



Team Building Through Kayaking Adventures

Navigating the Waterways of the First State

BY COLIN HEFFINGER

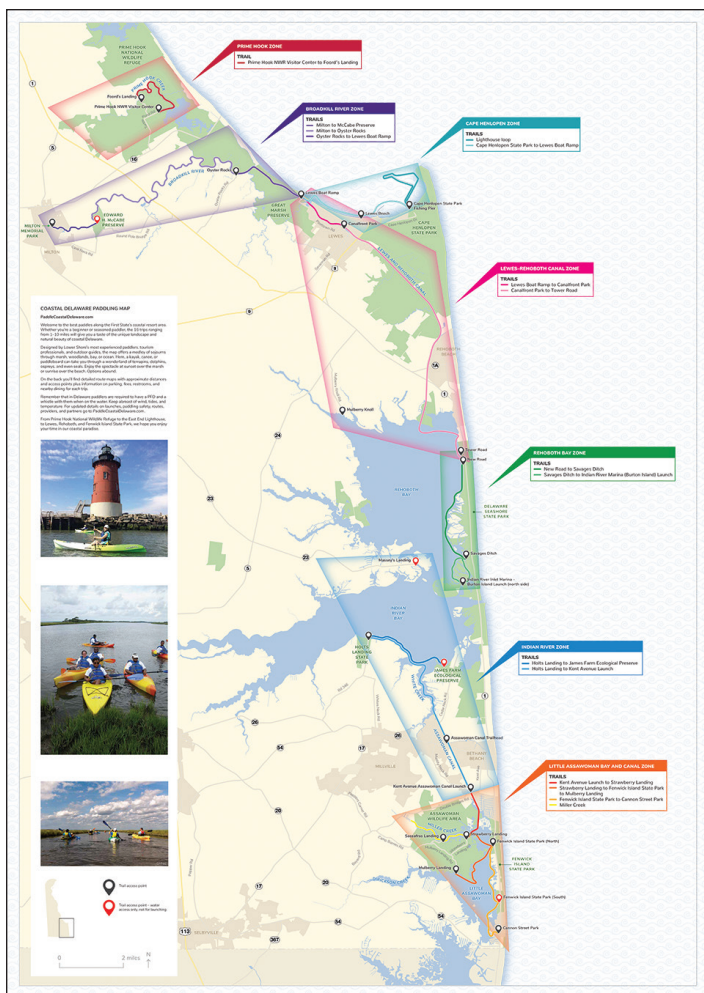
THE NEED FOR A REWARDING ESCAPE has become significantly more important than ever as we move forward in our recovery efforts from the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout the pandemic, businesses have endured and adapted to constant changes to stay afloat in a world facing a “new normal.” What better time to take a business retreat and explore the natural waterways of Delaware? What better opportunity to bond with your staff and embrace new adventures together?

Kayaking is an excellent way to get outside and experience the dozens of rivers channeling throughout the state, while also bonding with members of your team through a moderately challenging exercise. Delaware provides kayaking opportunities for beginners and experienced paddlers alike. One of the most indispensable tools available for kayaking is a project created by a team of dedicated kayaking enthusiasts for Sussex and Kent County. This collaboration strived to build an easily accessible system of maps that show waterways and access points all in one place.

Ed Luendowski is the Coastal Communities Development Specialist at the University of Delaware and one of the masterminds behind the kayaking maps project for Sussex County. “The maps provide a unified, one-stop post for paddling locations,” Ed explains. “We created Paddle Coastal Delaware as a resource for 16 unique trips throughout Sussex that provide ecology, fishing and kayaking to everyone interested.”

Kayaking has become a growing tourism opportunity for Sussex and Kent Counties. Individuals throughout the Del-Mar-Va region travel to Delaware to experience its unique waterways. There are opportunities to dock at businesses from the water, where kayakers can grab a bite to eat or a drink during their kayaking trip. Businesses can take employees out kayaking together or individuals can kayak alone or with friends. The possibilities are endless and up to the kayakers.

