

Northeastern Illinois Regional Water Trail Plan

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prepared by:
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Openlands Project, and
Illinois Paddling Council

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A PADDLER'S PERSPECTIVE

In Support of A Regional System of Water Trails

Paddle a stretch of any river and it is a unique experience. It may be quiet or noisy, pristine or damaged. Or, it may be some of both, like the Fox River. But no matter how varied the experience, it is one exactly like no other.

Not every river is suitable to meet the recreational needs and the various levels of experience and equipment paddlers bring to it. Novice paddlers may find it easier to learn and practice boat control skills without having to watch out for and avoid power boats or deal with their wakes. Paddlers with a disability might not enjoy a river that presents a difficult portage every few miles. Elderly boaters may prefer a peaceful float on a tree-lined stream to a long day between steel walls, jet skis, tour boats and the industrial traffic in more urban waters.

The ten major waterways of the six county area addressed in this plan encompass the best of several worlds of paddling. They are urban and rural, crowded and empty, easy and challenging. Clear creeks flow through wooded nature preserves, and industrial rivers work day and night as they muscle by the colossal, rusting, relic, infrastructures of our past industrial age. The waterways of northeastern Illinois present a spectrum of paddling experiences found few places in the world in such close proximity.

Stunning sunsets, spectacular moonrises, and unsurpassed views of the city's skyline reward sea kayakers on the vast expanse of Lake Michigan. The quiet beauty of a prairie stream awaits canoeists on the DuPage River. Paddlers on the North Branch of the Chicago River find surprising solitude as they pass through county forest preserves and city parks. And the awesome, urban canyons of Chicago's downtown look nowhere more imposing than when seen from a small boat on the river.

All of these experiences could be available to the nearly eight million people of the six county area without having to go farther than an hour's drive, bus trip or train ride from their homes. The relatively low cost, healthful, quiet and environmentally friendly transport provided by canoes and kayaks can take us to places inaccessible by any other means. Providing the basic recreational infrastructure of developed launch sites for human-powered watercraft would open the use of these great underutilized and largely unappreciated recreational resources to older, younger, disabled and novice paddlers.

While not every river can be developed for every paddler's skills and tastes, in a regional system of water trails there can be a place for everyone. Safe, legal, and adequate launch sites tied together as water trails by signs with identifying, wayfinding, safety and interpretive information would make these waterways and these experiences available to all the residents of and visitors to northeastern Illinois.

We live in one of the most densely populated, and one of the most intensely manmade, places in the world. The opportunities to experience Lake Michigan and the rivers of our area is what makes northeastern Illinois livable for many local paddlers. It is what helps remind us that there is more to the world than the human constructs within which we spend most of our time on earth.

Gary Mechanic
Illinois Paddling Council

INTRODUCTION: Creating a Regional Water Trail Plan

This water trail plan sets forth a vision for providing water trails for non-motorized boating on our region's waterways. Local governments and others that implement this plan will realize a unique opportunity to enhance the quality of life of the region's citizens and economic benefits for our communities.

A Coordinated System of Water Trails Can:

- Expand outdoor recreation options for more citizens in the form of water trails, which are in increasing demand
- Foster stewardship and support for improved water quality of our water-based greenways through the paddler's affinity for nature and through hands-on opportunities to educate
- Provide a healthy outdoor experience, available to everyone
- Create more opportunities for spiritual enrichment and artistic inspiration
- Bring the rich history that is embedded in our waterways closer to the hearts and minds of our region's citizens
- Tap the tourism and economic benefits of water trails
- Enhance community attractiveness

As a region, we can take relatively simple steps to achieve this. Not only is it relatively inexpensive to build non-motorized boat access to the water, but the trail itself (i.e., the water) is already there. Most of the recommended sites are already in the ownership of recreation providers, who are maintaining and carrying insurance for the property. And, a state grant program is already in place for building boat access sites.

We Have an Excellent Opportunity

A Vast System of Historic Rivers, Streams, and Lakes

Northeastern Illinois has been blessed with 2000 miles of streams and 68 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline, much of which has been protected as greenways by forest preserve and conservation districts, park districts, and other agencies and organizations. It is their forward-thinking natural resources and recreation initiatives that allow us now to identify 480 miles of potential water trails that can be tied together in a coordinated regional system. Sixty three public access sites for canoes are already established and another 58 need only minor access or portage improvements. Nearly eighty percent (376) of the miles recommended as trails in this plan are relatively easy to develop into safe, functioning water trails.

Water quality in the region's rivers, lakes, and streams has been steadily improving over the last 25 years, increasingly supporting more uses such as paddling and fishing. There are, however, many water related problems that still need to be addressed.

Developing publicly accessible trails for canoeing and kayaking can, in conjunction with other greenway and trail initiatives, inspire communities to embrace not only the recreational potential, but the environmental, historic, and cultural significance of our region's rivers and lakes.

The number and variety of waterways and adjacent land characteristics in the region can provide us with a broad array of unique recreational experiences. And, much of this land is in public ownership. Given these advantages, we can produce an extensive water trail system for more users, and more different kinds of users, cheaply and with actions by relatively few governmental jurisdictions. The benefits of creating the water trails recommended in this plan, however, go far beyond the recreational. Some of these benefits are described below.

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Why a Regional Water Trail System?

Water Trails Provide a Variety of Benefits

The recreation provided by water trails goes beyond opportunities for fun, healthy, outdoor exercise. Paddling the waters of our rivers, lakes, and streams can refresh our spirits and inspire our creativity. On the water, we are in close contact with nature, where our connection to a wider world is exposed. These benefits are intangible and not easily quantified. Nevertheless, the work of painters, photographers, and other artists throughout the ages lend evidence to the artistic inspiration offered by our waterways. The following sections describe some of the more tangible benefits of providing water trails.

Stewardship

Certain forms of recreation lend themselves to a sense of connection with the environment. Hiking, fishing, camping, and paddling put participants in close contact with the natural world. As these recreationists return to a favorite trail, fishing spot, campground or waterway, many come to depend on that contact, and develop a great deal of direct experience and knowledge of the natural systems of these places.

Paddling allows close observation of wildlife, vegetation, water quality, and riverbank conditions.¹ The quality of these natural features in the environment is an important part of the paddling experience, which provides a powerful incentive for paddlers to advocate and work for healthier river and lake ecosystems. By increasing the numbers of paddlers and maximizing their opportunities for caring and stewardship, communities and the region can benefit from future improvements in water quality and the restoration of important functions of riverine systems such as flood protection.

Several local examples of successful volunteer projects, such as those of Friends of the Chicago River and Illinois River Watch², demonstrate the willingness of the public to volunteer as stewards of the lakes, forests, prairies and rivers of northeastern Illinois. Water trail development and River Watch stream monitoring are mutually beneficial. Water trails can provide users interested in stewardship more access for monitoring sites. River Watch can provide paddlers with stream quality information. Such partnerships would strengthen broader efforts to protect and enhance streams and watersheds.

Water trail providers, such as park districts and forest preserve districts, are often concerned that their investment be protected, because funding for operation and maintenance of trail facilities is often more limited than funds for facility development. However, it may not be necessary for providers to be solely responsible for management. There are many examples nationwide of non-governmental and volunteer organizations that have adopted water trail maintenance responsibilities (e.g., Maine Island Trail Association, Washington Water Trail Association, Seaway Trail, Inc., etc.).

Organizations such as Friends of Chicago River, Friends of the Fox River, the Conservation Foundation, and each of the eight Conservation 2000 Ecosystem Partnerships in the region could be actively involved in developing stewardship and management agreements and trail maintenance guidelines for water trails in northeastern Illinois. In some cases, fee systems could be developed (as they have for bike trails) to help cover the costs of

At Friends of the Chicago River's 1998 River Rescue Day clean-up, 1200 volunteers cleared more than 22 tons of trash at 35 sites.

¹ The "People on the Water" Workshop held in September 1996 brought together 140 canoers, kayakers, recreation providers, planners, environmental groups and other organizations. Water quality problems and degraded river banks were among the top concerns of all eight breakout sessions organized around the major waterways.

² Illinois River Watch is a component of the EcoWatch network, a statewide network of volunteers and high school science classes which collects ecosystem data for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. The objectives of the River Watch program are to educate and inform citizens about stream ecology, provide opportunity for citizens to become involved in protecting the health of streams, and provide consistent high-quality data which can be used by scientists to measure quality changes in streams over time.

maintaining facilities, removing debris and obstructions, stabilizing severely eroding launch sites, and establishing riparian buffers.

In 1991, the DuPage County Board passed the County-wide Stream Maintenance Program, authorizing the county Department of Environmental Concerns to perform stream maintenance on over 100 miles of streams in the county. This program limits maintenance to the confines of the stream and *ten feet* from the top of the bank on each side. The goal is to remove unwanted overhanging trees, stumps, limbs, and shrubs, and properly dispose of woody material and trash from the streams. It has reduced localized flooding by restoring the natural conveyance and flood storage capacity of the streams and is, in part, an effective mechanism for in-stream water trail maintenance as well. Others, such as the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) also perform maintenance, and more maintenance programs are planned or recently underway (Kane and Lake counties).

As noted in the "Additional Recommendations" section of this plan, the effect on biodiversity in the immediate area and downstream should be considered in the clearing of streams and rivers.

Historic and Environmental Education Opportunities

Access to the region's waterways for canoeing and kayaking gives citizens the opportunity to participate in and seek opportunities to learn about the long history of paddlecraft on our region's rivers and lakes which dates back over 1,000 years. A fascinating cultural history can be connected with: the essential role of rivers and canoes in the fur trade; the shift in focus to specialized transport routes and recreation (the popular "swimming holes", and gathering spots); and the contemporary approach to our rivers as it evolves from abuse to growing respect, as evidenced by pollution controls, better planning, and efforts of citizens as they rediscover the beauties and fascinations of a healthy stream or lake system. (See Appendix A for a more detailed historical account).

In 1807, pelts from 8,313 muskrat, 3,310 raccoons, 460 deer, 146 minks, 45 wolves, 37 wildcats, 64 otters, 7 fox, and 1 bear were shipped out on the Sloop Contractor from Fort Dearborn.

In addition, many of the areas encountered along water trails contain important, sensitive natural resources that are part of our region's natural history. For example, seven sites along the DesPlaines River Water Trail (as shown on the maps) are dedicated Illinois Nature Preserves, areas that retain to a high degree their pre-European settlement character or have ecological, geological, or archeological features of scientific or educational significance. The sensitive use of nature preserves provides an exceptional educational opportunity.³ Natural Areas Inventory sites, also shown on the water trail maps, contain areas with high quality ecosystems, although they do not have the same level of protection as nature preserves. These also offer excellent educational opportunities.

³ It is, however, unlawful to disturb or remove anything from an Illinois Nature Preserve. Activities such as hunting, trapping, camping, and pets are prohibited.

Tourism and Other Economic Benefits

There is much evidence that trails, in general, provide significant benefits and, if well planned, do not create negative impacts. Canoeing and kayaking have grown in popularity, increasing the market demand for water trails. According to a nationwide survey, participation in canoeing and kayaking increased 24% just from 1995 to 1996. This demand translates into financial benefits for communities that provide access to water trails. Improved tourism, outdoor recreation, and quality of life are all tangible rewards. Water trail facilities are good investments for economic development. Studies indicate that property values near trails, parks, and other outdoor recreational facilities are generally enhanced.

There is Substantial Existing Demand for Water Trails

The lack of a coordinated, signed, water trail system has substantially limited the general public's use of our region's waterways. The streams and rivers in northeastern Illinois are primarily paddled by a limited number of experienced local paddlers who own their own equipment, or by larger numbers participating in organized events or tours sponsored by regional paddling clubs. Boat registrations in northeastern Illinois indicate that at least 42,839 canoes and kayaks are located in this region. Events such as the Des Plaines River Marathon, started in 1957 and drawing about 1,000 annual participants, and the Fox River Mid-America Canoe Race, introduce new people every year to paddling and are popular spectator sports as well. The Lincoln Park Boat Club runs an annual 5K and 10K sea kayak race on Lake Michigan called the Skyline Challenge. Other smaller events are being created by paddlers, such as the annual New Year's Day Paddle, which started in 1985 and now draws more than 100 people to the Chicago River North Branch annually.

The region is home to the Chicago Area Sea Kayakers Association (250 members), the Prairie State Canoeists (1200 statewide members), the Chicago Whitewater Association (more than 500 members), the Illinois and Southwest Voyageur Brigades, the Lincoln Park Boat Club (more than 400 members), members of the American Canoe Association (and its Disabled Paddler's Committee), and the Illinois Paddling Council. These groups play important roles in introducing and training people in the variety of skills necessary to enjoy different types of paddling. For more information about these and other paddling groups, see Appendix C.

While the membership of local paddling clubs is easy to determine, and totals nearly 3000, far more canoers and kayakers do *not* belong to organized groups. Organizers of the Des Plaines River Canoe Marathon have estimated that paddling club members represent only 10 to 20% of the 1,000 or so participants in that event.

Over the last 20-30 years, regional county forest preserve and conservation districts and a few park districts have been the primary providers of access to our waterways. The Forest Preserve Districts of Cook and Lake Counties have long provided paddle craft access points along

portions of the Des Plaines River. For over 15 years, the McHenry County Conservation District has managed one of the region's most popular small stream canoe routes along the Nippersink Creek. The Kane County Forest Preserve District has provided canoe and kayak access points along the Fox River since the 1960s. The Forest Preserve District of Will County published an interpretive guide to canoeing the lower Du Page River in 1984. Given the number of paddlers on these trails, the number of paddlers turning out for special events, the number of paddlers both organized and unorganized, and interest in the development of this plan, the potential demand for water trails is evident.

There is Unmet Potential Demand for Water Trails

It is possible to roughly estimate the number of *existing* users and non-motorized watercraft. However, it is nearly impossible to quantify the number of *potential* users. If safe, legal, and adequate access is developed to create a regional water trail system, there is the potential to encourage recreational use by a number of types of people rarely seen on these waterways now. For example:

Younger and older paddlers - Undeveloped access sites and long stretches between sites make it difficult for older paddlers and families with younger children to enjoy the unique experiences of nature on these waterways. A 1994 survey of paddlers found that 87% of the respondents were between the ages of 21 and 59.

Disabled paddlers - Chicago is a center for handicapped and disabled people. Large, specialized medical facilities such as the Rehabilitation Institute and the degree to which buildings and facilities have been made accessible attracts disabled people to this area and makes it easier for them to live, work and play here. People with spinal cord and other lower body disabilities can, with the use of various adaptive devices, enjoy boating on many of these waterways. Once seated in a canoe or kayak, many disabled paddlers are as able as any other boater. Development of handicapped-accessible launch sites would open many stretches of northeastern Illinois waterways to this population of potential users.

Students: Rivers can serve as classrooms. Much of Illinois' geological, natural, and human history is uniquely seen along many of the state's waterways. Legal access is a prerequisite for the exploration of our living history. Rivers also provide an efficient and effective setting for teaching the importance of conservation and stewardship.

Lower Income Groups: Having canoeing or kayaking opportunities available along more waterways in the region may provide some lower income families and citizens with a low cost alternative to traveling far for outdoor recreation. Currently, those with lower incomes constitute only 10% of paddlers, according to a 1994 survey (see Appendix C).

Tourists - Chicago has always been a national convention center. The development of larger conference facilities at McCormick Place, Navy Pier and in Rosemont has

established Chicago as a world conference center. Paddlers from around the country and world visit the area for professional and personal reasons. Lack of information about access site locations, preferred routes and stretches, and boat rental information make it difficult for visitors to explore these waterways.

What Makes a Water Trail?

