

Padding Floyds Fork- Route Descriptions and Notes

North Beckley to Creekside – 2.0 miles (1-1.5 Hour Paddle)

- Go upstream from the access to practice your paddling strokes. This long, ¼ mile long pool is a great warm up spot. Go far enough up and you can see three generations of US 60 Bridges – the oldest dating from before the turn of the last century.
- Paddle downstream alongside the Louisville Loop on one side, and Midland Golf Club on the other. This is a great stretch for spotting turtles sunning themselves (and for waving at Louisville Loop users)
- About ½ mile downstream from the access, the Fork takes a strong right hand turn. This is the “Oxbow”. If you are fishing, work the rock bank for great sunfish action. Directly downstream at the beginning of the pool is a great location to fish for Kentucky “Spotted” Bass.
- Once you make the turn, you’ll enter a long, slow pool. This was the site of minor skirmishing during the Civil War as Confederates posted pickets on the left stream bank.
- This section of the Fork is stocked with trout and this section is a top favorite of theirs. Look for areas with small streams entering and shade.
- At the end of this pool you’ll enter about a ½ mile long series of island and channels. Stay in the main river channel as this is where the water is during all months. This is where your skills as a paddler will pay dividends as one missed stroke and you may find your boat beached. No worries – get out, point your bow downstream and keep on going.
- At the end of this bend you will see one of The Parkland’s signature “Leaping Deer” bridges. On the left stream bank you’ll also see a strong creek entering the Fork. This is outflow from the MSD treatment plant. If it is a clear day, you’ll see fish congregating in this flow as it is filled with oxygen and tends to be a couple degrees cooler than the stream during the summer months.
- Continuing underneath I-64 you’ll approach a series of four islands. Pick your path carefully, but generally you want to stay to the right of all islands. Stop at any of them if the water levels are good and check out some of the fossils (some over 350 million years old) and freshwater mussel shells.
- The creek will now make a gentle turn to the right. This section can be tricky during low water as you’ll navigate between water willows and a steep bank. Sometimes the best paddling water puts you right on the stream bank.
- You’ll next see the second bridge Thornton Bridge. This is another leaping deer design and it separates two of the major “rooms” of Beckley Creek Park - the Egg Lawn on your right and the Humana Grand Allee on your left.
- After going under the bridge you’ll encounter a long slow pool that is framed by the Gheens Foundation Lodge. This is a great place to work on paddling skills and even try some maneuvers if interested.
- The Creekside Paddling Access steps are at the end of this pool on your right. Beckley Creek itself enters the Fork immediately downstream from the access.

Creekside to Fisherville Paddling Access – 4.7 miles (2.5-3 Hour Paddle)

- Go upstream from the access to practice your paddling strokes. This long, ¼ mile long pool is a great warm up spot. Go far enough up and you can see one of the Leaping Deer bridges that define the park's architectural style.
- The creek takes a left hand turn immediately after putting in and enters a series of channels and bars. In low water, you'll likely have to drag over some shallow spots. This continues for about 1/3 of a mile before you enter some slower flowing pools.
- The Flats – now you float through one of the most interesting parts of Floyds Fork – a section we call "The Flats". This is a very shallow section of water where the creek has worn its way down to bedrock. Very shallow in summer, but full of fun riffles and waves when the water is up.
- Going under the first bridge on this route – one of the "Leaping Deer" bridges of The Parklands, you'll now come into a series of pools as the creek approaches a steep cliff on the left. This is a great site for smallmouth bass fishing and spotting kingfishers.
- As the creek makes its right hand turn, you'll encounter the remains of the old Grosscourth Distiller Dam. Look for the old water intake facility on your left, and then the remains of the dam. This old, washed out dam creates some whitewater action in higher water. Believe it or not, the section of creek you are on now actually caught fire in the 1960's when the distillery burned to the ground. People say that the flames could be seen from Louisville.
- After the dam you will wind through a series of small channels mostly on river right. Be careful and alert as this section has a reputation for flipping the inattentive paddler.
- The next bridge you will see is the Echo Trail high bridge. The remains of an old white farmhouse are on your left.
- You have now left park property and will not be back in the park until you reach the take-out at Fisherville.
- Next up is the entry of Long Run, a tributary stream to Floyds Fork.
- Continuing downstream the Petersen Walnut Plantation shows up on your left. This is the largest walnut plantation east of the Mississippi and is now being managed for conservation purposes by Metro Parks.
- The creek makes a series of bends to the right as it approaches two bridges – first, the Norfolk Southern railroad trestle then the Taylorsville Road bridge. These bridges are notorious for catching debris after flood events, so be careful and take your time working through them. The general paddling route is to stay center for the trestle and then bare river right for the Taylorsville Road underpass.
- The creek continues working its way right after the bridge section coming upon the Fisherville Village and community. This picturesque community has a long history of connecting with the Fork. There are records of the Fork being used to ship commodities downstream from Fisherville.
- The next bridge you will go under is Taylorsville Lake Road. Look on the left for sandstone and limestone ledges. These are often home to swallows and rare plant species. The Fisherville Access will be on your right approximately 40 yards downstream from the bridge.