Dave Wilson, a paddling enthusiast from Maryland, has used the Sussex County maps and paddlecoastaldelaware.com to help him in his



Kent County Boat Ramps

Water Access Points / Boat Ramps

All items

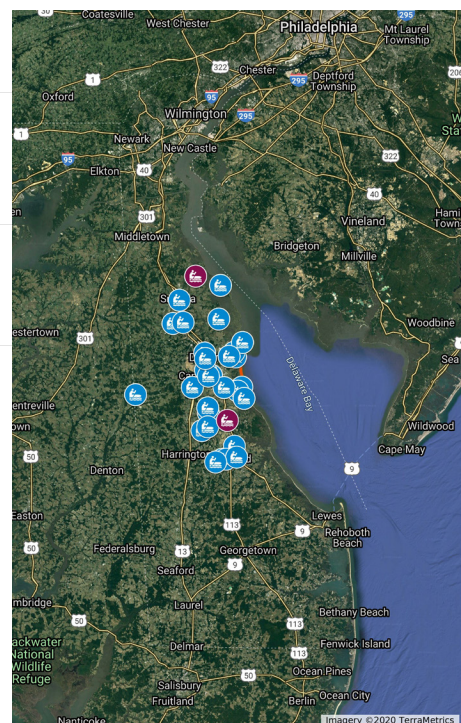
Kayaking Routes

- St Jones River B
- St Jones River A
- Little Creek to Port Mahon
- Delaware Bayshore

Proposed Water Access Points

- Proposed Bay Rd Boat Ramp
- Proposed Flemings Landing Boat Ramp

Boat Ramp locations for kayaking, canoeing, fishing, boating, and other water recreational activities in Kent County, Delaware.



Visit www.paddlecoastaldelaware.com for online and print maps of Sussex County. The maps effectively highlight individual trails and access points available for kayaking opportunities.

For Kent County kayaking, an interactive map is available online that shows nearly 30 water access points or boat ramps scattered throughout the county's waterways. Interested individuals can access this map through Google Maps: <https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1LJfmayLqkH5oiAD6lO2Y-Jc1IP0ii1Z6&ll=39.12730455303514%2C-75.40982832826017&z=10>

regular kayaking trips. “It’s very user friendly,” Dave states. “This is for people who both paddle and kayak. It’s also great for people who don’t. It shows access points and deviations in the trips I like and introduced me to spots I never thought of before. It shows things that Google Maps doesn’t; like the limits of nature areas and relevant details like bathrooms, food availability, and parking information. The fact that there’s information on these things is super helpful. We can’t always remember all of those details.”

Throughout Sussex and Kent County, a variety of kayaking businesses provide easy access to renting or purchasing equipment as well as information to help both new and expert kayakers engage in a rewarding and enjoyable experience. Quest Kayak, based in Lewes, has been one of the earliest Delaware kayaking businesses since starting in 1999. Quest Kayak provides expert-guided kayaking tours of the Atlantic Ocean, Delaware Bay and Saltmarsh area. Beach gear rental opportunities are also available at Quest Kayak, ranging from kayaks to chairs to floating party mats.

Matt Carter, owner of Quest Kayak, played a critical role in creating the maps by offering his kayaking expertise and knowledge of the Sussex County waterways. “These rivers are running 10 – 14 miles from the

inland towns and that’s our true environment – wooded to saltwater bay area. More homes and more people are moving here. There’s a lot more accessibility from neighborhoods as a result.”

“We’ve made a lot of connections over the years through the maps,” Matt continues. “The maps give me a great shoulder season in the spring or fall when we can actually take people to these locations. We limit ourselves to the Lewes and the Milton area in the summer. We have repeat customers who come back and buy kayaks from us. They love it.”

“It’s like a checklist for them,” Matt reflects. “They explore and check off each location. The maps give them a lot of options. You could go in the spring to see wildlife waking up and then in the fall for an entirely different experience.” ■