

## Tubing the Esopus Creek

Located in the heart of the Catskill Mountains is a five mile stretch of river that has become one of the most popular tubing courses around. People come from all over to ride the rapids and drift with the currents of the Esopus Creek. The Esopus Creek is located in the Ulster County section of the Catskill Mountains. From its source high on Slide Mountain, it flows 26 miles to the Ashokan Reservoir. As a link in the New York City water system, the Esopus receives a huge flow of water through a tunnel from the bottom of the Schoharie Reservoir. This 50-60 degree water then crashes down stream over a boulder strewn bottom creating excellent white water conditions for tube runs. Your transport down this creek is nothing more than the soft inner tube of a truck tire. It's a giant black rubber donut with a wooden board lashed with nylon rope in the hole for a seat. Cleverly fashioned from that rope is a pair of handles that you will need to hang on for dear life.



There are two tubing courses to choose from. The five mile Upper Course, which begins at the water release point on the creek known as the portal, takes 2 hours to complete. This course is recommended for adults since it is much more challenging due to larger, faster and more frequent rapids. The four mile Lower Course, which is recommended for children and families, takes 1 hour and 45 minutes to complete. While the water on this course has a swift current, the rapids are smaller and less frequent. Another factor that determines the intensity of the rapids is the percentage of the water release. The water release from the portal is

generally only 30% of the maximum release, however once a month there is a 100% water release. This full water release brings the creek level up a few feet generating fewer rocks and much faster rapids. If you have never tubed before, it is a good idea to complete the Lower Course first on a full water release weekend.

With the water temperature between 50-60 degrees, when you first step into the water it is cold. Some choose to wear a wetsuit, however when the air temperature hits 80 degrees it really isn't necessary. In fact, during a good heat wave, the water is quite refreshing. Once you drift further down the creek the water seems to get warmer. I am not sure if this is due to the sun heating up the water or the fact that you are too busy anticipating the next rapid to think about the water temperature.

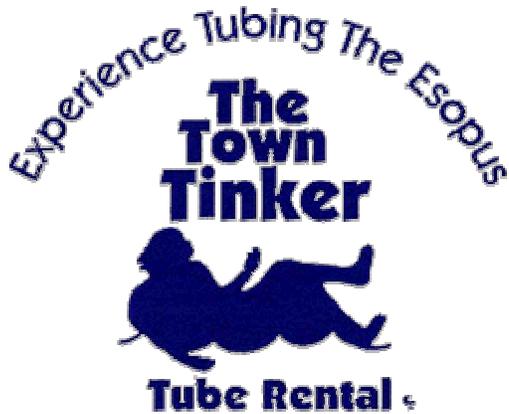


All this talk about rapids brings up a good point: Is tubing the Esopus safe? Despite the rocks and the fast current, I think it's about as safe as your bathtub. It may seem scary at times, but as long as you don't panic, you'll be fine. Richie Bedner, the owner of F-S Tube & Raft Rental in the town of Phoenicia located along the Esopus, is looking out for you. He will not allow children to take the Upper Course. "The kids will be sad, but at least they'll be alive," he says, "And when the adults come back from the Upper Course they'll be thanking me." Richie will tell you everything you need to

know for a safe, fun time. And when the creek gets too fast or the obstacles are too dangerous, he won't let you go. All in all, if it is a hot day, there is no better way to cool off than to take a wild and fun ride down the Esopus.

### ***Directions from Hunter NY :***

Rt 23A To Rt 214 South for 11.3 miles to Phoenicia. Once in Phoenicia,  
4 Church Street  
Phoenicia, New York 845 688-7633  
F-S will be on the right side behind the Phoenicia Pharmacy.



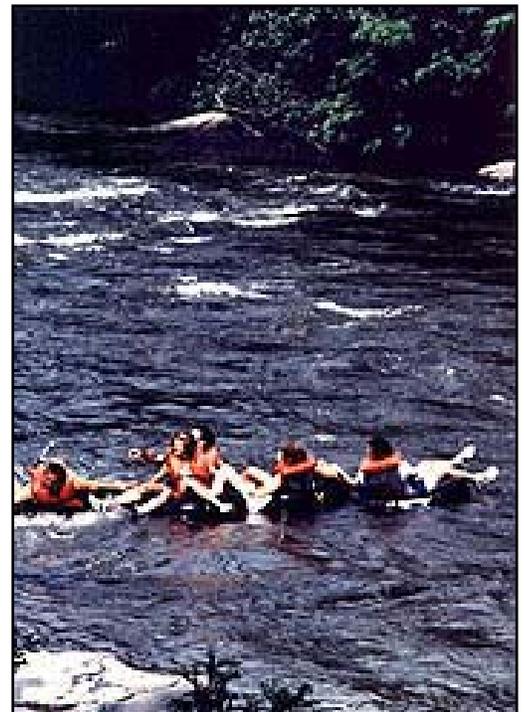
Since the days of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn, the image of floating down a river on a hot summer day has always created a sense of adventure.

Located in the heart of the Catskill Mountains is a five mile stretch of river that has become one of the most popular tubing courses around. People come from all over to ride the rapids and drift with the current as the Esopus Creek winds through the beautiful mountains and greenery of the Catskills.