The simplest definition of a water trail is a series of access sites along a waterway, tied together by signs at each site to form a trail. Rivers, by their very nature, are trails. Unlike land-based trails, rivers with a flow or current are one-way trails for most users. Still water canals, man-made channels, and lakes allow for travel in two or more directions. In either case, it is the **sites** and **signs** that create the trail.

The distance between a series of access sites determines its ability to function as a water trail for paddlers, especially given the one-way nature of rivers. On rivers with a current, few paddlers put in at one site and return to the same location. Consequently, a water trail must consist of at least one downstream take-out located within reasonable distance of the put-in. An assumption of this plan is that in this region, the appropriate average distance between access sites falls between 3 and 5 miles. Sites may be closer in some areas and farther apart in other areas. The closer sites allow use of that stretch of waterway by more types of users such as younger, older, and disabled paddlers.

An assumption of this plan is that the appropriate average distance between access sites falls between 3-5 miles.

While sites and signs create the trail infrastructure, a functioning trail must also address trail management, the interactions among users and with the environment, including potential obstacles. Permanent obstacles such as dams, temporary obstacles such as construction projects and logjams, hazards such as water control facilities and locks, and the opportunity for safe exit from the waterway in emergencies must all be considered in order to develop safe water trails. Some or all of these hazards along a stretch of river may not preclude the development of a trail; however it does limit the use of the trail to better equipped and more experienced users. More discussion of safety considerations can be found in the plan sections on management.

What Makes a Water Trail Access Site?

An access site is a place to put a boat in the water. Beyond this simple definition, the question of access to some of the waterways in Illinois can be complex. Access concerns not only location and design, but may also involve issues of land ownership, permission, and access for what purpose and for whom. It is an objective of this plan to achieve water trail access that is legal, safe, and accessible to a variety of non-motorized boats and users, including those with disabilities.

Access and Land Ownership Considerations: The locations that are identified on this plan's map as recommended access sites are primarily on publicly owned property held by recreation providers. These include forest preserve and conservation districts, park districts, municipalities, counties, and other local, state, and federal agencies. Fortunately for this region, the forest preserves and the conservation district have focused their acquisition programs on protecting rivers and streams. This has resulted in numerous riparian greenways that lend themselves to water-based recreational uses. Locating sites on land owned by recreation providers is also advantageous in that the landowner is already prepared and insured for recreational use.⁴

While nearly all of the sites shown on the plan map are on public property, not all of the recommended water trail stretches are on public waterways. This is not an issue if there is a consenting public (or private) landowner on at least one side of the stream. If, however, there are numerous private landowners on both sides of a non-public stream, then creating a water trail that can be freely used by the public becomes more complicated. Coordination may be needed between the potential water trail provider and riparian property owners regarding use of the water. In cases such as this, where there are numerous private property owners along both sides of a "non-navigable" stream, this plan places a lower priority on water trail development.

Safe Access: While many sites identified in this plan require only minor improvements such as the installation of a sign, several potential sites are located where some construction will be required to make the site safe for the general public.

Access for All Classes of Non-Motorized Boats: For the purposes of this plan, water trails include sites that allow access to the water by a variety of non-motorized boats. Many existing launch sites in this region are designed for launching open boats such as canoes, rowboats, john boats, and skiffs. Some sites may need to be retrofitted to safely accommodate boats such as rowing shells, sea kayaks, white water kayaks, Olympic racing kayaks and decked canoes. For a description of the basic requirements of various boat types, see the plan section on Launch Site Design.

Access for Persons With Disabilities: Public access to the region's waterways for paddlers should include access for persons with disabilities. To those who are handicapped when participating in other sports and activities, non-motorized boating can provide an experience that places them on the same level of skill and capability as those without physical disabilities. An accessible water trail system in this region will be especially significant due to the presence in Chicago of an internationally recognized rehabilitation institution. While access for persons with disabilities may not be appropriate at every site, nor on every trail, it is desirable to have a representative cross section of paddling experiences for the disabled.

⁴ Public and private recreational providers are further protected by the recreational use statute of Illinois law - "Recreational Use of Land and Water Areas Act" 745 ILCS 65/1-7. This statute limits the liability of landowners for injuries to recreational users to only those injuries caused by the landowner's gross negligence and willful misconduct, as long as no fee is charged for the use of property.

What Makes a Regional System of Water Trails?

Those who currently paddle the waterways of northeastern Illinois know that planning and carrying out a simple day trip can present many challenges. For example, waterways cross political boundaries, and users are generally not aware of local rules that may differ. Information about safety and access on a single waterway may be dispersed among many separate sources because sites are owned and managed by many different local entities. In addition, because of occasionally strong flows in most northeastern Illinois rivers, travel is ordinarily in the downstream direction. Currents carry paddlers from one local jurisdiction to the next, and returning to the original launch site is not only undesirable but often impossible.

A regional water trail system creates continuity between owners of access sites and consolidates information about safety and downstream access. Through cooperative planning and management, different local governments can combine their resources and expertise to provide the best possible recreational experience. In fact, without such cooperation, only a few short, disjunct water trails could exist in northeastern Illinois. The system proposed in this plan can be, through cooperative planning, adoption by the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission, and coordinated implementation, a truly regional undertaking.

About this Plan

How This Plan Evolved

The groundwork for this plan was laid with discussions among the paddling community, planners, recreation providers, natural resource agencies, and advocacy organizations. These discussions ultimately focused on the shared desire to improve conditions for paddlers by providing safe, legal launch sites on the abundant miles of lake front and riverbanks in the region. A first regional water trail workshop, *People on the Water*, was held in September 1996, sponsored by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC), the Openlands Project (OLP), and the Illinois Paddling Council (IPC). Out of this workshop came the recommendation to develop a plan for access to the region's waterways. Concurrently, the updating of the *Northeastern Illinois Regional Greenways Plan* provided a context for focusing on the region's waterways as a new greenway plan component: a regional water trail plan.

Spurred by the opportunities for recreation and stewardship, and the size, enthusiasm, and dedication of the paddling community, the IDNR sponsored the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission, the Openlands Project, and the Illinois Paddling Council development of this plan. Kraft Foods joined in the effort as an additional sponsor.

How This Plan Was Developed

Plan objectives were developed in collaboration with NIPC's Recreation and Open Space Technical Advisory Committee (ROSTAC), who oversaw and reviewed plan development. A field inventory was conducted to examine existing and feasible access sites on potential water trails in the region. Information from the inventory, which included parking availability, land ownership, and many other site attributes (see the sample inventory form in Appendix A) provided a basis for recommending the specific water trail stretches and sites identified in the plan.

Eight workshops were held during the fall 1997 to solicit input from public agencies and stakeholders in the region, and to begin fostering partnerships. The workshops drew 131 participants, including some from outside the borders of the region. Their input guided the development of the plan and further defined critical issues to address.

Objectives

The objectives evolving out of these processes are listed below:

Objective I. Develop a non-motorized water trail plan for northeastern Illinois that is **regional**, and

- facilitates coordination of municipal, county, regional, and state agencies and constituents in the development of water-based trails*
- considers potential connections to and coordination with water trail initiatives beyond the boundaries of northeastern Illinois*
- considers the full variety of experiences that are potentially available for users of water trails in this region; for example, the objective of accessibility to all users should be balanced with an objective to respect, acknowledge, and preserve waterway stretches that have a more natural, undeveloped appeal*

Objective II. Identify non-motorized **public access and recreation opportunities** on appropriate waterways in the region, and

- take advantage of existing public investments and consider linkages to existing and proposed bicycle, hiking, and other recreational facilities; public transit stations/stops; and cultural and environmental activities and opportunities*
- identify specific access areas (stretches and sites where possible) at points close enough to make waterways usable by boaters of a wide range of skill levels, physical capacities, and ages*
- appeal to a broad range of non-motorized interests such as quiet recreation, wildlife observation, fishing, exercise, education, and stewardship; and to water trail users with varying skill levels and interests*
- include facilities and outreach for those with disabilities, for low income groups, and minorities*

Objective III. Facilitate new and coordinate with existing **conservation** efforts related to the region's stream and lake resources, and

- *seize opportunities to improve water quality and riparian habitat through encouraging stewardship*
- *increase awareness of the natural resource value of the waterways and their surrounding ecosystems and their benefits, including storm water management, riparian habitat, stream bank stabilization, and water quality*
- *reinforce existing conservation efforts*

Objective IV. Protect the **safety** of water trail users, and

- *provide information on safe water trail use and coexistence among water trail users*
- *provide information for disabled users regarding location of accessible sites (and warning signage for sites where accessibility may be expected but is not provided)*
- *recommend specific safety measures and provide water trail implementers with appropriate information and resources on design of water trail access facilities, including those for disabled users*

Objective V. Foster appreciation of the significant cultural resource values of waterway corridors

Objective VI. Reflect the shared goals of, and help carry out the **Year 2000 Regional Greenways And Trails Implementation Program**

Objective VII. Realize the community and economic benefits of developing a regional water trail system (such as recreational boating and potential business development), especially in economically disadvantaged areas

Objective VIII. Set forth an action program for **implementation** that will result in a well-managed, safe, cost efficient, coordinated regional system of water trails, and

- *address on-going development and management issues, including risk management for providers*
- *foster intergovernmental coordination and partnerships in development and management of water trails*
- *encourage coordination by providing information on local, state, and federal initiatives relating to waterways and river advocacy groups and activities*
- *identify funding sources*

Many of these objectives are also intended as considerations for those involved in coordinating and implementing a water trail along their respective rivers and lakes.

How To Use This Plan

This plan sets forth a vision for a system of water trails for non-motorized craft in northeastern Illinois and provides an action plan to achieve this vision. In addition, this plan serves as a more specific guide for recreation providers and funding agencies in providing access to the region's waterways. The plan includes maps to assist both local governments and funding agencies in selecting locations for access as part of a larger, coordinated system.

These location recommendations are based on a field study of existing conditions and the assumption that three to five miles is an appropriate average distance between access points for most local water trails. Descriptions of existing conditions for paddlers on the potential water trails are included to characterize the waterways and provide information on conditions, obstacles and other issues particular to each trail or stretch. Based on these conditions, the plan also identifies suggested paddling trips representative of the varied regional experiences available for families, adventurers, disabled users, and observers of wildlife (see Appendix E).

Local governments will be the primary implementors of the water trails recommended in this plan. This involves improving established sites, developing new sites and coordinating with adjacent jurisdictions and groups to manage and maintain the sites and insure they function as integral parts of a safe water trail system that provides adequate information to users. This plan offers suggestions for involving users as volunteers in maintenance, promotion, and other tasks. Examples are given of multi-jurisdictional trail management models. On Lake Michigan and many of the rivers, groups are already in place and working on issues such as water quality, habitat, stream bank stabilization, and public access, as well as advocating and working to implement water trails. Friends of the Chicago River is one exemplary group spearheading initiatives to address these issues. There are also water trail advocacy groups for Lake Michigan and the Des Plaines River. In some cases these groups can help facilitate the required coordination, and may be willing to take on additional responsibilities involved in planning, developing and managing sites and water trails.

The plan also provides information on funding, facility design, maps and signs and other issues related to water trails including natural resource management and promoting water trails.

PROPOSED REGIONAL WATER TRAILS

Ten major waterways make up the proposed regional water trails in this plan. These water trails are:

LAKE MICHIGAN WATER TRAIL

CHICAGO RIVER WATER TRAIL (includes Skokie Lagoons, North Branch, North Shore Channel, Main Branch, South Branch)

DES PLAINES RIVER WATER TRAIL

SALT CREEK WATER TRAIL

DU PAGE RIVER WATER TRAIL (includes East, West, and Main Branch)

FOX RIVER WATER TRAIL (includes Chain O' Lakes)

NIPPERSINK CREEK WATER TRAIL

KISHWAUKEE RIVER WATER TRAIL

CALUMET WATER TRAIL (includes Lake Calumet, Calumet and Little Calumet River, & Cal Sag Channel)

KANKAKEE RIVER WATER TRAIL

HOW THE WATER TRAILS WERE SELECTED: The Process and Priorities

The waterways listed above are recommended for trails based on both waterway characteristics and priorities that were established with involvement and input of the paddling community, participants in the 1996 workshop, the eight regional workshops in 1997, and ROSTAC.

These priorities are:

- **Relatively Low Cost Improvements Needed**
- **Local Support**
- **Safely Paddleable**
- **Adequate Depth and Flow Most of the Season⁵**
- **Multiple Benefits and Quality of Experience**

Applying these priorities to identify potential trails required judgements based on a combination of site surveys, evidence of current use by paddlers, and other input from the paddling community and agencies such as the MWRD.

Current use by paddlers provided an indicator of many of the priorities listed above. "Adequate Water Depth and Flow Most of the Season", "Quality of Experience", and even "Local Support" can be evidenced to some extent by determining whether the waterway or part of it is currently used by paddlers. Further analysis of potential local support included identifying, to the extent possible, the ownership of properties along non-public rivers. If the waterway's adjacent landowner is a public agency, or if a waterway such as the Des Plaines River has been consistently in use by paddlers without landowner complaints, "local support" was assumed. Therefore, the small number of private parcels along the Des Plaines was not considered an obstacle for developing a trail.

The priority "safely paddleable" ruled out some entire waterways and some stretches of other waterways. High banks, dams, intensive motorized traffic, and rapidly flowing water can pose potential safety hazards. For example, the existing dam on the Fox River at Kimball Street in Elgin can be dangerous to paddlers who are unfamiliar with the site. Making a safe portage around this dam would be desirable but difficult and expensive. Likewise, constructed vertical walls along parts of the South Branch Chicago River, the Calumet River, and the Sanitary and Ship Canal may inhibit safe travel for novice paddlers. Fast, unexpected changes in water levels due to gate movements at water control structures, pumping stations, and aeration facilities can also be safety problems. Examples of these potentially dangerous sites include the Lockport power station, Wilmette Harbor sluice gates, the Lawrence Avenue pumping station, the Devon Avenue aeration site, and certain other sites managed by the MWRD.

It was not necessary for a waterway to meet all the priorities in order to be included. For example, if a stretch of waterway is not currently safe but can be made so with relatively little cost or complexity, it has been included as a potential trail. Likewise, the difficulties with the Kishwaukee River, i.e., land ownership obstacles (the local support priority) and difficult paddling, was outweighed by the high quality of the resource and the experience it can offer paddlers (i.e., the multiple benefits and quality of experience priority).

⁵ Without enough depth and flow during warm months of the year, water trail travel is impaired, bottom sediments disturbed, stream banks trampled, aquatic plant and animal communities disrupted, and boats potentially damaged. Waterways with inadequate year-round depth and flow have generally been excluded from this plan, but almost all waterways can be difficult to paddle during periods of extreme drought.

CLASSIFICATION OF TRAIL STRETCHES, ACCESS SITES, AND DAMS

Water Trail Stretches

The following describes why and how some water trails have been divided into stretches (as distinguished by different line patterns on the maps). A *water trail stretch* is a length of water trail having in common a similar estimated level of improvement needed and/or obstacles to implementation present.

