

Exploring the river

**WILDLANDS CONSERVANCY'S
LEHIGH RIVER SOJOURN**
2005
June 24-27

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Colorful cool-down

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Lehigh River Sojourn -- Day 2

Megan Hetrick

Today, the Sojourn started at White Haven for our 12 mile rafting expedition. It was a beautiful day for rafting. Rafting is pretty similar to canoeing. You need to avoid rocks while trying to keep the raft straight. The day was more enjoyable thanks to Chris Kocher. Chris is the Chief Program Office for the Wildlands Conservancy. He pointed out the best lines to take through the rapids. The water was warm, perfect for a swim. Andy, Tony, and I took many swims. Over one set of rapids Andy almost fell overboard, like the 10 people who did.

We rafted past the Lehigh Tannery on the left, and Buttermilk Falls on the right. The worst part was the walk back to the bus, but that was a beautiful walk past Drakes Creek. We would like to thank Pocono Whitewater for the transportation to the river and for the rafts. I, Travis, had a wonderful day on the river today. The beautiful, 26 mile gorge was reason enough to be there. This stretch of river was full of private boaters, but they stayed out of our way. We didn't hit many rocks, but when we did we hit them hard. We also hit some really good lines. Our raft went over a shelf and a wall of water came crashing over us. I had a very enjoyable day today.

I, Andy, had a lot of fun today on the river. We started our trip in White Haven, and went to Drakes Creek. At first, the water seemed cold, but it felt wonderful after a minute or two. When we first set out, we couldn't get going, so we had to move farther out into the river. The only thing I was concerned about other than making it back in one piece, was to keep reapplying my sunscreen. I did not want sunburn right before I went to boy scout camp. There were many rapids, which made the trip extremely fun, and challenging. We would jump out of our rafts to go swimming often, because it was very hot out. The water level was a lot higher today, so it was easier to paddle, and not hit rocks, but the were some large rocks that we could not avoid. Today was the best day so far, and I hope that the river is this high tomorrow.

Today was a new experience for me, Tony, rafting on the Lehigh River. I found this to be a lot of fun and enjoyable for almost everyone. The Francis E. Walter Dam released 600 cfs which made the trip a lot easier. We were not the only ones on the river; various companies as well as people just by themselves were on the river. They were kayaking, canoeing, and rafting everywhere. This appeared to be a very popular stretch of the Lehigh River. There were many rapids and waves which made the trip very exciting. At the end of our trip we pulled out at Drakes Creek where the water was a lot cooler than the river itself. This creek appeared to be a beautiful fishing stream with wild trout. It was however, an extremely small stream, but it did have a great amount of fish. One man that we spoke to told us he caught 20 brook trout. This was a great day and I hope we get to go rafting again.

While sitting in the pavilion after dinner, Nevin Cope showed us how to make slide whistles out of a maple branch. It was an intricate process that required great skill. My first attempt at making a whistle did not result in success. The wrong end of the twig came off ending this attempt. Tonight I will try my hand at this again and hopefully it will be a success.

