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Caption: The D&R Canal State Park features a flat towpath trail that is popular for biking, walking, and running.

‘Tour de Towpath’ Event Will Celebrate D&R Canal State Park’s 50th Anniversary in October

TRENTON, NEW JERSEY – Fifty years ago this October, New Jersey Governor Brendan Byrne signed legislation to create the D&R Canal State Park, now a 70-mile linear park passing through four Central Jersey counties. To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the park and the D&R Canal Commission, the nonprofit [D&R Canal Watch](http://www.dandrcanalwatch.org) has announced a walk-run-bike event called **Tour de Towpath**, centered at Cadwalader Park in Trenton on Saturday, October 26. Registration is now open at www.tourdetowpath.org.

“The D&R Canal State Park is the second-most visited New Jersey State Park and one of the state’s best outdoor recreation resources. The Tour de Towpath is the perfect way to increase awareness and celebrate the park and Canal Commission, said Linda Barth, President of D&R Canal Watch, a nonprofit group that organizes volunteer projects and raises funds for the park.

The Tour de Towpath will feature a flagship 50-mile bicycle route to Colonial Park in Franklin Township, as well as a 20-mile cycling route to Princeton’s Turning Basin Park, a non-competitive half-marathon run/walk to Washington Crossing State Park in Hopewell and a 5k fun run/walk. A festival at the City of Trenton’s Cadwalader Park will greet participants upon their return with music, food, and a community village featuring local non-profits.

"As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the D&R Canal State Park with the Tour de Towpath event, we honor not only the beauty and importance of the canal but also the dedication of the community and organizations that support it," said Trenton Mayor Reed Gusciora. "I encourage everyone to join us for a day of fitness, fun, and festivities as we come together to recognize this remarkable park and its impact on our region."

All registered volunteers and participants will receive an event T-shirt. To register or donate, visit the event website as TourdeTowpath.org. Registration is \$50 in advance and \$60 the morning of the event; volunteer registration is free.

"We are grateful for the support of the New Jersey State Parks, the Canal Commission, the City of Trenton, and more than a dozen businesses and nonprofit groups, including our lead sponsor, Capital Health," said Canal Watch's Linda Barth.

"We're thrilled to support the Tour de Towpath and help mark an important milestone for the D&R Canal State Park," said Al Maghazehe, President and CEO of Capital Health. "Capital Health and the D&R Canal are woven into the fabric of our region, and we couldn't be happier to be part of an event that promotes the health and wellbeing of the communities we serve."

Canal History & Other Events

The Canal Commission, established under the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park Law of 1974, is a state regulatory agency responsible for preserving and protecting the D&R Canal as a historic and natural resource as well as a water supply system that provides drinking water to an estimated 1 million people in central New Jersey.

As part of the 50th anniversary of the D&R Canal State Park and Commission, New Jersey State Parks is holding a public celebration at Prallsville Mill in Stockton on September 14, 2024, from 2 to 5pm. The public will be able to meet the many partner organizations who assist with the preservation and education of the environmental and historic resources of the D&R Canal State Park, see park inspired photography, tour the mill buildings, enjoy street tacos, and hear live music.

The D&R Canal was built in the 1830s and operated for nearly 100 years, bringing coal, agricultural products, and other goods to New York City from New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Before the days of steam engines, canal boats were towed by mules that used the towpath parallel to the canal. Once its work was supplanted by freight trains, the canal was abandoned and reverted to state ownership. After several decades, the state decided to preserve the canal and use it as a recreation resource and public water supply.

The D&R Canal State Park passes through the counties of Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, and Somerset. The park's 70-mile-long towpath is part of larger trail networks, including Circuit Trails, East Coast Greenway, and September 11th National Memorial Trail.

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