Water trail stretches are classified as having either minor, major, or substantial obstacles or improvements needed as described below:

“Minor Obstacles or Improvements Needed” indicates that the water trail stretch

- can easily be made safe for use by the general public,
- needs only minor improvements such as signs to tie sites together (may already be functioning as a trail), and
- is either on a public waterway; or on a non-public waterway with the adjacent land in public ownership on at least one side; or on a non-public waterway with adjacent land predominantly in public ownership on at least one side and is locally supported (landowner consent or, at minimum, no landowner complaints have been received where paddling is common)

“Moderate Obstacles or Improvements Needed” indicates that the water trail stretch

- may be more difficult to make safe for the general public, and/or
- may have a number of sites needing construction such as parking or heavier bank stabilization, and/or
- may be on a non-public waterway and require partnerships with a number of private adjacent landowners

“Substantial Obstacles or Improvements Needed” indicates that the water trail stretch

- may be substantially more difficult to make safe for the general public due to steep banks, rapid water flow, a dangerous obstacle (such as a dam), or extensive conflicts such as motorboat or industrial traffic, and/or

- may have numerous or key sites needing more intensive improvements such as land acquisition, a road, or complex launch facility, and/or
- may have complicated site location options due to unknown acceptability by adjacent landowners or urban river edge development, and/or
- may be on non-public waterway and require partnerships and involvement of a substantial number of private adjacent landowners

Trail stretches with minor obstacles or improvements needed are those that could easily be “up and running” water trails with the least amount of time, effort and development. These should be first priority water trail stretches, the primary focus for near term development, possibly within one to three years. Since there are numerous miles of these easily developable trails (minor obstacles or improvements needed), the trail stretches with moderate obstacles or improvements needed should be considered second priority water trail stretches. Trail stretches with substantial obstacles or needed improvements are recommended as third priority.

Waterways or water trail stretches that are not in any of these categories (and have no line patterning on the maps) are currently not recommended as water trails or water trail stretches. These waterways or stretches did not sufficiently meet priorities that are listed at the beginning of the section, “How the Water Trails Were Selected.”

The table below summarizes the number of miles of first, second, and third priority stretches for each water trail

Table 1: Proposed Northeastern Illinois Regional Water Trail Mileage

WATER TRAIL	WATER BODY	MILES OF STRETCH WITH:			Total Trail Miles
		Minor Obstacles or Imprvmnts Needed -1st Priority-	Moderate Obstacles or Imprvmnts Needed -2nd Priority-	Major Obstacles or Imprvmnts Needed -3rd Priority-	
Lake Michigan		48	20		68
Chicago River		27	8	1	36
	N Br & Skokie Lag	21			21
	N Sh Channel		6		6
	Chicago Riv Main Br	2			2
	S Br Chicago Riv	4	2	1	7
Des Plaines River		83	5	15	103
Salt Creek		26	0	3	29
DuPage River		49	3	19	71
	DuPage River	26			26
	East Br DuPage		3	19	22
	West Br DuPage	23	0		23
Fox River		81	11	2	94
	Fox River	54	11	2	67
	Chain O Lakes	27			27
Nippersink Creek		13			13
Kishwaukee River				8	8
Calumet Waterways		35	3		38
	Calumet River	10			10
	Little Calumet	16			16
	Lake Calumet	4			4
	Cal Sag Channel	5	3		8
Kankakee River		14	6		20
TOTAL MILES		376	56	48	480

September 14, 1999

The recommended system of ten major water trails comprises 480 miles. As shown in this table, nearly 80% percent of the trail miles in this system have minor obstacles or improvements needed, meaning that they are relatively easy to develop into safe, functioning water trails and are therefore recommended as first priority for development.

Water Trail Access Sites

A “water trail access site” is an established or recommended access site along a stretch of recommended water trail. Sites are on average 3-5 miles apart and are classified according to the estimated level of improvement that is needed to become functioning components of a safe, signed water trail. The estimated amount of improvement necessary for the sites is based on field surveys conducted by a paddling expert and are not the result of engineering studies. More information on surveyed sites is available from the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission, Openlands Project, and the Illinois Paddling Council Access Project.

Water trail sites are classified as established boat launches, sites needing minor improvements, or sites needing construction as described below.

- “Established Boat Launch”: Established canoe launches are specifically designated as such on the map (⊕), but may also require a sign or wayfinding information to convey their relationship to other sites in order to become components of a water trail. Charts in the text of this plan use “a” in referring to these sites.

- “Site Needs Minor Improvements” is indicated on the map as a solid circle (●) and identifies access sites that need minor improvements such as:
 - water trail sign or wayfinding information
 - simple bank stabilization, such as geogrid to provide a put-in for paddlers
 - gravel screening
 - porous pavement such as flexible pavers

Charts in the text of this plan use “b” in referring to these sites.

- “Site Needs Construction” is indicated on the map as a solid square (■) and identifies access sites that need improvements such as:
 - parking lots
 - more intensive bank stabilization
 - other construction

Charts in the text of this plan use “c” in referring to these sites.

Dams

Dams have been noted on the map with a “d” symbol.⁶ Improvements to create safe portage may be needed, and they may also be recommended as *access* sites. Dams and type of improvements needed are identified on the map as follows:

- “d” on the map indicates a dam is present; if no other symbols accompany it, then no improvements are recommended at the site
- “d” with a triangle (▲) on the map indicates the site needs portage improvements only (i.e., it is not also recommended as an *access* site)
- “d” with a triangle (▲) and a circle (●) on the map indicates the site needs portage improvements and minor improvements to make it a suitable *access* site as well
- “d” with a triangle (▲) and a square (■) on the map indicates the site needs portage improvements and construction to make the portage suitable as an *access* site as well

Charts in the text of this plan use “a,d” or “b,d” or “c,d” in referring to sites needing both access and portage improvements, with the first letter referring to the level of access improvement needed. If a site needs only portage improvements, “d” is used.

⁶ It is possible that the plan inventory was unable to discover every dam in the proposed water trail system. Therefore maps in this plan should not be used as a comprehensive documentation of dams in the region.

The following table lists the number of recommended access and portage sites in each category, corresponding to the sites shown on the water trail maps.

Table 2: Proposed Northeastern Illinois Water Trail Site Summary

WATER TRAIL	WATER BODY	SITES				TOTAL	# SITE OWNERS
		Already Established "a"	Need Minor Impvt "b"	Need Construction "c"	Need Prtg Impvt Only* "d"		
Lake Michigan		17	17	1	0	35	16
Chicago River		2	3	14	1	20	6
	N. Br & Skokie Lag	2	2	7	1	12	5
	N. Sh. Channel	0	1	2	0	3	3
	Chicago Riv Main St	0	0	1	0	1	1
	S. Br Chicago R	0	0	4	0	4	2
Des Plaines River		12	6	7	2	27	10
Salt Creek		3	3	6	3	15	6
DuPage River		7	3	13	2	25	9
	DuPage River	1	2	4	0	7	5
	East Br DuPage	1	0	5	0	6	4
	West Br DuPage	5	1	4	2	12	4
Fox River		12	10	4	6	32	12
Nippersink Creek		5	0	0	0	5	1
Kishwaukee River		0	0	1	0	1	1
Calumet River		4	1	5	0	10	7
	Calumet River	0	1	0	0	1	1
	Little Calumet	3	0	3		6	3
	Lake Calumet	0	0	1	0	1	1
	Cal Sag Channel	1	0	1	0	2	2
Kankakee River		3	1	0	0	4	2
TOTAL		65	44	51	14	174	

September 14, 1999

* If site needs portage and access improvements, site was included in the column for access improvements

As shown in the above table, 174 access and portage sites are recommended as key components of the regional water trail system. Access sites are, on the average, 3 to 5 miles apart. Seventy one percent of the recommended sites are either established boat launches and/or need only minor improvements such as coordinating signage or minor access or portage improvements such as a gravel path.

Top 11 Owners of Sites in First Priority Trail Stretches

The table below lists the 11 agencies with plan identified implementation responsibilities for more than three established or recommended water trail sites on first priority water trail stretches. First priority water trail stretches are those having the fewest obstacles to becoming safe functioning water trails. The table groups the sites by each owner, and their sites are listed by increasing level of improvements needed (all "a" sites are listed, then "b" sites, and so on). The last column summarizes the site information for each agency on these first priority trail stretches.

Table 3: Top 11 Owners of Sites in First Priority Trail Stretches

Owner	Waterway	Site Name	Site Needs	Summary of Improvements Needed, By Owner and Water Trail
Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	Chi River, Skokie Lagoons	Tower Rd Boat Launch	a	Forest Preserve District of Cook Co.: 4 Water Trails, 27 Sites
Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	DesPlaines River	Columbia Woods Forest Preserve	a	
Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	DesPlaines River	Stony Ford Canoe Landing	a	
Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	DesPlaines River	Allison Woods	a	
Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	DesPlaines River	Plank Road Meadow Boat Ramp	a	
Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	Salt Creek	Busse Reservoir	a	
Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	Little Calumet River	Little Calumet Boat Ramp	a	
Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	Little Calumet River	Beaubien Woods	a	
Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	Chicago River, North Branch	Blue Star Memorial Woods	b	
Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	Chicago River, North Branch	Bunker Hill Canoe Access	b	
Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	DesPlaines River	Dam #4	b,d	
Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	DesPlaines River	Dam #1	b,d	
Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	DesPlaines River	Dam #2	b,d	
Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	DesPlaines River	Irving Park Road Picnic Area	b	
Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	Salt Creek	Brezina Woods	b	
Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	Salt Creek	Bemis Woods	b	
Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	Salt Creek	Busse Reservoir Dam	b,d	
Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	Salt Creek	17th Ave Bridge	c	
Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	Chicago River, North Branch	Willow Rd Dam	c,d	
Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	Chicago River, North Branch	Linne Woods Forest Preserve	c	
Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	Chicago River, North Branch	LaBagh Woods Canoe Access	c	
Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	Little Calumet River	Kickapoo Meadows	c	
Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	DesPlaines River	Dempster Street Dam	c,d	
Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	DesPlaines River	Robinson Woods South	c	
Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	Chicago River, North Branch	Winnetka Rd Dam	d	
Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	DesPlaines River	Park Ridge Dam	d	
Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	DesPlaines River	Amitage Street Dam	d	
Chicago Park Dist / Westrec	Lake Michigan	Wilson Ramp	a	Chicago Park District: 3 Water Trails, 19 Sites
Chicago Park District	Lake Michigan	Touhy (or Leone) Beach	a	
Chicago Park District	Lake Michigan	Jackson Park Inner Harbor	a	
Chicago Park Dist/Westrec	Lake Michigan	Calumet Park Boat Ramp	a	
Chicago Park District	Lake Michigan	Rainbow Beach	a	
Chicago Park District	Lake Michigan	Montrose Beach	a	
Chicago Park Dist / Westrec	Lake Michigan	Montrose Harbor	a	
Chicago Park Dist / Westrec	Lake Michigan	Burnham Harbor W. Boat Ramp	a	
Chicago Park Dist / Westrec	Lake Michigan	Diversey Harbor Boat Ramp	a	
Chicago Park Dist / Westrec	Lake Michigan	Diversey Harbor North	b	
Chicago Park District	Lake Michigan	63rd Street Beach	b	
Chicago Park District	Lake Michigan	Berger Park (Landing Only)	b	
Chicago Park District	Lake Michigan	12th Street Beach	b	
Chicago Park District	Lake Michigan	31st Street Beach	b	
Chicago Park District	Chicago River, South Branch	Chinatown Park	c	
Chicago Park District	Chicago River, South Branch	Canal Origins Park	c	
Chicago Park District	Chicago River, North Branch	River Park	c,d	
Chicago Park District	Chicago River, North Branch	Clark Park	c	
Chicago Park District	Little Calumet River	129th and Eggleston	c	

table continued next page...

* "Site needs" indicates the estimated level of site improvements needed (corresponding to map designations) using the following letters:

a = established site b = site needs minor improvements c = construction needed d = portage improvements needed (note that a site may need access and portage improvements)

Table 3: Top 11 Owners of Sites in First Priority Trail Stretches, continued

Owner	Waterway	Site Name	Site Needs*	Summary of Improvements Needed, By Owner and WaterTrail
MWRD	Calumet River	SEPA #1	b	MWRD: 3 Water Trails, 3 Sites⁷ Calumet River: 1 site needs minor improvements Chicago River: 1 site needs construction DesPlaines River: 1 site needs construction
MWRD	Chicago River, North Branch	North Avenue Turning Basin	c	
MWRD (or use IDOT Right of Way?)	DesPlaines River	Lemont Road	c	
Chicago	Chicago River, North Branch	Lathrop Wetlands	c	Chicago, Chicago Park Dist, MWRD: 1 Water Trail, 2 Sites Chicago River: 2 sites need construction (See footnote 1)
Chicago / Chicago Pk Dist / MWRD	Chicago River, Main Stem	DuSable Park	c	
IDNR	Fox River	Chain O' Lakes St Pk Main Ramp	a	IDNR: 5 Water Trails, 19 sites Fox River: 2 established sites need coordinating signage 3 sites need minor improvements (all also need portage improvements) 2 sites need construction (both need portage improvements) 2 sites need portage improvements only Kankakee River: 3 established sites need coordinating signage DuPage River/IM Canal: 1 site needs minor improvements 2 sites need portage improvements Lake Michigan: 2 sites need minor improvements 1 site needs construction Salt Creek: 1 site needs portage improvements
IDNR	Fox River	Chain O' Lakes State Park North	a	
IDNR	Kankakee River	Area 9 Boat Launch	a	
IDNR	Kankakee River	Chippewa Boat Launch	a	
IDNR	Kankakee River	Kankakee River Boat Launch	a	
IDNR	DuPage River / I&M Canal	I&M Canal Channahon Access	b	
IDNR/Geneva	Fox River	Geneva Dam/Old Mill Park	b,d	
IDNR/Batavia	Fox River	Batavia Dam	b,d	
IDNR	Fox River	Montgomery Dam	b,d	
IDNR	Lake Michigan	IL Beach St. Park - South Unit	b	
IDNR	Lake Michigan	IL Beach St. Park - Sailing Bch	b	
IDNR	Lake Michigan	North Point Marina	c	
IDNR	Fox River	St. Charles Dam	c,d	
IDNR	Fox River	South Elgin Dam	c,d	
IDNR	DuPage River, West Branch	1st dam below McDowell Grv Canoe L	d	
IDNR	DuPage River, West Branch	Fawell Dam	d	
IDNR	Fox River	McHenry Dam and Portage	d	
IDNR	Fox River	North Aurora Dam	d	
IDNR	Salt Creek	Graham Center Dam	d	
Forest Preserve Dist of Kane Co	Fox River	Fox River Shores	a	Forest Preserve Dist of Kane Co: 1 Water Trail, 7 sites Fox River: 4 established sites need coordinating signage 3 sites need minor improvements (1 also needs portage improvements)
Forest Preserve Dist of Kane Co	Fox River	Blackhawk Forest Preserve	a	
Forest Preserve Dist of Kane Co	Fox River	Fabyan West Forest Preserve	a	
Forest Preserve Dist of Kane Co	Fox River	Voyageurs Landing	a	
Forest Preserve Dist of Kane Co	Fox River	Glenwood Park For. Preserve	b	
Forest Preserve Dist of Kane Co	Fox River	Buffalo Park	b	
Forest Preserve Dist of Kane Co	Fox River	Carpenterville Dam	b,d	
Lake County Forest Preserve Dist	DesPlaines River	Route 60 Canoe Launch	a	Lake County Forest Preserve Dist: 2 Water Trails, 6 sites Des Plaines River: 5 established sites need coordinating signage Fox River: 1 established sites need coordinating signage
Lake County Forest Preserve Dist	DesPlaines River	Russell Road	a	
Lake County Forest Preserve Dist	DesPlaines River	Independence Grove Canoe Launch	a	
Lake County Forest Preserve Dist	DesPlaines River	Oak Spring Rd Canoe Launch	a	
Lake County Forest Preserve Dist	DesPlaines River	Wadsworth Rd Canoe Launch	a	
Lake County Forest Preserve Dist	Fox River	Fox River Forest Preserve Fee Ramp	a	
Forest Preserve Dist of DuPage Co	DuPage River, West Branch	Blackwell Forest Preserve	a	Forest Preserve Dist of DuPage Co.: 2 Water Trails, 8 sites DuPage River: 2 established sites need coordinating signage 1 site needs minor improvements (site also needs portage improvements) 2 sites need construction) Salt Creek: 4 site needs construction (1site also needs portage imprvmt) 1 site needs portage improvements
Forest Preserve Dist of DuPage Co	DuPage River, West Branch	McDowell Grove Forest Preserve	a	
Forest Preserve Dist of DuPage Co	DuPage River, West Branch	Warrenville Dam	b,d	
Forest Preserve Dist of DuPage Co	DuPage River, West Branch	Hawk Hollow Forest Preserve	c	
Forest Preserve Dist of DuPage Co	DuPage River, West Branch	Timber Ridge Forest Preserve	c	
Forest Preserve Dist of DuPage Co	Salt Creek	Salt Creek Marsh Forest Preserve	c	
Forest Preserve Dist of DuPage Co	Salt Creek	Cricket Creek Forest Preserve	c	
Forest Preserve Dist of DuPage Co	Salt Creek	Graue Mill and Dam	c,d	
Forest Preserve Dist of DuPage Co	Salt Creek	Fullersburg Woods	c	
Forest Preserve Dist of DuPage Co	Salt Creek	Oak Meadows Dam	d	
McHenry County Conservation Dist	Nippersink Creek	Pioneer Road	a	McHenry County Conservation Dist: 1 Water Trail, 5 sites Nippersink Creek: 5 established sites, no improvements required
McHenry County Conservation Dist	Nippersink Creek	Lyle Thomas Park	a	
McHenry County Conservation Dist	Nippersink Creek	Keystone Landing	a	
McHenry County Conservation Dist	Nippersink Creek	Glacial Park N. Campground	a	
McHenry County Conservation Dist	Nippersink Creek	Canoe Base	a	
Naperville Park District	DuPage River, West Branch	Knoch Knolls Park	a	Naperville Park District: 1 Water Trail, 5 sites DuPage River: 2 established sites need coordinating signage 3 sites need construction
Naperville Park District	DuPage River, West Branch	Weigand Riverfront Park	a	
Naperville Park District	DuPage River, West Branch	Pioneer Park	c	
Naperville Park District	DuPage River, West Branch	Centennial Park	c	
Naperville Pk Dist/For Pres Dist Will Co	DuPage River	Riverview Farm Preserve	c	
Forest Preserve Dist of Will Co	Des Plaines River	Isle a la Cache Museum	a	Forest Preserve District of Will Co: 2 Water Trails, 3 sites Des Plaines: 1 established site needs coordinating signage 1 site needs minor improvements DuPage: 1 established site (site also needs portage improvements)
Forest Preserve Dist of Will Co	DesPlaines River	Lockport Prairie Nature Preserve	b	
Forest Preserve Dist of Will Co	DuPage River	Hammel Woods Preserve	a,d	

