the river was straightened to make way for rail and roadways.


**3**  At **FORT KNOX**, a "cribbing project" built of logs stabilizes the west (right) bank and surrounds the small steps leading to the river. A bridge foundation from a nineteenth century estate still stands in the river, and the east (left) bank was home to a tapestry mill at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**4** **DUNCOMB ARCHED BRIDGES**, part of the original Bronx River Parkway, mark the entrance to the Bronx River Forest. Constructed in 1918, the stairway in the center was meant for boat access and is now part of the walking path along the Bronx River Greenway. Look for coconut-fiber coir logs, tree trunks staked to the river's edge, and boulder vanes placed at angles in the water used to slow erosion and regenerate the banks.

**5** The **BRONX RIVER FOREST**, which extends south into the New York Botanical Garden, boasts many trees that are more than 100 years old. Recent improvements include restoration of the river's floodplain, construction of a boardwalk and loop trail, an improved Greenway bike path, and renovation of the historic Burke Bridge. Burke Bridge is also the northern border of Bronx Park, 718.1 acres that house the New York Botanical Garden, the Bronx River Forest, and the Bronx Zoo. Today, the forest is home to more than 250 thriving species of native flora such as pin oak, river birch, and white snakeroot, and native fauna, including the mallard, common merganser, and muskrat.

**6**  **KAZIMIROFF BLVD.** is a limited-access point made of flat stones on the east (left) bank. **SEE ACCESS ADVISEMENTS.**


**7** In the **NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN**, the river flows within a fault line and between cliffs of blended Manhattan Schist and Fordham Gneiss—rocks that have been metamorphosed, or changed, by the tectonic forces that shaped the region. The waterfall in the Garden is the remains of a dam that powered several mills that manufactured snuff between 1792 and 1870. The current Stone Mill was built in 1842.


 **Be cautious upon entering the gorge. Note the signs warning of a dam (waterfall) ahead and directing paddlers to a portage on the east (left) bank. SEE PORTAGE ADVISEMENTS.**


**8** Fordham Road marks the northern boundary of the **BRONX ZOO**. Be very quiet here if you want to catch a glimpse of the turtles, egrets, and herons in the small lake ahead.


 **Do not disembark in any part of the zoo except the portage points.**

**9** **BRONX ZOO TWIN DAMS** powered Bolton's Bleach and Dye Works, a.k.a "The Bleach" until 1888.


 **The stretch from these dams to River Park can be very shallow at times. Paddlers may need to disembark and pull boats for short distances, depending on conditions. SEE PORTAGE ADVISEMENTS.**


**10**  **RIVER PARK/180<sup>th</sup> ST.** features restrooms, play area, grilling, access to 2 and 5 trains, and a dam. By 2011, a fish passage will be built into the dam that will include an improved boat portage system. **SEE PORTAGE ADVISEMENTS.**

**11**  **WEST FARMS RAPIDS PARK** (estimated to open in 2010) offers easy vehicular access from E. 179<sup>th</sup> St. and is a critical link in the Bronx River Greenway.

 **CAUTION! 180<sup>th</sup> Street to East Tremont Avenue is the most challenging section of river. The west (right) side of the East Tremont Ave. Bridge is impassible in all but the highest water. SEE OTHER ADVISEMENTS FOR DETAILS.**


**12** **DREW GARDENS** is a community garden established in 1994 that was once a trash-strewn industrial landfill. Today, thanks to community efforts, a butterfly garden, vegetable plots, and a farmers market flourish here. At the southern end of the garden, the river becomes tidal.


**13**  **STARLIGHT PARK**'s northern boundary is marked by the blue steel 174<sup>th</sup> St. Bridge. At the southern end of the park, paddlers should look out for a concrete low-head dam, or weir, protruding from the water at low tide. The Bronx River Alliance headquarters will be built near the weir, with a boat ramp and a floating dock to allow passage around the obstruction. Until then, paddlers can safely pass over the weir at least two hours before or after low tide. Check tide charts when planning your trip. (Park estimated to open in 2012.)

**14**  **CONCRETE PLANT PARK**, formerly a working and then abandoned concrete plant, is now a park offering green space and waterfront access. It is also a key link between north and south sections of the Bronx River Greenway.

Spanning the river in front of Concrete Plant Park is a NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) "skim boom" that collects floatable debris. The DEP removes the floatables regularly, but if debris has accumulated it can be difficult to paddle past the boom—use caution. **SEE ACCESS ADVISEMENTS.**

**15** Passing under the Bruckner Expressway, notice the **RECYCLING FACILITIES** on the west (right) bank of the river, which collect scrap metal, glass, and plastic from the Bronx and Northern Manhattan. Watch for occasional barge traffic.