If you've never tubed before, head for the Town Tinker Tube Rental headquarters on Bridge St. in **Phoenicia, NY**. There the expertly trained Town Tinker staff will rent you all the equipment

you need, as well as giving you tubing instructions and safety tips.

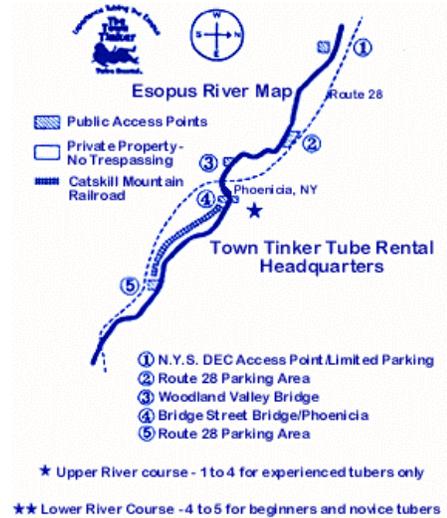
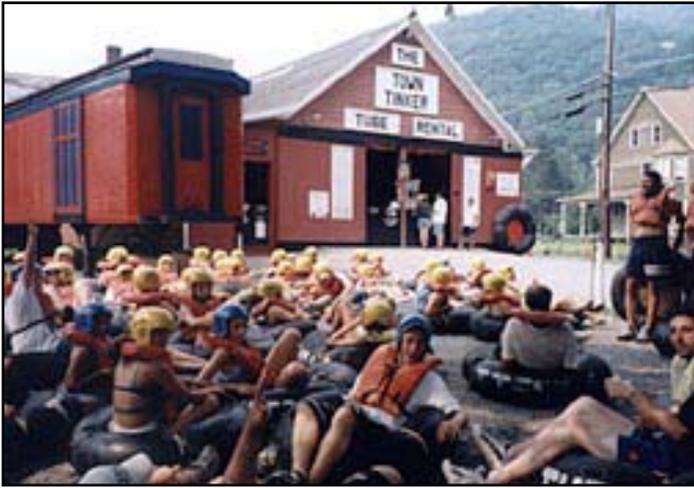
Town Tinker has two tubing courses, novice and expert. As the name implies, the novice course is for first-time tubers and those who prefer a gentler ride down the creek; the expert course is for more experienced tubers. Each course is about 2 1/2 miles long and each takes about 2 hours. The novice course begins near the Town Tinker headquarters on Bridge St. This course has a variety of exciting rapids, fun flumes, and calmer stretches just made for drifting. At the end of this course, either our Town Tinker Tube Taxis (weekdays) or the Catskill Mountain Railroad (weekends and holidays) will be your transportation back to Bridge St. The expert course, which is definitely more challenging and contains the best of the whitewater, begins 2 1/2 miles upstream from headquarters. Transportation to the entry point is by Town Tinker Tube Taxis. Along the expert course, you'll encounter larger, faster sets of rapids with names like "Railroad Rapids" and "The Chute". Any way you like it, you can find it on the Esopus Creek.



Of course, tubing, like other recreations and sports, has its hazards as well as good points, but common sense and following a few tubing tips can diminish the problems.

Tubing is fun, it's cheap and almost anyone can have a good time tubing...friends, families and people of all ages.

**Children must be over 12 years old and good swimmers.**



## General Information and Safety Tips

1. Children must be 12 years old and good swimmers.
2. Bathing suits or shorts and a shirt to protect against sunburn are appropriate attire.
3. Wear old sneakers to protect your feet.
4. Helmets are recommended for everyone and required for those under 14 years old.
5. Wetsuits are recommended due to the cold water temperature, usually under 60 degrees Fahrenheit.
6. Eyeglass retainers are a must for those who wear glasses.
7. Do not take valuables (rings, jewelry, etc.) or car keys with you in the creek. Key and article check available.
8. Tube with a friend or in a group so as to have help in case of an emergency.
9. Steer away from fallen trees as the swift current may trap you in the branches. It is essential to navigate, which is accomplished by paddling with your hands and kicking with your feet. Stay in the middle of the river or the deepest running water where you'll have fewer obstacles to deal with.
10. If you fall out of a tube, don't panic! Grab the tube! It's a flotation device and will keep your head above water. Once you have the tube, place it in front of you, down-river, and use it as a cushion between you and anything you might run into. Let your legs trail behind you and swim behind the tube to avoid hitting your legs on submerged rocks. If you are unable to grab hold of the tube, position yourself so that you are going downstream feet first, not head first, and maneuver yourself over to the bank or other place of safety.
11. It is dangerous to stand up in water that is more than knee-deep. Feet can be trapped, and swift currents can easily knock you over.
12. In the event of thunder storms and lightning, exit the water immediately.

**Do Not Trespass, Litter, or Take Food and Drinks in the Creek!**

## *Directions from Hunter NY :*

Rt 23A To Rt 214 South for 11.3 miles to Phoenicia. Once in Phoenicia, Make Right turn onto Bridge street. The Town Tinker Tube barn is painted barn red with white trim. You can't miss it!

### ***Town Tinker Tube Rentals***

**Bridge Street, Phoenicia, N.Y.**

**Open May 15 through September 30 9:00 - 6:00 Daily**

**Reservations - 845-688-5553**