⁷ The MWRD, having jurisdiction over Cook County waterways, has leased land to other agencies for various purposes. It is recommended that similar leasing arrangements be pursued by agencies, such as the Chicago Park District, for sites under MWRD jurisdiction.

Balance of Sites in Priority 1, 2 and 3 Trail Stretches

The following table includes the balance of established/ recommended water trail sites on priority 1, 2, and 3 trails not included in Table 3. They are listed alphabetically by site owner.

Table 4: Owners of Sites in Priority 1, 2 and 3 Trail Stretches (includes all sites not included in Table 3.)

Priority Stretch	Owner	Waterway	Site Name	Site Needs*
1	Alsip	Cal-Sag Channel	Howe's Landing	a
1	Aurora	Fox River	New York Avenue Dam	d
1	Batavia	Fox River	Batavia Island	a
1	Batavia Park District	Fox River	South Batavia Dam	d
1	Batavia/DNR	Fox River	Batavia Dam	b,d
1	Brookfield	Salt Creek	Brookfield	a
1	Burr Ridge Park District	DesPlaines River	Knollwood Boat Launch	a
1	Calumet Memorial Park District	Little Calumet River	Veterans Park Calumet City	c
1	Chicago Housing Authority	Chicago River, North Branch	Lathrop Homes Canoe Launch	a
1	City of Mc Henry- Dept Park & Rec.	Fox River	South Riverfront Park	b,
1	City of Mc Henry- Dept Park & Rec.	Fox River	Weber Park	b
1	Elgin	Fox River	Slade Avenue	a
1	Elgin	Fox River	Trout Park	c
1	Elmhurst Park Dist	Salt Creek	Eldridge Park	b
1	Foss Park District	Lake Michigan	Foss Park Beach	b
1	Fox Valley Park District	Fox River	South River Street Park	a
1	Fox Valley Park District	Fox River	North Avenue Dam	d
1	Fox Valley Park District	Fox River	Illinois Avenue Boat Launch	a
1	Gurnee Park District	Des Plaines River	Gowe Park	a
1	Lincolnshire	DesPlaines River	Rivershire Park	c
1	Plainfield Township Park District	DuPage River	Riverside Parkway Canoe Access	a
1	Plainfield Township Park District	DuPage River	Riverview Park	c
1	Plainfield Township Park District	DuPage River	Eaton Farm	c
1	Port Authority	Lake Calumet	Lake Calumet	c
1	Private - Bowling Alley	Fox River	Chapel Hill Rd Fee Ramp	a
1	Riverside Park District	DesPlaines River	Hofmann Dam	c,d
1	Shorewood	DuPage River	Oakwood Drive	c
1	South Holland Park District	Little Calumet River	Gouwens Park	a
1	St. Charles Park District	Fox River	Ferson Creek Park	b
1	Unknown	Des Plaines	Lake Street	c
1	U.S. Navy	Lake Michigan	Great Lakes Nav Trng Cntr Marina	a
1	Waukegan	Lake Michigan	Waukegan Municipal Beach	b
1	Waukegan Park District	Lake Michigan	Waukegan Harbor - North Harbor	a
1	Winfield Park District	DuPage River, West Branch	Lions Park	a
1	Zion	Lake Michigan	Hosah Park and Beach	b
2	Chicago Park District	Chicago River, South Branch	Western Avenue Canoe Access	c
2	County of DuPage	Salt Creek	3rd Street Emergency Take Out	a
2	Evanston	North Shore Channel	Ladd Arboretum	b
2	Evanston	Lake Michigan	Church Street Boat Ramp	a
2	Evanston	Lake Michigan	Dempster Sailing Beach	a
2	Forest Preserve District of Will County	DuPage River, East Branch	Barber's Corner Quarry Lake	c
2	Fox River Grove	Fox River	Fox River Grove Picnic Area	c
2	Glencoe Park Dist	Lake Michigan	Lakefront Beach and Park	b
2	IDNR	Fox River	Algonquin Dam and Portage	d
2	Joliet	DesPlaines River	Broadway Greenway	c
2	Lake Bluff Park District	Lake Michigan	Sunrise Park	b
2	Lake County Forest Preserve District	Lake Michigan	Fort Sheridan South Beach	b
2	Lake Forest	Lake Michigan	Forest Park Boat Rmp & Sailing Bch	a
2	Metropolitan Water Reclamation District	Cal-Sag Channel	Worth SEPA	c
2	Metropolitan Water Reclamation District	North Shore Channel	Lincoln Village	c
2	Naperville Park District	DuPage River, East Branch	DuPage River Park	c
2	Park Dist of Highland Park	Lake Michigan	Rosewood Beach and Park	b
2	Park Dist of Highland Park	Lake Michigan	Ravine Beach	b
2	Park Dist of Highland Park	Lake Michigan	Park Avenue Boating Beach	a
2	Skokie Park District	North Shore Channel	Oakton Street	c
2	Village of Algonquin	Fox River	River Front Park	c
2	Wilmette Park Dist	Lake Michigan	Gillson Park	a
2	Wilmington	Kankakee River	Wilmington Dam	b,d
2	Winnetka Park District	Lake Michigan	Tower Road Park and Beach	b
2	Winnetka Park District	Lake Michigan	Lloyd Park Boat Ramp and Beach	a
2	Winnetka Park District	Lake Michigan	Elder Lane Park	b
3	Chicago	Chicago River, South Branch	Job Corps Canoe Access	c
3	Elgin	Fox River	Kimball Street Dam	c,d
3	Forest Preserve Dist of DuPage Co	DuPage River, East Branch	Greene Valley Forest Preserve	c
3	Forest Preserve Dist of Will County	DesPlaines River	McKinley Woods Forest Preserve	b
3	Lisle Park District	DuPage River, East Branch	Lisle Community Park	c
3	McHenry County Conservation District	Kishwaukee River	County Line Rd	c
3	Oak Brook	Salt Creek	Old Oak Brook Dam	d

* "Site needs" indicates the estimated level of site improvements needed (corresponding to map designations) using the following letters:
a = established site b = site needs minor improvements c = construction needed d = portage improvements needed (note: a site may need access and portage improvements)

As shown in Table 3, there are eleven site owners with four or more sites on first priority trail stretches. Most also have implementation responsibilities on multiple trails. These eleven agencies own 75% of the 141 sites on first priority trail stretches (see Table 5 below), and so are key implementors of this plan. Included in this category are the six county forest preserve/conservation districts, the Chicago Park District (in conjunction with City of Chicago and MWRD), the IDNR, and the Naperville Park District. Nearly half of the sites in first priority trail stretches are owned by three agencies: the Forest Preserve District of Cook County (27 sites); the Chicago Park District (19 sites - some in conjunction with the City of Chicago or MWRD); and the IDNR (19 sites). Their sites are distributed throughout eight of the ten recommended water trails.

Table 5 is a summary of the sites and number of separate owners grouped by the three categories of trail stretches.

Table 5: Sites and Owners By Priority Stretch

Stretch: Miles:	Priority 1 376 mi	Priority 2 56 mi	Priority 3 48 mi	Total 480 mi
Number of Owners	39	19	7	54
Number of Sites	141	26	7	174
Site Needs*				
"a" sites	58	7	0	65
"b" sites	34	9	1	44
"c" sites	37	9	5	51
"d" sites	12	1	1	14

* - Site needs* indicates the estimated level of site improvements needed:
a = established site b = site needs minor improvements c = construction needed
d = only portage improvements are needed

As can be derived from Table 5 above, 104 of the 141 sites (74%) along first priority trail stretches are either established or need only minor access or portage improvements. There are 39 different owners of sites in these first priority trail stretches, which comprises 376 miles of the recommended water trail system. As shown in Table 3, eleven agencies own 106 (75%) of the 141 sites that are on first priority trails.

There are 26 sites in the 56 miles of second priority trail stretches, and 19 different owners. Third priority trail stretches, comprising 48 miles of the system, contain seven sites, with seven different owners.

MAJOR ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

There are many actions that local jurisdictions, the IDNR, planning and advocacy organizations, and others can take to gain increased recreational access for paddlers. What follows below are those major actions necessary to implementing the *coordinated* regional water trail system recommended in this plan. Additional recommendations and expansion of those listed below are included in the section on Additional Action Recommendations. To effectively implement this plan, it is recommended that

1. Owners of established and potential access and portage sites recommended in this plan include these sites and trails in their operational and development plans and make the improvements necessary to open those trail stretches with minimal obstacles as safe, functioning water trails (first priority stretches) as soon as possible. Second and third priority stretches should be included in longer term plans and capital programs.
2. Recreation providers, dam owners⁸ and other jurisdictions (such as water management agencies) along each recommended water trail work together to develop and manage a coordinated trail system. A coordinating mechanism, e.g., a water trail committee, will be needed to orchestrate the implementation, management, and maintenance of the trails that require action by more than one jurisdiction.⁸
3. All identified water trail providers name a water trail contact person to facilitate coordination.
4. Municipalities, park districts, counties, and water management agencies formally adopt the Regional Water Trails Plan and include water trails in comprehensive land use plans, and ask that developers seeking approval of developments near water trail facilities consider them in their plans and avoid conflicts in their planning.
5. IDNR consider revisions to the Boat Access Area Development Program to emphasize water *trail* development rather than site-specific boat access. Examples of specific changes to consider are included in Appendix G: Additional Recommendations.
6. A northeastern Illinois regional water trail council be formed consisting of representatives of each water trail committee (as suggested in the second recommendation), user groups, IDNR, etc. to provide technical assistance, address standards, coordinate promotion and user information (signage, guides), and a potential website, for the regional system of water trails.⁹

⁸ Note: In several cases, it was not possible to identify the owners of dams or adjacent land that is recommended for improvements in this plan. Water trail planners/implementors will need to identify these owners and coordinate with them in order to achieve a safe functional trail, especially where portage improvements are needed.

⁹ NIPC, Openlands Project, and the Access Project of the Illinois Paddling Council will commit to convening the first meetings of each trail committee and the coordinating council.

The Ten Major Water Trails:

Existing Conditions and Recommended Improvements

The ten waterways or waterway systems recommended as water trails in this plan share numerous characteristics including lower water in summer, winter ice, etc. The following waterway profiles focus on the characteristics and conditions that are *particular* to that waterway. (More specific information such as characteristics of and improvements needed at the surveyed access sites identified on the water trail maps is available from the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission, Openlands Project, and the Access Project of the Illinois Paddling Council.)

The following sections describe the particular conditions of each of the ten recommended water trails and the nature of the paddling experiences along the trail. Following the waterway descriptions are action recommendations for each water trail, divided into common stretches with a corresponding list of the site owners that would be expected to make the recommended improvements.¹⁰ Additional recommendations not specifically related to sites and portages are listed at the end of that section.

¹⁰ On the back of each map is a list of site names, their specific location, and ownership

Lake Michigan Water Trail

General Description

The Illinois shore of Lake Michigan stretches 68 miles from the Indiana border at Calumet Park on the south side of Chicago to the Wisconsin border north of Winthrop Harbor in Lake County. The 23 miles of the Chicago lakefront are almost entirely open to the public thanks to Daniel Burnham's visionary Chicago Plan of 1909. Boat-friendly sand beaches line its shore at some places on the south side and much of the shoreline on the north side of the city.

In northern Cook County and in southern Lake County, the beaches narrow and give way to high wooded bluffs topped by homes and a few suburban parks. North of the industrial area of Waukegan, on the north side of Waukegan Harbor, the sand beaches return and Illinois Beach State Park protects several miles of shoreline from private development.

Beaches require little or no improvements to provide access for boats of a wide variety of design and materials. While access to and from beaches is important to the creation of a lake trail, harbor access also plays a critical role on Lake Michigan. High waves and the resulting surf in shallow waters can make an unprotected beach a difficult and/or dangerous place to launch from or land on for small boaters. Harbors, ramps, and protected beaches are therefore important design elements for a long lake trail.

Along the shore, north of the city, many suburbs control parking and/or launching by imposing high daily and seasonal fees for non-residents. Since it is extremely unlikely that anyone resides in more than one suburb, even paddlers who *are* residents of one lakefront suburb find it prohibitively expensive to use the north shore as a trail for longer and one-way trips. The Lake Michigan Water Trail Group¹¹ has proposed the creation of a Water Trail Users Pass that could overcome this obstacle to an affordable water trail on this section of the Illinois shore.

Of Note...

In April 1998, the Chicago Park District announced plans to open the first water trail on the Illinois shore of Lake Michigan. Eight sites, including three beaches, will create a twenty mile long trail from Calumet Park at the Indiana border to the Wilson Ramp on the north side of the city.

¹¹ The Lake Michigan Water Trail Group is a group of recreational sea kayakers who paddle on Lake Michigan. In addition to advocating for a water trail user's pass, they advocate for water trail implementation that would include boat-friendly "softened" edges for access to the lake, parking, and boat drop-off spaces.

Paddling Lake Michigan

A trail on Lake Michigan presents considerations unlike those of the other water trails recommended in this plan. A lake trail is defined only by the location of the access points. The distance paddlers can go from shore, the potential for high wind and waves and high speed power boat traffic can make paddling on the lake a challenge even for experienced users. For these reasons, the use of a water trail on Lake Michigan is recommended only for experienced and well equipped paddlers or for less experienced paddlers accompanied by an experienced group or guide.

