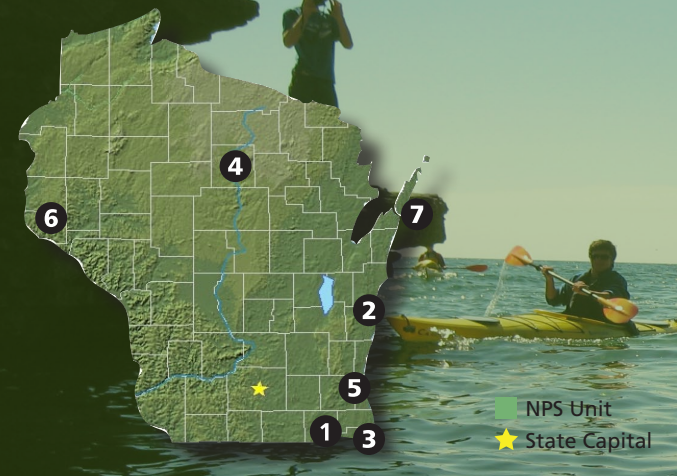




# Wisconsin News



Wisconsin's Lake Michigan Water Trail

## PROJECTS AND PARTNERS 2012

### Current Projects

1. Hack-ma-tack National Wildlife Refuge  
McHenry County Conservation District
2. Lake Michigan Water Trail, Wisconsin Segment  
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
3. Lake Michigan Water Trail Organizational Development  
NW Indiana Paddling Association
4. Merrill's Wisconsin Riverfront East-West Trail  
River District Development Foundation of Merrill
5. Milwaukee River Greenway Trails  
Milwaukee River Greenway Coalition
6. Mississippi River Trail & Collaborative Support  
Mississippi River Trail, Inc.
7. Niagara Escarpment Greenway Plan  
Niagara Escarpment Resource Network (NERN)

### ABOUT US

The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program is the community assistance arm of the National Park Service. RTCA staff provides technical assistance to community groups and local, state, and federal government agencies working to protect natural areas and water resources and enhance close-to-home outdoor recreation opportunities. We help communities plan, organize partnerships, and achieve on-the-ground success on projects they initiate.

## Recent Successes

### Lake Michigan Water Trail – Wisconsin Segment Gap Analysis Completed

Paddlers and communities interested in using and enhancing the Lake Michigan Water Trail can now find current information due to the completion of an access site gap analysis. The entire 530-mile long Wisconsin shoreline was reviewed by paddlers and planners as a key first step in developing the water trail.

The “Inventory and Analysis of Access Sites in Support of a Lake Michigan Water Trail” consists of two major parts. All public access sites were identified and evaluated for inclusion; those selected were classified by category for inclusion on the map. Segments of shoreline that lacked opportunities for paddler camping and day access were identified and the areas of greatest need will be targeted for new public land acquisition.

RTCA provided guidance in developing the gap analysis and public involvement and will continue to provide assistance in developing a map, website, and brochure; seeking National Water Trail System designation; and coordinating with other water trail planners. Key partners included the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission. More information: [http://dnr.wi.gov/master\\_planning/lakemichigan/](http://dnr.wi.gov/master_planning/lakemichigan/)

*“The Lake Michigan Water Trail has greatly benefited from assistance provided by the RTCA Program. The water trail experience that the program staff brought to the project was invaluable.”*

Angela Pierce, Planner  
Bay – Lake Regional Planning Commission

# Current Projects

## 1. Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge

Project Partner: McHenry County Conservation District

RTCA Contact: Diane Banta

Location: Bi-state Region, IL / WI

Congressional Districts: IL - 8, 16

### Project Goal

Preserve ecologically important lands totaling approximately 5,000 acres in Northeast Illinois and Southeast Wisconsin as a National Wildlife Refuge with an established Friends Group which oversees the work process and partnership.

### NPS Role

Guide Friends of Hack-ma-tack through the process of defining the potential National Wildlife Refuge, defining acres to be protected, partnership building, and public involvement opportunities while building a sustainable non-profit organization.

## 2. Lake Michigan Water Trail, Wisconsin Segment

Project Partner: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

RTCA Contact: Angie Tornes

Location: WI Lake Michigan shorelines

Congressional Districts: WI - 1, 4, 5, 6, 8

### Project Goal

Create a 533-mile water trail along the Wisconsin Shorelines of Lake Michigan and Green Bay. A gap analysis identifying zones where public access is needed; these would be targeted for future land acquisition. Develop a branding strategy/logo and provide educational opportunities to encourage better understanding of the need to help protect the lake's ecosystem.

### NPS Role

Contribute expertise in developing previous large water trail projects, e.g., Lake Superior Water Trail. Lead public participation efforts. Facilitate future partnerships with organizations that can help implement and build the water trail.



Lake Michigan Water Trail on a foggy day.

## 3. Lake Michigan Watertrail Organizational Development

Project Partner: Lake Michigan Water Trail Association

RTCA Contact: Diane Banta

Location: IL, IN, MI, WI

Congressional District: IL - 2

### Project Goal

Build a partnership organization to work on the Lake Michigan Water Trail which will provide access to Lake Michigan in four states through numerous landings and access points while marketing the trail for increased tourism and economic development opportunities.

### NPS Role

Convene quad state paddler organizations, local governments, and state governments to set vision, mission, and goals/outcomes leading to the designation of the 200-mile Lake Michigan Water Trail as a National Water Trail.

