



Maintenance

Missouri National Recreational River Water Trail
Credit: NPS

BMP Goal: The water trail managers demonstrate ability to support routine and long-term maintenance investments on the water trail. Facilities are designed, constructed, and maintained by incorporating sustainability principles.

Key Questions

Launch and Access Site Design

- Given the characteristics of the water body, flow, shoreline, riparian vegetation, and types of users accessing the launch, which site location is most appropriate?
- What types of watercraft will be launched? What is the user experience level? How frequently will the launch be used and how many people will use it at one time? Is the launch large enough to accommodate users on a typical day?
- Do any environmental issues need to be addressed?
- Is there a firm and stable surface with sufficient space to accommodate watercraft length?
- Can paddlers easily get in and out of their watercraft? Is the access safe?
- Can the launch withstand varying flow levels (floods, droughts, tides), currents, and exposure to the elements throughout the year? Does the design take into account possible channel migration or bank changes over time?
- Does the launch design minimize riverbank and vegetation disturbance during construction and over time?
- Do the designs comply with regulations?
- Is the launch designed with maximum user accessibility in mind?

Trail Maintenance

- Is it clear who maintains which segments of trail?
- Are there partnership or adopt-a-trail agreements?

Signage

- Is there a plan for creating and locating signs?
- Do signs along the water trail follow consistent standards? What information do signs provide (for example, safety, navigation, stewardship, interpretation)?
- Are hazards adequately and consistently signed?



Willamette River Water Trail

Examples

Launch and Access Site Design

- *Prepare to Launch! Resource: Guidelines For Assessing, Designing & Building Access Sites For Carry-In Watercraft*
- Willamette River Design Notebook: This notebook sets forth a design methodology for riverbank design concepts. Its main purpose is to establish a common frame of reference and common goals for all parties concerned with development at the river's edge.
- *Developing Water Trails in Iowa*: See Chapter 3, Design Development, for guidelines and sample designs for launches and access sites. This resource is specific to Iowa but is adaptable for any river with similar conditions.
- St. Clair County, home of Island Loop Water Trail, created a powerpoint on how they created launches accessible to users who might be limited by existing facilities.
- A document inventoried and analyzed existing access sites as part of a planning process during the creation of the Lake Michigan Water Trail.

Trail Maintenance

- The Roanoke River Partners have an adopt-a-platform group contract for adoption groups.
- The Connecticut River Water Trail has come up with a guide for developing campsites including selecting locations, working with landowners, and campsite maintenance, including a checklist of tasks to complete during campsite opening, mid-season, and closing.
- The Northern Forest Canoe Trail has a kiosk maintenance agreement with partners.

Sign Creation

- Delaware River Sign Plan: A plan for creating consistent signs for the water trail, including flowcharts of possible sign types and a basic description of management of a GIS-based sign database.
- NASBLA Paddlesports Committee has created universal sign recommendations.
- Schuykill River Sign Design Manual: A sign master plan document that can be used as a reference for others creating sign design guidelines or manuals.