Lake Michigan Water Trail Action Recommendations

1st Priority Stretches (minor obstacles or improvements needed)

As a first priority, it is recommended that the owners of the established and recommended sites improve and coordinate signage or wayfinding information for the sites in the following stretches:

- North Point Marina to the Great Lakes Naval Training Center Marina:

<u>Site Owner</u>	<u>Site Needs</u>
IDNR	1 site needs construction 2 sites need minor improvements
City of Zion	1 site needs minor improvements
Waukegan / Park District	1 site needs minor improvements
City of Waukegan	1 established site needs coordinating signage
Foss Park District	1 site needs minor improvements
U.S. Navy - Rec.Dept.	1 established site needs coordinating signage

- Touhy (or Leone) Beach and Park to Calumet Park Boat Ramp:

<u>Site Owner</u>	<u>Site Needs</u>
Chicago Park District	9 established sites need coordinating signage 5 sites need minor improvements

2nd Priority Stretch (moderate obstacles or improvements needed)

As second priority, it is recommended that the owners of established and recommended sites improve and coordinate signage or wayfinding information for the sites in the following stretch:

- Lake Park Beach to Dempster Sailing Beach (North Shore Communities):

<u>Site Owner</u>	<u>Site Needs</u>
Lake Bluff Park District	1 site needs minor improvements
City of Lake Forest	1 established site needs coordinating signage
Lake Co FPD & Highwood	1 site needs minor improvements
Park Dist of Highland Park	2 sites need minor improvements 1 established site needs coordinating signage
Glencoe Park District	1 site needs minor improvements

Winnetka Park District	2 sites need minor improvements
Wilmette Park District	1 established site needs coordinating signage
City of Evanston Parks & Rec.	1 established site needs coordinating signage
	2 established sites need coordinating signage

- It is also recommended that the owners listed above participate in a Water Trail Users Pass as noted in the section on Lake Michigan: General Conditions.












Additional Recommendation

- It is recommended that a coordinating committee or other mechanism work to coordinate the entire Lake Michigan Trail, and explore the potential for, and/or indicate with wayfinding information established trail connections in Wisconsin and Indiana.

Lake Michigan Water Trail

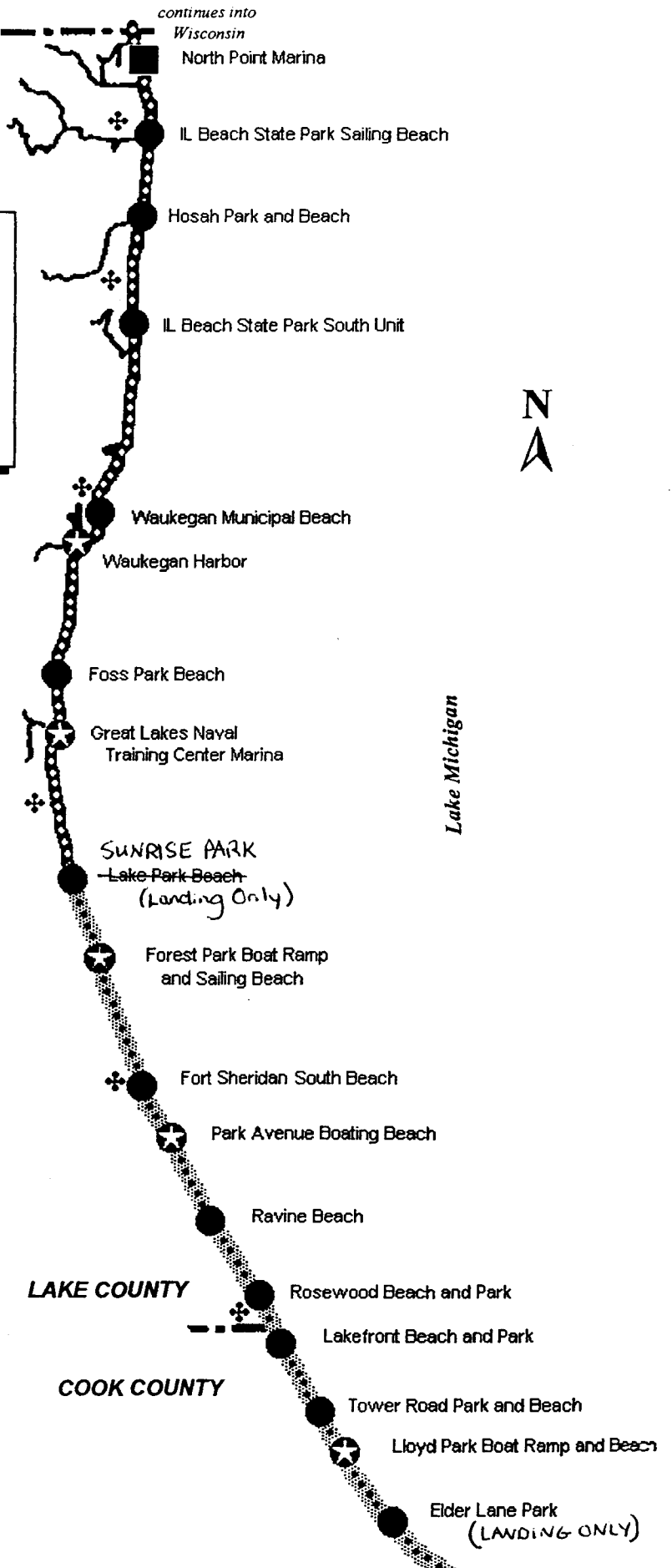
Wisconsin State Line to North Shore Channel

LEGEND

-  Waterways and Lakes
-  County Boundaries
-  Minor obstacles or improvements needed
-  Moderate obstacles or improvements needed
-  Major obstacles or improvements needed
-  Established Boat Launch
-  Site needs minor improvements
-  Site needs some construction
-  Portage needs improvements
-  Dam
-  Illinois Nature Preserve or Natural Area Inventory Site














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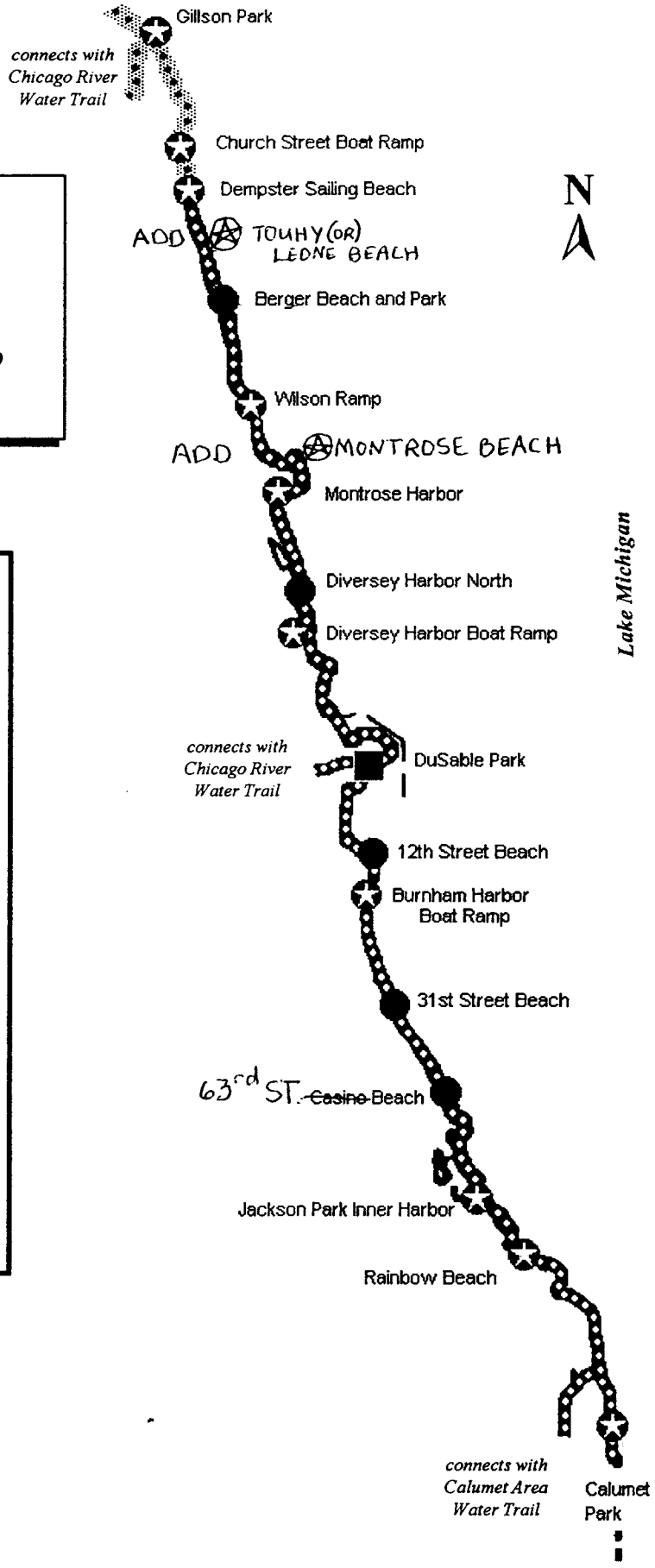
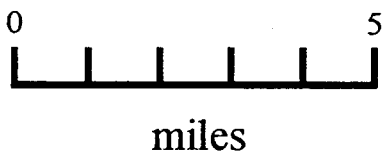


Lake Michigan Water Trail

North Shore Channel to Indiana State Line

LEGEND

-  Waterways and Lakes
-  County Boundaries
-  Minor obstacles or improvements needed
-  Moderate obstacles or improvements needed
-  Major obstacles or improvements needed
-  Established Boat Launch
-  Site needs minor improvements
-  Site needs some construction
-  Portage needs improvements
-  Dam
-  Illinois Nature Preserve or Natural Area Inventory Site



Lake Michigan Water Trail Sites

Waterway	Site Name	Location	Municipality	Ownership	Site Needs*	Priority Stretch**
Lake Michigan	North Point Marina	E end of Main St (7th)	Winthrop Harbor	IL Dept of Natural Resources	c	1
Lake Michigan	IL Beach State Park - Sailing Beach	E end of 17th St	Zion	IL Dept of Natural Resources	b	1
Lake Michigan	Hosah Park and Beach	E end of Shiloh Blvd (N edge of ComEd Nuclear Power Plant)	Zion	Zion	b	1
Lake Michigan	IL Beach State Park - South Unit	E end of Wadsworth Rd	Beach Park	IL Dept of Natural Resources	b	1
Lake Michigan	Waukegan Municipal Beach	End of Seahorse Dr on N side of Waukegan Harbor	Waukegan	Waukegan	b	1
Lake Michigan	Waukegan Harbor - North Harbor	S end of Harbor Pl near Sheridan Rd and Grand Ave	Waukegan	Waukegan	a	1
Lake Michigan	Foss Park Beach	N side of N Chicago Filtration and Pumping Station	North Chicago	Foss Park District	b	1
Lake Michigan	Great Lakes Nav Trng Cntr Marina	Gate E of Sheridan Rd and N of Rt 137 (Farragut) to E end Mahan Rd	Great Lakes	U.S. Navy	a	1
Lake Michigan	Sunrise Park (Landing Only)	Along Sunrise Ave	Lake Bluff	Lake Bluff Park District	b	2
Lake Michigan	Forest Park Boat Ramp & Sailing Bch	S end of Lake Rd	Lake Forest	Lake Forest	a	2
Lake Michigan	Fort Sheridan South Beach	E end of Boles Loop	Highwood	Lake County Forest Preserve Dist	b	2
Lake Michigan	Park Avenue Boating Beach	E end of Park Ave	Highland Park	Park Dist of Highland Park	a	2
Lake Michigan	Ravine Beach	Ravine Dr E of Sheridan Rd	Highland Park	Park Dist of Highland Park	b	2
Lake Michigan	Rosewood Beach and Park	N of Cary Ave and E of Sheridan Rd	Highland Park	Park Dist of Highland Park	b	2
Lake Michigan	Lakefront Beach and Park	E of Sheridan Rd and N of Hazel Ave	Glencoe	Glencoe Park Dist	b	2
Lake Michigan	Tower Road Park and Beach	NE end of Tower Rd	Winnetka	Winnetka Park District	b	2
Lake Michigan	Lloyd Park Boat Ramp and Beach	Between Lloyd Pl and Humboldt Ave E of Sheridan Rd	Winnetka	Winnetka Park District	a	2
Lake Michigan	Elder Lane Park (Landing Only)	Elder Lane E of Sheridan Rd	Winnetka	Winnetka Park District	b	2
Lake Michigan	Gilson Park	E of Sheridan Rd and N of Bahai Temple	Winnetka	Winnetka Park District	a	2
Lake Michigan	Church Street Boat Ramp	E end of Church St	Evanston	Wilmotte Park Dist	a	2
Lake Michigan	Dempster Sailing Beach	E end of Dempster St	Evanston	Evanston	a	2
Lake Michigan	Touly Avenue (Leone Park)	E. End of Touly Avenue	Chicago	Chicago Park District	a	1
Lake Michigan	Berger Park	E end of Granville Ave	Chicago	Chicago Park Dist	b	1
Lake Michigan	Wilson Ramp	Simonds Dr N of Wilson Dr	Chicago	Chicago Park Dist/Westrec	a	1
Lake Michigan	Montrose Beach	1st 50 yards of beach N side of pier	Chicago	Chicago Park District	a	1
Lake Michigan	Montrose Harbor	E end of Montrose Dr E of Lake Shore Dr	Chicago	Chicago Park Dist - Westrec	a	1
Lake Michigan	Diversey Harbor North	Diversey Parkway at Lake Shore Drive	Chicago	Chicago Park Dist - Westrec	b	1
Lake Michigan	Diversey Harbor Boat Ramp	E of Cannon Drive, S of Diversey Parkway	Chicago	Chicago Park Dist - Westrec	a	1
Lake Michigan	12th Street Beach	1250 S and E side of Northerly Island	Chicago	Chicago Park District	b	1
Lake Michigan	Burnham Harbor West Boat Ramp	1600 S and E side of Lake Shore Drive	Chicago	Chicago Park Dist - Westrec	a	1
Lake Michigan	31st Street Beach	31st St, E of Lake Shore Drive	Chicago	Chicago Park District	b	1
Lake Michigan	Casino Beach	49th St, E of Lake Shore Drive	Chicago	Chicago Park District	b	1
Lake Michigan	Jackson Park Inner Harbor	Hayes Dr, 500' E of Coast Guard Dr (S Lake Shore)	Chicago	Chicago Park District	a	1
Lake Michigan	Rainbow Beach	E end of 75th St	Chicago	Chicago Park District	a	1
Lake Michigan	Calumet Park	E end of 95th St	Chicago	Chicago Park Dist/Westrec	a	1

* Site needs* indicates the estimated level of site improvements needed (corresponding to map designations) using the following letters:
 a = established site b = site needs minor improvements c = construction needed d = portage improvements needed (note that a site may need access and portage improvements)

** "Priority Stretch" identifies the level of difficulty to implement the stretch (corresponding to the three varying map line textures) within which the site is located:
 1 = site is in 1st priority stretch 2 = site is in a 2nd priority stretch 3 = site is in a third priority stretch

Additional Agencies and Organizations
 S.E. Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission; N.W. Indiana Regional Planning Commission; The Northwest Passage, Inc. Wilmette; Lake Michigan Water Trail Group; Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago
 Friends of the Marine Community; Lake Michigan Federation

Chicago River Water Trail

General Description

The Chicago River is a long, complex waterway that begins in Lake County. It includes the Skokie River, Skokie Lagoons, the West and Middle Forks of the North Branch, the North Shore Channel, the North Branch, the North Branch Canal (the east channel around Goose Island), the Main Branch in the downtown area of the city, the South Branch, the South Fork of the South Branch (Bubbly Creek), and the Sanitary and Ship Canal leading to the National Historic Site of the Chicago Portage area around 47th and Harlem, southwest of the city. Its location between and connecting of the Great Lakes and the Mississippi watersheds is the reason Chicago was located here and became the second largest non-coastal city in North America.