## 4. Merrill s Wisconsin Riverfront East-West Trail

Project Partner: River District Development Foundation of Merrill

RTCA Contact: Angie Tornes

Location: Merrill, WI

Congressional District: WI - 7

### Project Goal

Build a 2.5-mile trail along the Wisconsin River that would serve as a backbone to a trail system along the Wisconsin and Prairie Rivers in Merrill. The trail would link downtown and residential areas of Merrill with a popular recreation complex and Council Grounds State Park on the edge of town.

### NPS Role

Assist the community in identifying steps toward developing the backbone of a trail system along the Wisconsin and Prairie Rivers in Merrill. Develop a vision/mission statement for the trail. Assist in public involvement and developing a concept plan for the trail and its connections.

# Current Projects cont.

## 5. Milwaukee River Greenway Trails

Project Partner: Milwaukee River Greenway Coalition  
RTCA Contact: Angie Tornes  
Location: Downtown Milwaukee River Corridor  
Congressional District: WI - 4

### Project Goal

A 13-mile signed riverside trail that links neighborhoods with open space and that greatly improves public access to, understanding of, and stewardship for this unique urban historical and ecological resource.

### NPS Role

Assist in forming trails advisory committee; provide technical assistance on trail planning and construction; assist in developing action agenda. A trail management plan that identifies trails needing relocating or restoration; the development of trail signage plan; suggestions for funding implementation of both.

## 6. Mississippi River Connections Collaborative/Mississippi River Trail

Project Partner: Mississippi River Trail, Inc. (MRT)  
RTCA Contact: Rory Robinson  
Location: Mississippi River, MN, WI, IA, IL, MO, KY, TN, AR, MS, LA  
Congressional Districts: AR - 1, 4; IA - 1, 2, 4; IL - 12, 16, 17; KY - 1; LA - 3, 5, 6; MN; MO - 1, 2, 3, 8, 9; MS - 2, 3; TN - 8, 9; WI - 3, 7

### Project Goal

Outreach to local communities to encourage improvements to the MRT River Trail for improved recreation, tourism, and community development; continued technical assistance in the development of an organization strategic plan to support MOU objectives and increase long-term organizational viability; further develop to Mississippi River's blueway portion of the trail



Enjoying the Niagara Escarpment Greenway

system; technical support for identification as part of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

### NPS Role

To assist the Mississippi River Connections Collaborative with organizational development, outreach to other organizations and agencies, and development and implementation of their strategic and operations plans. Increase MRT's capacity to help develop water and land-based trail along the Mississippi River.

## 7. Niagara Escarpment Greenway

Project Partner: Niagara Escarpment Resource Network (NERN)  
RTCA Contact: Angie Tornes  
Location: Door, Kewaunee, Brown, Calumet, Fond du Lac, and Dodge counties  
Congressional District: WI - 6

### Project Goal

The project will identify and map out a 170-mile greenway corridor associated with the Niagara Escarpment geologi-

cal formation. Existing resource and recreation-based nodes will be identified in order to develop a connected network of regional and local sites which may include off-road and on-road walking and bike trails/routes as well as driving routes.

### NPS Role

Assist with revising goals and objectives for the draft greenway plan; assist in the assessment of resources, particularly aesthetics; assist in the development of a concept plan with broad indications of 1) greenways which incorporate priority conservation areas and 2) a wide main corridor and side trail connectors. Assist in developing public involvement and media relations. Assist in identifying potential funding sources and strategies for implementation.

## We're Here For You.

Could your project benefit  
from RTCA Staff Assistance?  
Contact us to find out.



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## 2011 Nationwide Partnership Success

1,991 Miles of Trail Developed

1,925 Miles of River Conserved

33,230 Acres of Open Space and  
Parkland Protected

94% Percentage of Community  
Partners Satisfied

Find more information online  
at

[www.nps.gov/rtca](http://www.nps.gov/rtca)



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# Recent Successes

## Kinnickinnic River Trail Connection Provided Through Multi-Objective Design

A significant extension link to Kinnickinnic River Trail was provided this year with the construction the Sixth Street Bridge in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. A 15-foot wide concrete platform was constructed beneath the bridge to accommodate bicycles, pedestrians, and maintenance vehicles as part of a project to improve the waterway and enhance flood management.

Approximately 1,000 feet of river channel was rehabilitated to improve aquatic habitat, stabilize eroding slopes, and improve recreational opportunities. This work included removing of 500 linear feet of concrete channel lining, constructing a main channel of pool/riffle sequences bordered by rounded alluvial stone, and the use of native vegetation to create a more stable and functional floodplain. Fishing access to the river was improved with the use of either flatter slopes or the tiered retaining wall sections.

Residents from the upstream, densely populated, mostly Latino community typically avoid heavy street traffic by using the underpass to access work and other destinations. After the 2013 construction of a nearby downstream bike/ped bridge, residents will have nearly continuous off-road access to downtown and Lake Michigan's waterfront.

RTCA provided assistance to the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District in designing the underpass, bridge, bike path, fishing access, and slope restoration. Staff had previously provided assistance in developing a Kinnickinnic River Action Agenda and the Vision for the Kinnickinnic River Trail Corridor, a 2.6-mile trail along the river and railroad corridor.



Kinnickinnic River Trail major restoration completion is a great project success.