

# Bluestone

National Scenic River

National Park Service

U. S. Department of the Interior

## Bluestone

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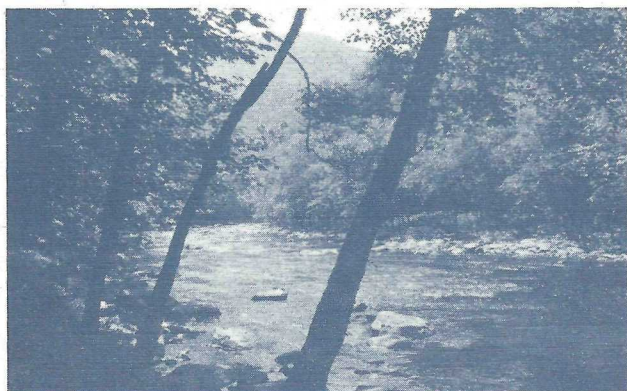
Bluestone National Scenic River (NSR) is a 10.5-mile section of the Bluestone River in southern West Virginia. It was created in 1988 under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and is protected by the National Park Service as a free-flowing river. This stretch of river is now preserved as a living landscape that provides an unspoiled experience for visitors, and a haven for a variety of plants and animals.

A small segment of Bluestone NSR lies within Pipestem Resort State Park. The remaining portion is utilized as a West Virginia Wildlife Management Area.

### Visiting the Bluestone

Bluestone NSR is located near Route 20 between Hinton and Athens, West Virginia, and is best reached through its two neighboring state parks, Bluestone State Park and Pipestem Resort State Park.

To reach Bluestone NSR from Bluestone State Park, follow signs for Old Mill Campground and continue to a small parking area near an iron gate. From Pipestem Resort State Park, Bluestone NSR can be accessed by an aerial tram (nominal fee, May – October) and via a rim-to-river trail, or viewed from rim overlooks.



## Bluestone History

The Bluestone River, named for the deep blue limestone streambed of its upper reaches in Virginia, has created a gorge 1,000 feet deep. The bottomland within the gorge of the Bluestone was first used by American Indians.

In the late 1700s, the Lilly, Meadow, and Farley families built homesteads along the river. At the confluence of the Bluestone and Little Bluestone rivers, the community of Lilly flourished. The Bluestone Turnpike, a riverbank road used by those who farmed and timbered the area until the 1940s, is used today by visitors to the park.

## Enjoying the Bluestone

The river and its gorge support an abundance of aquatic life, a variety of birds and mammals, and a diverse mix of forest types. The resources, size, and location of Bluestone NSR make it attractive for a daytime visit; it is not open to camping. Both adjoining state parks offer excellent campgrounds as well as other services not available within Bluestone NSR. A toll-free number, 1-800-CALLWVA, offers more information concerning WV state parks.

The Bluestone Turnpike Trail, which follows the river for eight miles from the Mountain Creek Lodge (at the base of the tram at Pipestem Resort State Park) to Bluestone State Park, is both a hiking and biking trail. Since hunting is permitted within the Wildlife Management Area of Bluestone NSR, hikers and hunters should wear blaze orange and use caution during hunting season.

The Bluestone River is a warmwater fishery for catfish and smallmouth bass; fishing requires a West Virginia fishing license. Opportunities for canoeing and kayaking are limited — the spring paddling season is most likely to provide adequate water levels. The Pipestem Resort State Park tram will transport canoes and kayaks as well as bicycles for an additional charge.



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