Paddling the Chicago River

Flowing through one of the most densely populated areas on earth, the Chicago River provides a variety of recreational opportunities from the quiet beauty of the creek-like North Branch, to the wide Main Branch through the urban canyons of the loop area, to the challenges of contending with power boat and barge traffic on the major industrial waterway of the historic South Branch.

Skokie Lagoons - A large wetland area near Wilmette and Glencoe was converted into a series of hand dug lagoons by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930's. Now, nearly seven miles of waterways provide a unique refuge for deer, waterfowl, and non-motorized boating. The Chicago River Water Trail begins at a recently completed boat ramp just south of Tower Road.

North Branch - Beginning at the Willow Road Dam that creates the Skokie Lagoons, the Skokie or East Fork of the North Branch flows south and east toward the city. Almost entirely protected by Cook County forest preserves, it provides a safe and quiet opportunity to enjoy nature in an otherwise highly developed suburban and urban area. The existing forest preserves and low banks make it easy to develop a number of low cost launch sites in this stretch.

Of Note...

In 1997 Mayor Daley directed Chicago's Planning and Development Department to create a plan for the Chicago River that would, over time, result in it becoming a greenway accommodating more access and recreation. A new city ordinance now requires many new developments to be set back 30 feet from the river to enhance opportunities to create a greenway and continuous trail along the river in the city. Safe, legal, and adequate boat access is integrated in the city's plan along with an environmental action plan.

At River Park on the city's north side a small dam creates a "waterfall" at the confluence of the North Branch and the North Shore Channel. It also marks the place where the North Branch becomes navigable for power boats. The North Branch becomes a wide, highly engineered river flowing southeast through the neighborhoods of the city toward the downtown area. Several canoe launches will be located along this stretch of the river as the City's Chicago River Development Plan is put in place.

North Shore Channel - The North Shore Channel is a manmade waterway that extends northward from the River Park "waterfall" just south of Foster Avenue to the Wilmette Locks at Lake Michigan near the Bahai Temple. This straight canal with a slow current and few power boats is ideal for race practice, newer paddlers, and rowing shells. The Skokie Park District plans to create a boat access in a new park at Oakton Street. An old canoe landing at Bridge Street in the Evanston Park District's Ladd Arboretum could be rehabilitated to provide adequate access to the entire channel.

Main Branch - Some of the tallest buildings in the world line the river in the downtown area. They create canyons of monumental proportions when seen from the water. History, architecture, industry, commerce, civil engineering, and hundreds of thousands of people come together to create an unparalleled paddling experience. The Chicago Park District has plans for a small boat access opposite the mouth of the river at the Chicago Locks. It will be called DuSable Park (after the first non-native settler of this area) and will serve as a link between the Chicago River water trail and the Lake Michigan water trail.

South Branch - The river continues south from the downtown area to near Cermak Road where it turns southwest to its confluence with Bubbly Creek. Here, the site of the terminus of the Illinois and Michigan Canal will be memorialized by the planned "Origins Park". A canoe launch is included in the plan for this site. From this point downstream, concrete and steel bulkhead walls line much of the riverbank and, along with increased industrial barge and power boat traffic, make this stretch of the river a place for more experienced paddlers.

Chicago River Water Trail Action Recommendations

1st Priority Stretches (minor obstacles or improvements needed):

As a first priority, it is recommended that the owners of established and recommended sites improve and coordinate signage or wayfinding information for the sites in the following stretches:

- Tower Road Boat Launch at Skokie Lagoons, along the North Branch to Du Sable Park on the Main Branch, and then to Canal Origins Park on the South Branch:

Skokie Lagoons and North Branch

<u>Site Owner</u>	<u>Site Needs</u>
For Pres Dist of Cook Co (6)	1 established site needs coordin. signage 1 site needs portage improvement 2 sites need minor improvements 3 sites need construction (1 of which also needs portage improvements)
Chi Pk Dist City of Chicago MWRD Chicago Housing Authority	2 sites need construction (1 of which also needs portage improvements) 1 site needs construction 1 site needs construction 1 established site needs coordin. signage

Chicago River - Main Stem (Loop)

<u>Site Owner</u>	<u>Site Needs</u>
Chicago/MWRD/Chi Park Dist.	1 site needs construction

Chicago River - South Branch

<u>Site Owner</u>	<u>Site Needs</u>
Chicago Park District	2 sites need construction

2nd Priority Stretches (moderate obstacles or improvements needed):

As second priority, it is recommended that the owners of the recommended sites improve and coordinate signage or wayfinding information for the sites in the following stretches:

- North Shore Channel from Gilson Park to River Park; and from Canal Origins Park to the Western Avenue Canoe Access along the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal

North Shore Channel

<u>Site Owner</u>	<u>Site Needs</u>
City of Evanston/MWRD	1 site needs minor improvements
Skokie Park District/MWRD	1 site needs construction
MWRD	1 site needs construction

Chicago River - South Branch

<u>Site Owner</u>	<u>Site Needs</u>
Chicago Park Dist.	1 site needs construction

3rd Priority Stretch (major obstacles or improvements needed):

As a third priority, it is recommended that the owner of the recommended site improve and coordinate signage or wayfinding information for the site in the following stretch:

- South Branch from Western Avenue Canoe Access to the Job Corps Canoe Access Site












<u>Site Owner</u>	<u>Site Needs</u>
City of Chicago	1 site needs construction

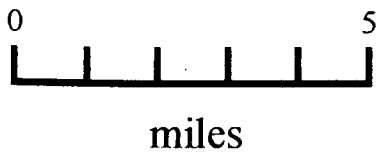
Chicago River Water Trail

LAKE COUNTY

COOK COUNTY

LEGEND

-  Waterways and Lakes
-  County Boundaries
-  Minor obstacles or improvements needed
-  Moderate obstacles or improvements needed
-  Major obstacles or improvements needed
-  Established Boat Launch
-  Site needs minor improvements
-  Site needs some construction
-  Portage needs improvements
-  Dam
-  Illinois Nature Preserve or Natural Area Inventory Site



Chicago River Water Trail Sites

Waterway	Site Name	Location	Municipality	Ownership	Site Needs*	Priority Stretch**
Chicago River, Skokie Lagoons	Tower Rd Boat Launch	South of Tower Rd, E of Edens Expressway	Northfield	Forest Preserve Dist of Cook County	a	1
Chicago River, North Branch	Willow Rd Dam	North of Willow Rd, west side of Forest Preserve Dr	Winnetka	Forest Preserve Dist of Cook County	c,d	1
Chicago River, North Branch	Winnetka Rd Dam	N of Winnetka Rd between Hubbard and I-94	Winnetka	Forest Preserve Dist of Cook County	d	1
Chicago River, North Branch	Blue Star Memorial Woods	South of East Lake Ave, west of Harms Rd	Glenview	Forest Preserve Dist of Cook County	b	1
Chicago River, North Branch	Linne Woods Forest Preserve	North of Dempster St, 6400 west	Morton Grove	Forest Preserve Dist of Cook County	c	1
Chicago River, North Branch	Bunker Hill Canoe Access	West of Caldwell, south of Touhy	Niles	Forest Preserve Dist of Cook County	b	1
Chicago River, North Branch	Labagh Woods Canoe Access	Foster, NW of Gompers Park	Chicago	Forest Preserve Dist of Cook County	c	1
Chicago River, North Branch	River Park	Albany and Carmen	Chicago	Chicago Park District	c,d	1
Chicago River, North Branch	Clark Park	Beth Belmont and Addison on Rockwell	Chicago	Chicago Park District	c	1
Chicago River, North Branch	Lathrop Wetlands	S of Diversey Pkwy, W of Damen Ave	Chicago	Chicago Park District	c	1
Chicago River, North Branch	North Avenue Turning Basin	S of North Ave on the west bank of the Turning Basin	Chicago	Metropolitan Water Reclamation District	c	1
Chicago River, North Branch	Lathrop Homes Canoe Launch	300 yards N. of Division, off Leavitt	Chicago	Chicago Housing Authority	c	1
Chicago River, Main Stem	DUSable Park	S of Navy Pier, E of Lake Shore Dr	Chicago	Chicago, Chicago Park Dist and MWRD	a	1
Chicago River, South Branch	Chinatown Park	Between 18th St and Cermak, 400 W	Chicago	Chicago Park District	c	1
Chicago River, South Branch	Canal Origins Park	E of Ashland, N of 31st St	Chicago	Chicago Park District	c	1
Chicago River, South Branch	Western Avenue Canoe Access	SW Western Ave Bridge	Chicago	Chicago Park District	c	2
Chicago River, South Branch	Job Corps Canoe Access	W of Kedzie, S of 33rd St	Chicago	Chicago	c	3
North Shore Channel	Ladd Arboretum	SW side of McCormick, NE side of Bridge St	Evanston	Evanston/MWRD	c	2
North Shore Channel	Oakton Street	N of Oakton, E of McCormick	Skokie	Skokie Park District/MWRD	b	2
North Shore Channel	Lincoln Village	S of Devon, NE of Lincoln	Chicago	Metropolitan Water Reclamation District	c	2

* Site needs* indicates the estimated level of site improvements needed (corresponding to map designations) using the following letters:
 a = established site b = site needs minor improvements c = construction needed d = portage improvements needed (note that a site may need access and portage improvements)

** Priority Stretch* identifies the level of difficulty to implement the stretch (corresponding to the three varying map line textures) within which the site is located:
 1 = site is in 1st priority stretch 2 = site is in a 2nd priority stretch 3 = site is in a third priority stretch

Additional Agencies and Organizations
 Friends of the Chicago River, Lake Co. Stormwater Management Commission, Friends of the Chicago River

Des Plaines River Water Trail

General Description

The Des Plaines River begins in Wisconsin in Racine County and flows south into Illinois as a small, prairie stream. It runs approximately 95 miles through four counties in Illinois to its confluence with the Kankakee River at Channahon to form the Illinois River. Along the way it changes its character from prairie stream, to large urban river, to major industrial waterway.

The legal classification of the Des Plaines River changes along its course. At its headwaters, the Des Plaines River, like all rivers in Wisconsin, is considered “navigable” and legally accessible by the public. When the river enters Illinois it becomes a ‘non-navigable’ river until it reaches the Hofmann Dam in Riverside and Lyons, just north of Ogden Avenue. Here, it once again becomes a public and navigable waterway to its end at the confluence with the Kankakee River.

Of Note...

The nineteen mile Des Plaines River Canoe Marathon is sponsored by the Des Plaines River Association and the Forest Preserve Districts of Lake and Cook County and has been held annually since 1957. In May, 1998, two thousand people registered for this paddling event.

Paddling the Des Plaines River

Fortunately for recreational users, Lake and Cook County Forest Preserve Districts have protected long stretches of the river by developing a Des Plaines River greenway and bike path along its banks. They are in the process of implementing a plan to link all the forest preserves with a regional greenway trail and have developed and promoted the recreational use of the river by creating canoe launch sites on the northern and middle sections of the river. The lack of trailered-boat ramps make this long river a quiet, beginner, and family friendly river, free of the noise and challenges of coping with powered boat use. Depending on water levels in the Lake County portion, however, frequent additional portages may be required.

The Lake County Forest Preserves offers canoe safety instruction and leads guided canoe trips along the Lake County section of the Des Plaines River Greenway.

North Section - From the state line at Russell Road in Lake County, to the Allison Woods Canoe Launch in northern Cook County, a number of developed canoe launches and undeveloped access sites form the basis for an easily developable trail system.

Middle Section - Through much of the Cook County section of the river, high banks and

no official launch sites make the river more difficult to access. The lack of a safe, designated portage around the Hofmann Dam also creates an obstacle to the continuous public use of the river through this section.

Lower Section - From the Stony Ford Canoe Landing, just downstream from the Hofmann Dam, a number of reasonably spaced access sites once again create an easily developable trail. Of particular interest in this section is historic Isle a la Cache. Here, on an island near Romeoville, a Will County Forest Preserve District Canoe Landing and Museum make an interesting stop or destination for a trip on the lower section. Four miles below Isle a la Cache is an easily developable site at Lockport Prairie. Safety considerations around the MWRD controlling works at Lockport, industrial barge traffic downstream of the confluence with the Sanitary and Ship Canal of the Illinois Waterway, and the Brandon Locks in Joliet make this last section of the river more difficult to develop for general public recreational use.

Des Plaines River Water Trail Action Recommendations

1st Priority Stretch (minor obstacles or improvements needed):

As a first priority, it is recommended that the owners of established and recommended sites make the improvements and coordinate signage or wayfinding information for the sites in the following stretch:

- Russell Road to Lockport Prairie

<u>Site Owner</u>	<u>Site Needs</u>
Lake Co For Pres Dist	5 established sites need coordinating signage
Gurnee Park District	1 established site needs coordinating signage
V of Lincolnshire	1 site needs construction
For Pres Dist of Cook Co	4 established sites need coordinating signage
	4 sites need minor improvements (3 of which need portage improvements)
	2 sites needs construction (1 of which also needs portage improvements)
	2 sites need portage improvements
Riverside Park District	1 site needs construction (site also needs portage improvement)
Burr Ridge Park District	1 established site needs coordinating signage
MWRD	1 site needs construction
For Pres Dist of Will Co	1 established site needs coordinating signage
	1 site needs minor improvements
Unknown	1 site needs construction (Lake Street)

2nd Priority Stretch (moderate obstacles or improvements needed):

As a second priority, it is recommended that the owner improve and coordinate signage or wayfinding information for the site in the following stretch:

- Lockport Prairie to Broadway Greenway

Site Owner
City of Joliet

Site Needs
1 site needs construction

3rd Priority Stretch (major obstacles or improvements needed):

As a third priority, it is recommended that the owner improve and coordinate signage or wayfinding information for the site in the following stretch:

