

## Creating A Water Trail

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What is a Water Trail?

A water trail is a route along a river or across other bodies of water such as a lake for people using small boats like kayaks and canoes. Water trails are most often identified by the land facilities that support water travel. These include launch and landing sites, campsites, rest areas and other points of interest. Your water trail can be informational by offering interpretive trails on natural, social or industrial history, changes in the environment, historic bridges, or wildlife habitat.

### **Why a Water Trail?**

#### **Water trails are good for your organization**

Creating a water trail can help your organization establish a presence in your community that can be helpful when you fight for river protection in the future. A water trail is a great way for your organization to connect with organizations protecting neighboring riverways or in the same watershed--even connect with groups that share your common interest in natural resource protection and enjoyment of the outdoors, such as cycling groups.

#### **Water trails are good for your community**

Water trails provide an opportunity for community involvement around your area's waterways. Water trails help people connect with their natural resources and help foster an understanding of the importance of clean water in the minds of community members. Depending on what kind of interpretive trail you create, water trails can teach the community about the history, habitat, or development of their community. Water trails are a valuable resource for recreation, education and stewardship.

#### **Water trails are good for your river**

Your water trail can increase and improve public access and environmentally sensitive launch, landing, and camping sites for non-motorized boats along the water trail. A water trail can encourage communities, counties, businesses and individuals to support, promote and connect to the area's natural resources.

### **Creating a Water Trail**

"Guiding Principles for Water Trails" were created by North American Water Trails, Inc. and the Rivers and Trails program of the National Parks Service. To see these principles, [click here](#) One of the great things about Wisconsin is the accessibility of our rivers and streams. In most cases, your organization will not need to build a launch/landing site for your water trail.

However, if there is a shortage of publicly accessible launch/landing sites and construction seems a viable option, please see the National Park Service's information on "[Logical Lasting Launches.](#)"

The Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network has created a comprehensive toolkit on planning, building, and managing a water trail. There is an impressive amount of knowledge on this website, [take a look](#).

## **Contacts and Links to Water Trail Webpages**

### **In Wisconsin**

Wisconsin DNR, Water Trails in Wisconsin, list of water trails across the state:

<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/parks/watertrails/>

Capitol Water Trails, LTD is a nonprofit organization invested in water trails around Madison. For maps of some Dane County water trails, click here:

<http://www.capitolwatertrails.org/maps.php>

Wyalusing State Park Water Trail:

<http://www.wyalusing.org/canopark.htm>

Lake Superior Water Trail:

<http://www.nps.gov/sacn/planyourvisit/index.htm>

Contact: Inland Sea Society 715.682.8188

Washburn County Canoe Routes with trail descriptions and maps:

<http://www.co.washburn.wi.us/departments/forestry/info/canoeing.htm>

St. Croix National Scenic Riverway website has maps with landing information, campsites and bathroom facilities on several stretches of the St. Croix:

<http://www.nps.gov/sacn/trip/maps.html>

### **Menominee River Water Trail:**

Menominee Watershed Canoe Trail maps are available at:

[info@florencewisconsin.com](mailto:info@florencewisconsin.com)

<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/parks/name/menominee/trails.html>

This website provides a map of Wisconsin with links to descriptions of major rivers:

<http://www.wisconline.com/attractions/canoerivers.html>

Kickapoo River Water Trail:

<http://kvr.state.wi.us/category.asp?linkcatid=1971&linkid=949&locid=115>

Milwaukee Urban Water Trail:

<http://www.mkeriverkeeper.org/content/milwaukee-urban-water-trail>

## **Other Places**

Pittsburgh Water Trails

<http://www.friendsoftheriverfront.org/>

The Alexander Mackenzie Voyageur Route

<http://www.amvr.org/>

## **Funding Sources**

Federal Recreational Trails Program is an assistance program of the Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both nonmotorized and motorized recreational trail uses.

<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails/>

Wisconsin Recreational Trails Program will fund water trails that are motorboat accessible.

<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/cfa/LR/Section/rectrails.html>

The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program funds trail development and enhancement, along with development of trailside facilities. 50% match.

<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/stewardship/>

Wisconsin Department of Administration Coastal Management Grants will fund projects that enhance and restore coastal resources within the state's coastal zone – all counties adjacent to Lakes Superior and Michigan, with their 820 miles of shoreline.

<http://www.doa.state.wi.us/section.asp?linkid=65&locid=9>

## **Technical Resources**

National Park Service Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance Program is a community resource that provides technical assistance to community groups and local, State, and federal government agencies so they can conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways.

<http://www.nps.gov/rtca/>