Fisherville Paddling Access to Cane Run Paddling Access – 4.3 miles in length (2.5 – 3 Hour Paddle)

- Immediately after entering the Fork you must work your way to the right bank and navigate a series of islands and small channels that can be challenging. After a brief respite of a slow pool, you'll find another narrow series of shoots to follow on river right.
- Pope Lick will enter on the right as the Fork takes a strong left-hand turn. Things settle out here into a longer pool. Whew.
- Continuing downstream you'll encounter, depending on water levels, either a gentle smooth float, or the first ledge of the trip. This six inch drop is evident in lower water levels – just keep your boat pointed downstream, build up some momentum and you'll sail through.
- Next up is the deepest pool on the trip. Every now and then try to find the bottom with your paddle. Some of these spots are more than five feet deep.
- Soon you'll see a bridge carrying the Louisville Loop. While not a true "Leaping Deer" bridge notice how the bridge conveys motion from the right to the left. This is a great place to hop out, go up and check out the Louisville Loop. Or stop under the bridge's shade for a picnic.
- Moving downstream for 1/3 mile, the next challenge is encountered. On the right you'll see a small channel carrying water. Most of the water LOOKS like it is going straight. It is not, take the small right channel. This will require some navigation and steering skills. At the close of this, you will have left the park. You are now on the stream and in one of the most remote sections of the park. The Louisville Loop will follow this route when it opens in 2015 and any construction you see is related to its development.
- After going through a series of chutes, you'll end up at a pool as the creek makes a gentle left bend. This continues for about 200 yards before the creek takes a hard left. Check out the "beach" on your left. This is a great spot to get out and look for fossils.
- The creek is now in a "pool and drop" stretch that goes for the remainder of the trip. You'll find long pools then sections of moving water, or during times of low flow, exceedingly low and shallow water. These are great sections of the creek to look for long nose gar sunning themselves during the afternoons. These pools also happen to be the best catfish sections on the creek. Also, be on the lookout for a carefully constructed stone walking path on your right in this section.
- Two streams enter the Fork on this section of the creek – and both are Cane Run. The old creek was dammed and moved to create more farmland in the bottoms. All of this land has been preserved in perpetuity by the Future Fund Land Trust.
- On this section during normal/low water conditions you'll have to pick your route carefully as little moves from left to right can result in different success rates for paddling versus getting stuck. Watch for inverted "V" shape patterns in the water – follow the "V" and you'll find the deeper water.
- Some of the most fun waves can be found at the end of this float – look for "waves" on the left. To "surf" these waves, aim your boat upstream and get into the wave, if the current is strong enough, it will hold your boat there in place. But be careful on entering and exiting as these waves like to flip boats that are sideways in the current.
- The take-out will come up on your left. It can be tricky to find, but there are signs. When the Fork makes a hard right hand turn, look for a creek entering in on the left. Go up this creek about 50 yards to the take-out that is an old road. Take out on your right.