- Broadway Greenway to McKinley Woods Forest Preserve





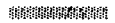






Site Owner
For Pres Dist of Will Co

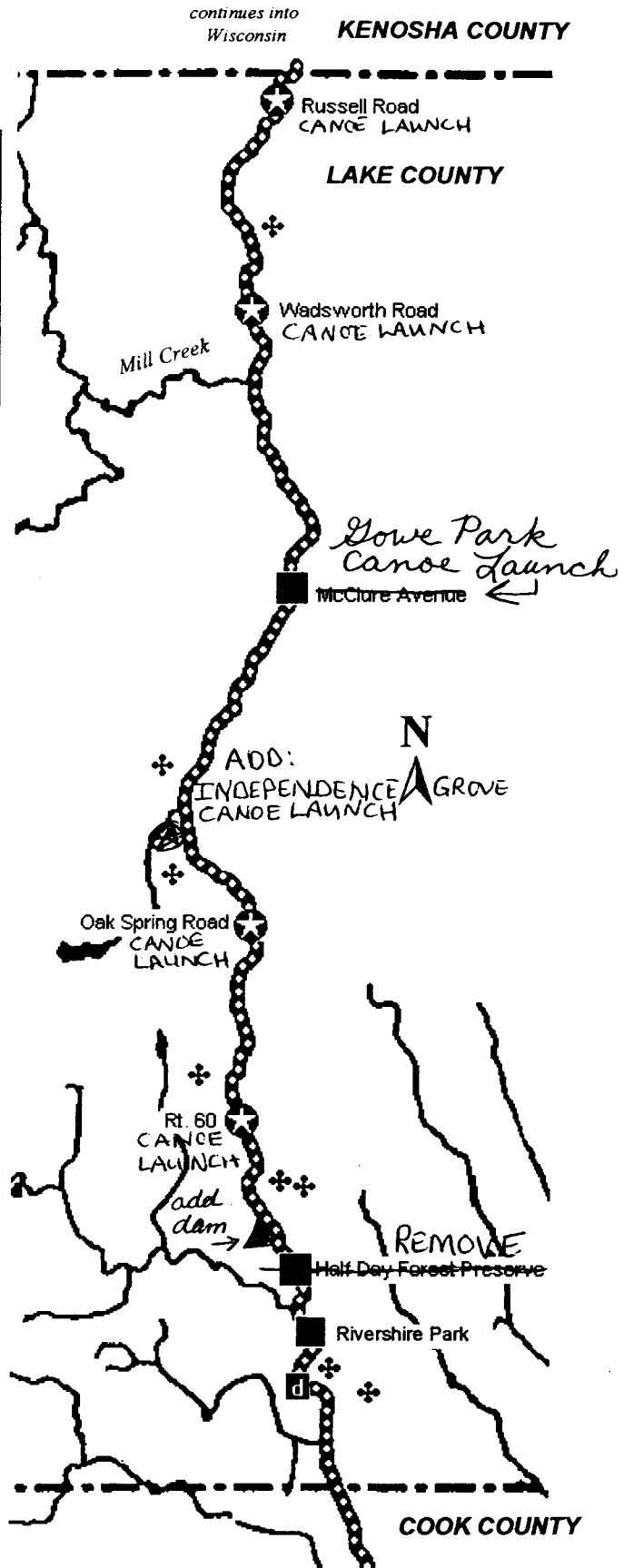
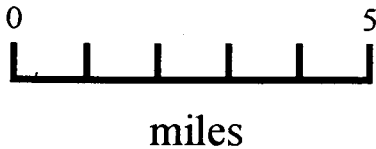
Site Needs
1 site needs minor improvements

Des Plaines River Water Trail

Wisconsin State Line to Cook County Line

LEGEND












-  Waterways and Lakes
-  County Boundaries
-  Minor obstacles or improvements needed
-  Moderate obstacles or improvements needed
-  Major obstacles or improvements needed
-  Established Boat Launch
-  Site needs minor improvements
-  Site needs some construction
-  Portage needs improvements
-  Dam
-  Illinois Nature Preserve or Natural Area Inventory Site

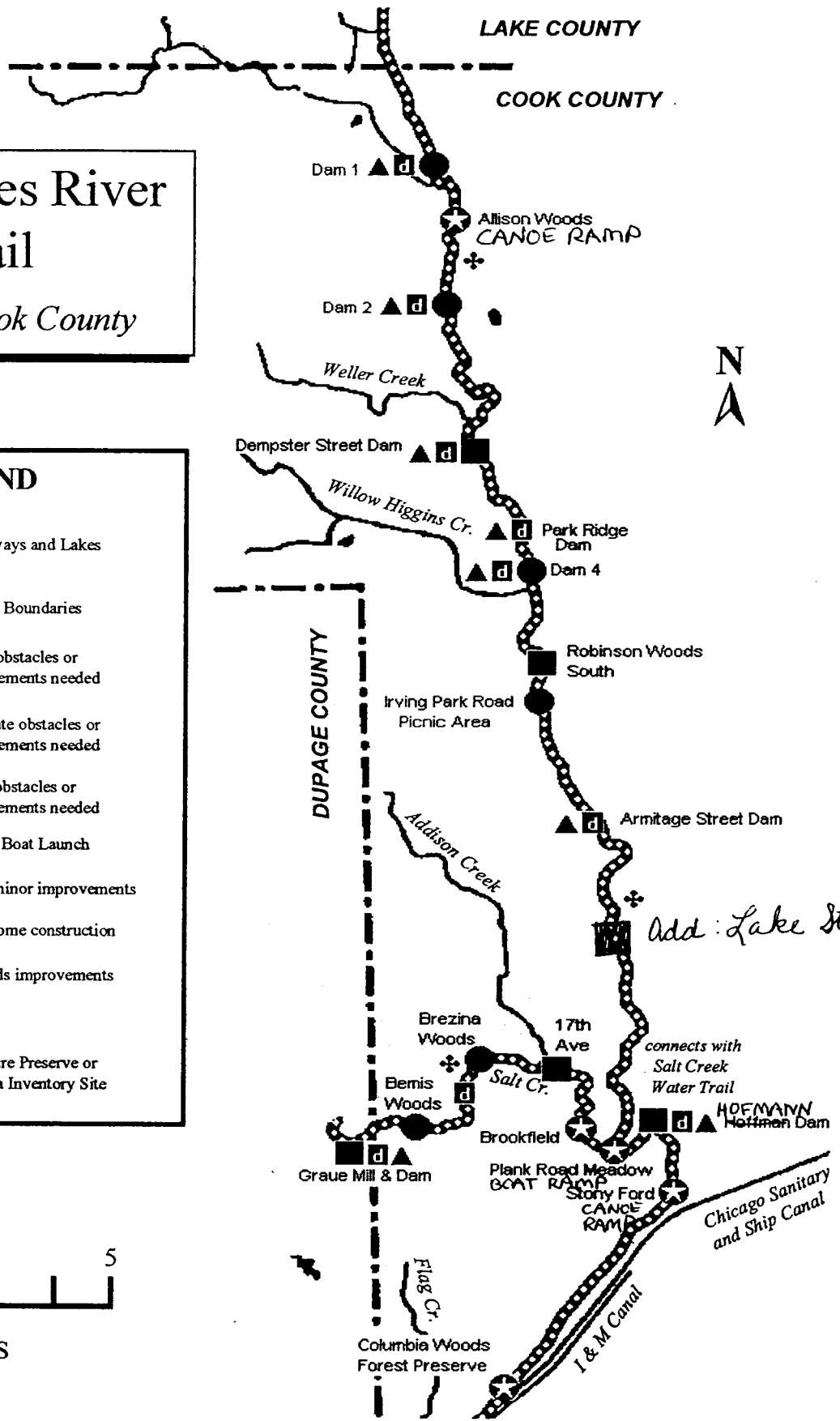
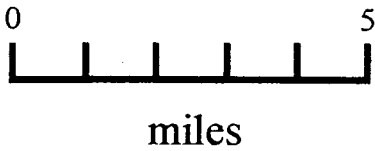


Des Plaines River Water Trail

within Cook County

LEGEND












-  Waterways and Lakes
-  County Boundaries
-  Minor obstacles or improvements needed
-  Moderate obstacles or improvements needed
-  Major obstacles or improvements needed
-  Established Boat Launch
-  Site needs minor improvements
-  Site needs some construction
-  Portage needs improvements
-  Dam
-  Illinois Nature Preserve or Natural Area Inventory Site

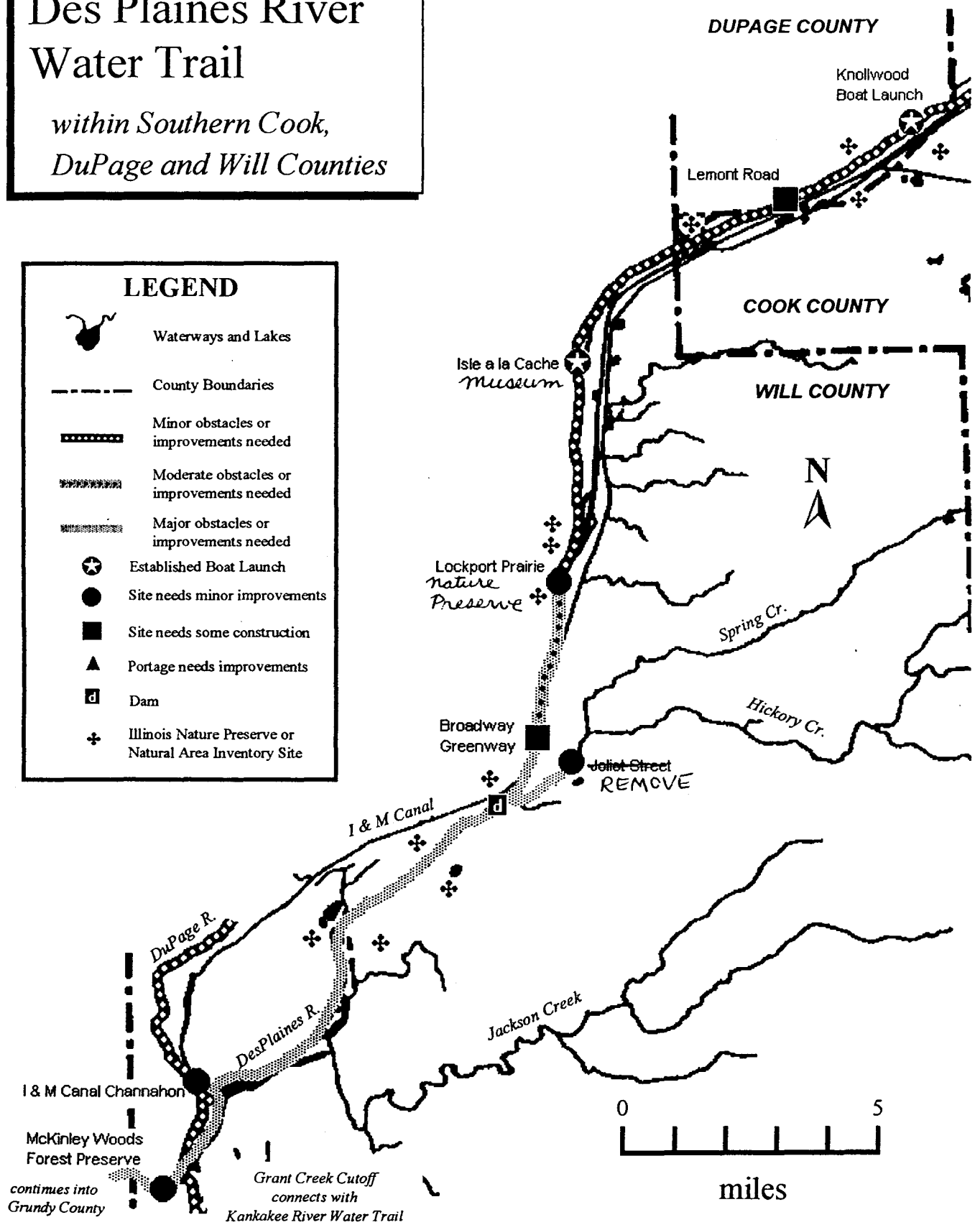


Des Plaines River Water Trail

*within Southern Cook,
DuPage and Will Counties*

LEGEND

-  Waterways and Lakes
-  County Boundaries
-  Minor obstacles or improvements needed
-  Moderate obstacles or improvements needed
-  Major obstacles or improvements needed
-  Established Boat Launch
-  Site needs minor improvements
-  Site needs some construction
-  Portage needs improvements
-  Dam
-  Illinois Nature Preserve or Natural Area Inventory Site



Des Plaines River Water Trail Sites

Waterway	Site Name	Location	Municipality	Ownership	Site Needs*	Priority Stretch**
DesPlaines River	Russell Road	S of Russell Rd, 1 mile E of I-94	Wadsworth	Lake County Forest Preserve District	a	1
DesPlaines River	Wadsworth Road Canoe Launch	S of Wadsworth Rd, 1/2 mile E of Rt 41	Wadsworth	Lake County Forest Preserve District	a	1
DesPlaines River	Gowe Park Canoe Launch	W end of McClure Rd, S of Grand Ave, W of O'Plaine Rd	Gurnee	Lake County Forest Preserve District	a	1
DesPlaines River	Independence Grove Canoe Launch	Independence Grove Forest Preserve	Libertyville	Lake County Forest Preserve District	a	1
DesPlaines River	Oak Spring Road Canoe Launch	S of Oak Spring Rd, W of St Mary's Rd	Vernon Hills	Lake County Forest Preserve District	a	1
DesPlaines River	Route 60 Canoe Launch	S of Rt 60, 1/4 mile E of Milwaukee Ave (Rt 21)	Lincolnshire	Lake County Forest Preserve District	a	1
DesPlaines River	Rivershire Park	1/2 mile W of Riverwoods Rd and Londonderry Lane	Northbrook	Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	b,d	1
DesPlaines River	Dam #1	S of Dundee Rd (Rt 68), 1/8 mile W of Portwine Rd	Prospect Heights	Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	a	1
DesPlaines River	Allison Woods	W of Milwaukee Ave, 1/2 mile S of Palatine Rd	Mt. Prospect	Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	b,d	1
DesPlaines River	Dam #2	S of Euclid Ave, 1/4 mile E of DesPlaines River Rd (Rt 45)	DesPlaines	Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	c,d	1
DesPlaines River	Dempster Street Dam	S of Dempster/Tracker St, E of Des Plaines River Rd (Rt 45)	Park Ridge	Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	d	1
DesPlaines River	Park Ridge Dam	N of Touhy Ave, W of Talcott Ave	Rosemont	Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	b,d	1
DesPlaines River	Dam #4	S of Devon, E of Des Plaines River Rd	Schiller Park	Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	c	1
DesPlaines River	Robinson Woods South	S of Lawrence Ave, between East River Rd and Des Plaines River Rd	Schiller Park	Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	b	1
DesPlaines River	Irving Park Road Picnic Area	E of Des Plaines River Rd, N of Irving Park Rd	Elmwood Park	Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	d	1
DesPlaines River	Armitage Street Dam	Armitage St, between Tratcher Rd and 1st Ave	Maywood or Riv For	Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	c	1
DesPlaines River	Lake Street	Near intersection of Lake Street and River	Lyons	Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	a	1
DesPlaines River	Plank Road Meadow Boat Ramp	NE of Ogden and Plainfield Rd intersection	Lyons and Riverside	Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	c,d	1
DesPlaines River	Hofmann Dam	N of Ogden, W of Joliet Ave	Lyons	Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	a	1
DesPlaines River	Stony Ford Canoe Landing	S of Joliet Rd, E of Oak Ave	Willow Springs	Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	a	1
DesPlaines River	Columbia Woods Forest Preserve	W of Willow Springs Rd, end of Columbia Woods Dr	Burr Ridge	Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	a	1
DesPlaines River	Knollwood Boat Launch	S end of Madison St, 1/2 mile E of Rt 53	Lemont	Metropolitan Water Reclamation District	c	1
DesPlaines River	Lemont Road	SE of Lemont Rd Bridge	Romeoville	Forest Preserve Dist of Will County	a	1
DesPlaines River	Isle a la Cache Museum	S of Romeo Rd (135th St), 1/2 mile E of Rt 53	Lockport	Forest Preserve Dist of Will County	b	1
DesPlaines River	Lockport Prairie Nature Preserve	Division Street, 1/2 mile E of Broadway St (Rt 53)	Joliet	Forest Preserve Dist of Will County	c	2
DesPlaines River	Broadway Greenway	E of Broadway Ave (Rt 53), NW of Rudy St Bridge	Channahon	Forest Preserve Dist of Will County	b	3
DesPlaines River	Mckinley Woods Forest Preserve	S end of McKinley Woods Rd				

* Site needs* indicates the estimated level of site improvements needed (corresponding to map designations) using the following letters:
a = established site b = site needs minor improvements c = construction needed d = portage improvements needed (note that a site may need access and portage improvements)

** Priority Stretch* identifies the level of difficulty to implement the stretch (corresponding to the three varying map line textures) within which the site is located:
1 = site is in 1st priority stretch 2 = site is in a 2nd priority stretch 3 = site is in a third priority stretch

Additional Agencies and Organizations
River Forest Park District; NRCS WillSouth Cook; Will/So Cook Soil & Water Cons. Dist.; Des Plaines River Association; Lemont; Southeastern Wisconsin Reg Planning Comm; River Trail Nature Center, Northbrook; Upper DesPlaines River Ecosystem Partnership

Salt Creek Water Trail

General Description

Salt Creek can be described as having four distinct sections. The upper watershed begins in Palatine and flows south past Arlington Race Track as an intermittent stream in a narrow channel. The lake section begins where the creek crosses Golf Road (Route 58) and enters Busse Woods Forest Preserve and the 590 acre flood retention area of Busse Reservoir.