**16**  **HUNTS POINT RIVERSIDE PARK** offered residents of the Hunts Point neighborhood their first waterfront access in over 60 years when it opened in 2006. The park features a floating dock, amphitheatre, tables, grills, and a spray shower play area. South of the park is the Hunts Point Food Distribution Center, the largest food distribution center in the world. This facility occupies all of the land on the west (right) bank to the mouth of the river.

**17**  **SOUNDVIEW PARK** is on the east (left) bank of the river, directly across from Hunts Point Riverside Park and features ball fields, picnic areas, and new boat access. The park will eventually include a nature center and fishing pier.

**18** River buoys 5 and 6 mark the **MOUTH OF THE BRONX RIVER**. At this point the river joins the East River and from it, connects to New York Harbor, Long Island Sound, and the Atlantic Ocean. Looking clockwise from Soundview, you will see the Whitestone Bridge, LaGuardia Airport, and Riker's Island. From here, prepared, experienced paddlers have many options to explore New York City's connected waterways.

Find the interactive New York City Water Trail map at: [http://www.nycgovparks.org/sub\\_things\\_to\\_do/facilities/kayak/](http://www.nycgovparks.org/sub_things_to_do/facilities/kayak/)

#### PORTAGE ADVISEMENTS

**NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN:** Follow signs to the landing on the east (left) bank. Follow the path south 0.2 miles, or 1,000 feet, to the Stone Mill. The area is being reconstructed in 2010, so watch for temporary portage path signs. When complete, the new launch will be another 0.1 miles south of the Stone Mill on the west (right) bank.

**BRONX ZOO TWIN DAMS:** South of Fordham Road about 600 feet, look for the channel on the east (left) just before the falls, leading to a small island between the twin dams here. The short portage trail goes up and over the island. No more than two boats may land at a time and the path down the other side of the island is steep, so exercise caution and patience. At high water, there may be strong currents at the launch site.

**RIVER PARK/180<sup>th</sup> ST:** This is the most challenging portage. The portage is on the west (right), very close to the edge of the falls, so caution and preparation are important. Keep to the right as you approach the landing, and when traveling in a group, keep a safe distance apart. It is best to have at least two people move the boats, one to stand at the top of the wall, slowly lowering one end of the boat to a second person on the ground below. By 2011, paddlers will be able to carry their boats from the landing to the launch site via a walkway on top of the fish passage. Launch along the rocks at the foot of the falls. At high water, there may be strong currents at the launch site.

#### ACCESS ADVISEMENTS

**KAZIMIROFF BOULEVARD:** To reach this point, pass the island on the west (right) side, round the southern end of the island and head upstream along the right bank. With no parking in the vicinity, a launch or landing can be challenging. However, this access site is useful as an emergency exit or to reach the forest walking trail and adjacent parkland.

**CONCRETE PLANT PARK:** If the boom is full of debris, contact the NYC Department of Environmental Protection Marine Section at (718) 595-3493.

#### OTHER ADVISEMENTS

Water may be quite shallow but still navigable, particularly in flatter bottomed boats. Boats with deep keels will get scraped on rocks in shallow conditions, especially during the summer.

At 211<sup>th</sup> ST., a small impoundment has created a shallow, rocky line across the river. Boats can most easily pass on the far right through a small opening between the rocks and the west (right) bank.

**180<sup>th</sup> ST. TO EAST TREMONT AVE:** Although only a few blocks long, a rocky bottom and drop in elevation here create small rapids that require close attention to avoid capsizing. Stay east (left) to pass under the East Tremont Ave. Bridge.

#### SAFETY POINTS

- We want you to have FUN and be SAFE while on the water. To help you, here are some additional Safety Guidelines:
- Obtain a NYC Parks access permit.
  - Do not paddle alone.
  - Paddlers enter the water at their own risk.
  - All paddlers must wear a United States Coast Guard approved personal flotation device (PFD).
  - Be aware of weather, tides and currents.
  - Be aware of power boats & other personal watercraft.
  - Notify someone not on your trip of your plans and check in when you return.
  - Carry a spare paddle.
  - Bring appropriate safety, rescue, and navigational aids; more than adequate food and water; and extra protective clothing.
  - Do not let children near the water, river banks, or access sites without adult supervision.

#### LAUNCH RULES PROHIBIT

- Swimming, diving, or wading (this includes pets).
- Dogs off leash.
- Littering or dumping debris.
- Any discharge into water.
- Camping or open fires.
- Storage of personal property or boats left unattended.

View the guide online and find more information and updates at [www.bronxriver.org](http://www.bronxriver.org)

For more information about NYC Parks, please call **311**, or visit [www.nyc.gov/parks](http://www.nyc.gov/parks). For information about NYC Parks boat access permits, call **(718) 430-1840**.



## Map & Guide Bronx River Blueway



This guide was prepared with funding provided by the New York State Department of State Division of Coastal Resources under Title 11 of the Environmental Protection Fund.

Text: Michael J. Hunter, Anne-Marie Runfola  
Map: George Colbert; Design: Anne LaFond © 2010

