



Community Support

Kansas River Water Trail

Best Management Practice Goal: The water trail actively engages local communities and trail users, who provide support and advocacy for the maintenance and stewardship of the water trail.

Key Questions

Public Opinion

- What is the public opinion of the water trail? What is the community's opinion about or reaction to increased use?
- Have surveys been conducted to assess public opinion?
- How do local media cover the water trail?
- How does the trail reach out to local media?
- Who uses the trail? In what capacity? What improvements would they like to see?
- Have local governments supported the trail?
- Is there opposition to the trail? If so, has it been addressed?

Partnerships and Outreach

- Does the trail have a broad support base (a variety of individuals and organizations, including local business and industry (eg. outfitters and water supply companies), state, federal, and local government, landowners, and conservation, recreation, and tourism advocates)?
- Does the water trail have partner organizations? Is annual contact made with the partner organizations?
- Does the water trail association or do partners host events? How often? How many people attend?
- How many volunteers have been involved in the water trail?

- Does the water trail actively seek or attain publicity for its efforts?

Landowner Relationships

- Have landowners along the waterway been contacted about the water trail or surveyed?
- Are agreements in place with landowners?
- Have landowners provided support (written, through stewardship/volunteer efforts, or otherwise?)
- Is annual contact made with landowners?

Funding

- Do organizations, foundations, or local municipalities support the trail with dollars, grants, or in-kind services?
- Do state or federal agencies support the trail with dollars, grants, or in-kind services?

Economic Impacts

- Have any studies been completed on the economic impact of the water trail?

Examples

Public Opinion

- Riverside Kayak Connections created web-based pre- and post-program surveys to assess previous program attendance, their level of paddling experience, and collect demographic information.
- A Sea Kayak Survey in Minnesota examined sea kayak use along the north shore of Lake Superior, interest in and barriers to sea kayak use and kayak-camping in this area, and characteristics of sea kayak owners. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources wanted information about use before it provided additional amenities and maps for the Lake Superior Water Trail.

Partnerships and Outreach

- The Willamette River Water Trail has a memorandum of understanding that formalizes partnership relationships in order to accomplish mutually-held goals.
- The Northern Forest Canoe trail has an agreement with a partner organization to maintain kiosks and access sites along the trail.
- The Roanoke River Partners have an adopt-a-platform contract for groups that agree to be stewards for access along the trail.
- The Waccamaw River Blue Trail has a blank adopt-a-landing agreement for partner groups.

Landowner Relationships

- A 2010 study assessed landowner attitudes along the Luling Paddle Trail in central Texas before and after the paddle trail opened.
- A landowner permission form is geared toward landowners providing river access on their properties and includes language stating that the landowner has liability protection unless they charge a fee.
- *Public Access Guide for Landowners, Water Trails, and River Managers* at www.river-management.org/water-trails

Funding

- The Mississippi National Recreation River works with the Friends of the Mississippi River to host an annual Mississippi River Challenge to raise money for a cleaner, healthier river.
- Funding Resources available from www.bluetrailsguide.org/funding-resources/

Economic Impacts

- *Making an Economic Case for Watertrails* at www.river-management.org/water-trails
- A 2012 Pennsylvania Water Trail Economic Impact Study reviewed economic impacts of water trail visitors and water trails on the state economy.
- A 2007 economic impact study was completed by the Northern Forest Canoe Trail