

Recreation

Black Canyon Water Trail
Credit: Izzy Collet, Desert Adventures

BMP Goal: The water trail route has established public access points that accommodate a diversity of trip lengths and provide access to a variety of opportunities for recreation and education.

Key Questions

Recreation Info and Facilities

- What is the total trail length?
- Has a gap analysis been done to determine distances between access points? What user groups will paddle these distances? Is there a need for a greater variety of segment lengths?
- What types of watercraft will the trail support?
- Are segments categorized by the types of experience they provide to users (for example, Iowa categorizes segments as gateway, recreational, challenge, and wilderness)?
- Are stopping points categorized by access type (hike-in, drive-in, water access, emergency only)?
- Are there safety considerations that should be addressed on the trail?
- Are there any portages due to dams or obstructions?
- Have universal design practices been taken into account to construct all facilities in ways that integrate users of varying abilities?
- Has accessibility information (ramp slope, material, design, public information, etc.) been described so that users with varying levels of ability can determine whether they will be able to use facilities? Is this information widely available?
- Have existing facilities been listed and mapped at each site (including launch type, parking, picnic tables, visitor centers, toilets, grills, firepits, electricity, campsites, cabins, camp platforms, swimming,

beaches, overnight parking, public water supply, etc.)? What facilities need to be planned?

- Are there any outfitters, marinas, rental shops providing equipment or access to the river?

Rules and Permitted Activities

- Are there regulations about topics including trip length, group size, permits or reservations, navigability, overnight stays, motorized vs. nonmotorized use, hours open, times of year open, etc.? Are these regulations communicated to the public in a variety of ways?
- What recreational activities are allowed in which sites along the water trail?
- Is the infrastructure in place for these activities to occur safely and legally?

Connectivity

- Are there connections with other water trails? What connections could be created?
- Are there connections with land trails? What connections could be created?
- Are there connections with public transit networks including buses, bike trails, rail systems, sidewalks, and pedestrian paths? What connections could be created?



Island Loop Water Trail

Credit: Lori Eishenburg, Paddlepour

Examples

General

- *Prepare to Launch! Guidelines for Assessing, Designing, and Building Launch Sites for Carry-in Watercraft* is a resource designed to help river and water trail managers and park planners build put-in and take-out sites as they address the evolving needs of paddlers and other users.

Recreation Info and Facilities

- The Department of Natural Resources in Iowa has categorized its river reaches, segments, and access sites into the types of experiences that are available to users (see section 2).
- The Seaside Water Trail in Virginia has done an excellent assessment of the environmental impacts of facilitating visitor camping and how to potentially minimize those impacts.
- Sunfish Lake Park in Ramsey, MN has a free self-serve canoe rental system with a swipe-card so registered users can check out boats.

Access, Routes, and Mapping

- To find information and documents pertaining to access, routes, and maps, see the Public Information section of the toolbox.

Connectivity

- The Mississippi National River and Recreation Area has created an online interactive map to integrate the water trail into the regional transportation networks. The map shows bikeshare stations, bike routes, bus stops, rail stations, and streets so people can access the river through many forms of transportation.