The dam that creates the reservoir marks the beginning of the middle section through Cook and DuPage counties. This stretch runs through residential areas and a number of forest preserves and parks. Sewage treatment plants and flood control structures in the DuPage County part of this section affect the water quality and present occasional safety hazards.

The lower section begins where the creek re-enters Cook County at the Tri-State Tollway. With the exception of a .4 mile stretch of the river through Brookfield, the lower section of Salt Creek is owned on one or both banks by the Forest Preserve District of Cook County.

Paddling the Salt Creek

Upper Section - The size and intermittent nature of the stream in the upper section make it unsuitable for development as a water trail.

Lake Section - Canoes, rowboats, and sailboats are allowed on the South and Main Lake sections of Cook County Forest Preserve District's Busse Lake. There are public launch ramps for access to both areas. Watercraft rental by the hour or day is available from April through October. Electric trolling motors are allowed; gas outboard motors are not.

Middle Section - While the reservoir collects water from a large watershed north of Golf Road, much of the polluted runoff that is also collected stays in the lake. The water that flows over the top of the dam to begin the middle section of the creek is relatively clean. Most of its course through Elk Grove is through Village Park District property. In DuPage County the creek provides an interesting trip through a mix of county forest preserves, local parks, golf courses, and light industrial and residential areas. The Nature Center at Fullersburg Woods Forest Preserve and Graue Mill would make interesting

Of Note...

The Salt Creek Greenway, which borders the Cook County portion of the waterway, is one of the oldest established stream greenways in the Midwest. The Forest Preserve District of DuPage County has recently initiated a proposal to develop a comprehensive Salt Creek Greenway Plan in conjunction with DuPage County, NIPC, and Openlands Project, with sponsorship by the IDNR.

stops or destinations on a water trail in this section. Currently there is no officially permitted access to the river in DuPage County.

Lower Section - Salt Creek re-enters Cook County at the Tri-State Tollway (I-294). Although shallow in spots, the river winds through beautiful Cook County Forest Preserve District woods and land owned by the Brookfield Zoo before its confluence with the Des Plaines River. Low banks and several access points in forest preserves and near bridges make this an easily developable trail.

Salt Creek Action Recommendations

1st Priority Stretches (minor obstacles or improvements needed):

As a first priority, it is recommended that the owners of established and recommended sites improve and coordinate signage or wayfinding information for the sites in the following stretch:

- Busse Reservoir to Eldridge Park; and Fullersburg Woods to Plank Road Meadow

<u>Site Owner</u>	<u>Site Needs</u>
For Pres Dist DuPage Co	4 sites need construction (1 of which also needs portage improvements)
	1 site needs portage improvement
IDNR	1 site needs portage improvement
Elmhurst Park District	1 site needs construction
County of DuPage	1 site needs coordinating signage
For Pres Dist Cook Co	1 established site needs coordinating signage
	3 sites need minor improvements (1 site also needs portage improvements)
	1 site needs construction
Village of Brookfield	1 established site needs coordinating signage

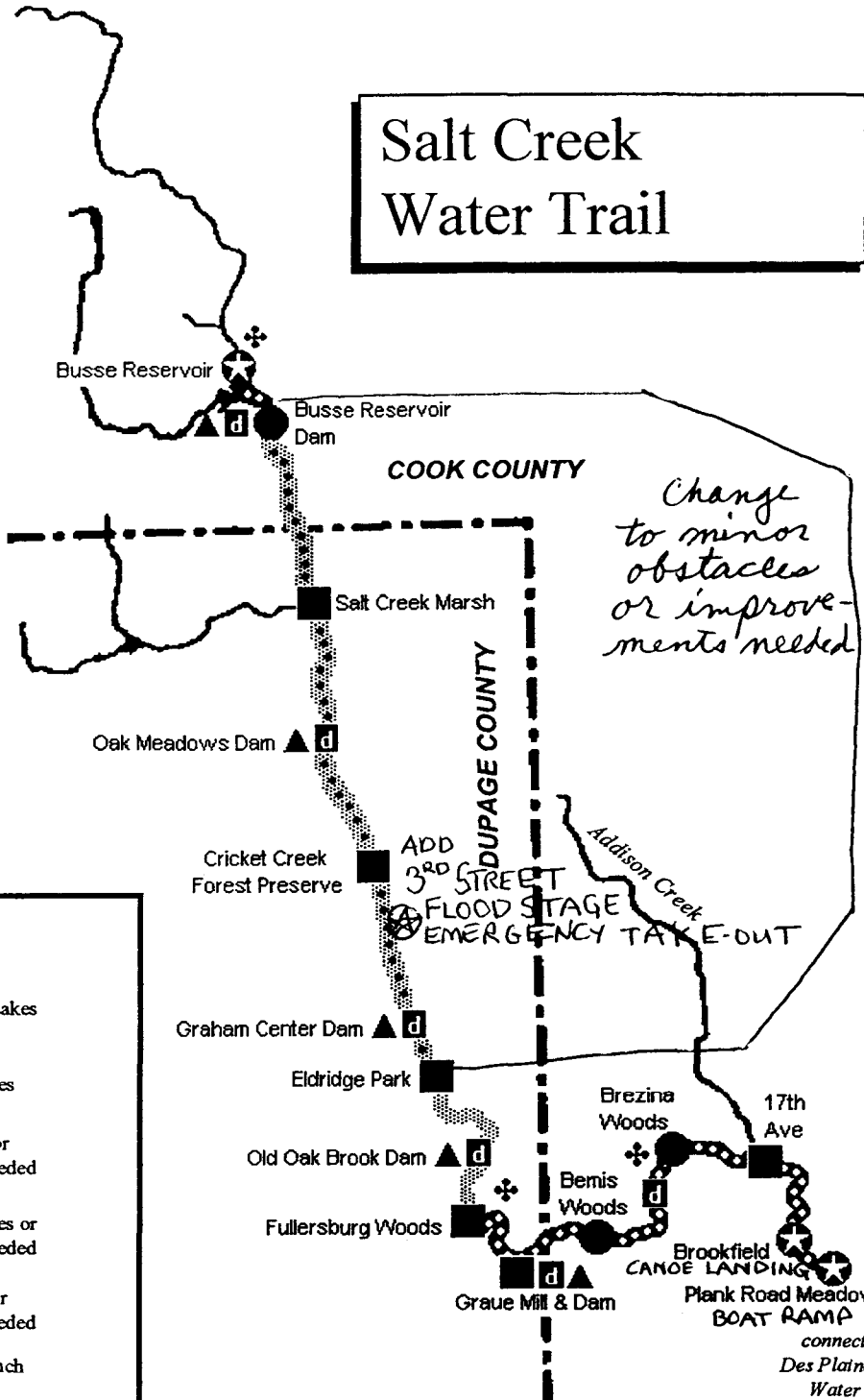
3rd Priority Stretch (major obstacles or improvements needed):

As a third priority, it is recommended that the owner improve and coordinate signage or wayfinding information for the site in the following stretch:

- Eldridge Park to Fullersburg Woods:

<u>Site Owner</u>	<u>Site Needs</u>
For Pres Dist DuPage Co	1 site needs portage improvement

Salt Creek Water Trail



LEGEND

- Waterways and Lakes
- County Boundaries
- Minor obstacles or improvements needed
- Moderate obstacles or improvements needed
- Major obstacles or improvements needed
- Established Boat Launch
- Site needs minor improvements
- Site needs some construction
- Portage needs improvements
- Dam
- Illinois Nature Preserve or Natural Area Inventory Site



Change to minor obstacles or improvements needed

ADD 3RD STREET FLOOD STAGE EMERGENCY TAKE-OUT

connects with Des Plaines River Water Trail

Salt Creek Water Trail Sites

Waterway	Site Name	Location	Municipality	Ownership	Site Needs*	Priority Stretch**
Salt Creek	Busse Reservoir	S of Higgins Rd, E of I-290	Elk Grove Village	Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	a	1
Salt Creek	Busse Reservoir Dam	W of Arlington Heights Rd at Edgewater	Elk Grove Village	Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	b,d	2
Salt Creek	Salt Creek Marsh Forest Preserve	W of Grove Ave at Commercial Street	Wood Dale	Forest Preserve Dist of DuPage Co	c	2
Salt Creek	Oak Meadows Dam	½ mile SW of Wooddale Rd and Third Ave intersection	Wood Dale	Forest Preserve Dist of DuPage Co	d	2
Salt Creek	Cricket Creek Forest Preserve	N of Fullerton Ave, E of Villa Ave	Addison	Forest Preserve Dist of DuPage Co	c	2
Salt Creek	3rd St Flood Stg EmergencyTakeOutE	Bank of Creek at 3rd Street	Elmhurst	County of DuPage	a	3
Salt Creek	Graham Center Dam	Madison St. at Fairview Ave	Elmhurst	IL Dept of Natural Resources	d	2
Salt Creek	Eldridge Park	N of Butterfield Rd at Commonwealth Ln	Elmhurst	Elmhurst Park Dist	c	2
Salt Creek	Old Oak Brook Dam	1/4 mile downstream of Oak Brook Rd (31st St.)	Oak Brook	Oak Brook	d	3
Salt Creek	Fullersburg Woods	NE of Spring Rd between York Rd and Madison St	Oak Brook	Forest Preserve Dist of DuPage Co	c	1
Salt Creek	Grave Mill and Dam	W of York Rd and N of Spring Rd	Oak Brook	Forest Preserve Dist of DuPage Co	c,d	1
Salt Creek	Bemis Woods	W of Wolf Rd and S of 31st St	Westchester	Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	b	1
Salt Creek	Brezina Woods	E side of LaGrange Rd, 600' S of Cernak Rd, N side of creek	Westchester	Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	b	1
Salt Creek	17th Ave Bridge	SE of 17th Ave Bridge	North Riverside	Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	c	1
Salt Creek	Brookfield Canoe Landing	N of Brookfield Ave, E of Forest Ave	Brookfield	Brookfield	a	1

* Site needs* indicates the estimated level of site improvements needed (corresponding to map designations) using the following letters:
 a = established site b = site needs minor improvements c = construction needed d = portage improvements needed (note that a site may need access and portage improvements)

** Priority Stretch** identifies the level of difficulty to implement the stretch (corresponding to the three varying map line textures) within which the site is located:
 1 = site is in 1st priority stretch 2 = site is in a 2nd priority stretch 3 = site is in a third priority stretch

Additional Agencies and Organizations
Salt Creek Watershed Network, Friends and Critics of Salt Creek, Salt Creek Greenway Association, Grave Mill Association (see also list for Des Plaines River)

DuPage River Water Trail

General Description

The DuPage River is a small to medium sized stream flowing north to south through DuPage and Will counties and ending at its confluence with the Des Plaines River in Channahon. The DuPage consists of East and West Branches which meet south of Naperville to form the DuPage itself. Together, they comprise 84 miles of waterway that drain a watershed of 326 square miles. The East Branch is largely channelized and the West Branch is mostly natural and meandering. Scenery along its East and West branches is mostly suburban with low grassy banks, while the DuPage itself is mostly rural. The lower part of the West Branch has several developed canoe launch sites. However, both branches are shallow in their upper stretches and occasionally difficult to paddle due to low water in the summer months.

Paddling the DuPage River

The upper stretches of both branches run through residential neighborhoods. The upper East Branch resembles a channelized drainage ditch more than a potential recreational resource. Therefore, the upper sections of both branches are not recommended for development as a water trails.

The West Branch: Beginning at Hawk Hollow Forest Preserve, near Bartlett, the West Branch flows through a number of DuPage County Forest Preserves. The Forest Preserve District is developing a greenway along its banks protecting the river from development and providing a peaceful, wildlife rich experience for paddlers. Log jams across this narrow stream and shallow stretches are occasional obstacles.

Lions Park on Beecher Road in Winfield is the first developed canoe launch. It is followed downstream by at least three more developed launch sites before the DuPage's confluence with the East Branch making this section very easy to develop as a water trail.

The East Branch: The usually canoeable part of the East Branch begins south of Warrenville Road in Lisle. A narrow stream through most of its length, the river flows through a city park in Lisle and Greene Valley Forest Preserve between Woodridge and Naperville making development of access on existing public property possible. There are no developed launch sites on the East Branch.

Of Note...

The DuPage River Coalition is a large, well organized, citizen conservation group dedicated to the development of the river's recreational potential, as well as protection of the water quality of and habitat along the river. Each year since its creation, the Coalition has held canoe trips, river clean-ups and a number of other projects involving increasing numbers of area residents.

The DuPage River: The confluence of the two branches is approximately ½ mile downstream of the public landing in Knoch Knolls Park on the south side of Naperville. A Will County Forest Preserve is planned for a site at 111th St. (the old Zion Church) and may include boat access. However a long stretch of approximately 12.5 miles of private, mostly rural property follows between 111th St. and the Riverside Parkway Canoe Access (just south of Caton Farm Road). Hammel Woods Forest Preserve in Shorewood provides an access site at the dam on the north side of Route 52. Downstream, a short section (.36 mile) located between I-80 and Shepley Road., west of Channahon, has a gradient of 10 feet per mile which at higher water levels creates an exciting set of rapids for white water enthusiasts.

During the development of this plan, the dam at Channahon was under reconstruction. A portage route will be needed around the finished structure. The DuPage River Water Trail would end at the I&M Canal State Trail parking lot in Channahon; however, development of a launch site at this location could also serve as access to the I&M Canal and as access to and from the lower Des Plaines one half mile downstream.

DuPage River Water Trail Action Recommendations

1st Priority Stretches (minor obstacles or improvements needed):

As a first priority, it is recommended that the owners of established and recommended sites improve and coordinate signage or wayfinding information for the sites in the following stretch:

- Hawk Hollow Forest Preserve on the West Branch to the confluence with the Des Plaines River:

<u>Site Owner</u>	<u>Site Needs</u>
Winfield Park District	1 established site needs coordinating signage
For Pres Dist DuPage Co	2 established sites need coordinating signage 1 site needs minor improvements (site also need portage improvement)
IDNR	2 sites need construction 2 sites needs portage improvements 1 site needs minor improvements
Naperville Park District	2 established sites need coordinating signage 3 sites need construction
Plainfield Twnshp Pk Dist	1 established site needs coordinating signage 2 sites needs construction
For Pres Dist of Will Co	1 established site needs coordinating signage (site also needs portage improvements)
Village of Shorewood	1 site needs construction

2nd Priority Stretches (moderate obstacles or improvements needed):

As second priority, it is recommended that the owners of recommended sites improve and coordinate signage or wayfinding information for the sites in the following stretch:

- Barbers Corner Quarry Lake on the East Branch to the confluence with the Main Branch:

<u>Site Owner</u>	<u>Site Needs</u>
For Pres Dist Will Co	1 site needs construction
Naperville Park Dist	1 site needs construction

3rd priority Stretch

As a third priority, it is recommended that the owners of recommended sites improve and coordinate signage or wayfinding information for the sites in the following stretch:

- Below Army Trail Road to Lisle Community Park

No sites identified in this segment at this point due to longer term implementation issues.












- Lisle Community Park to Barbers Corner Quarry Lake along the East Branch

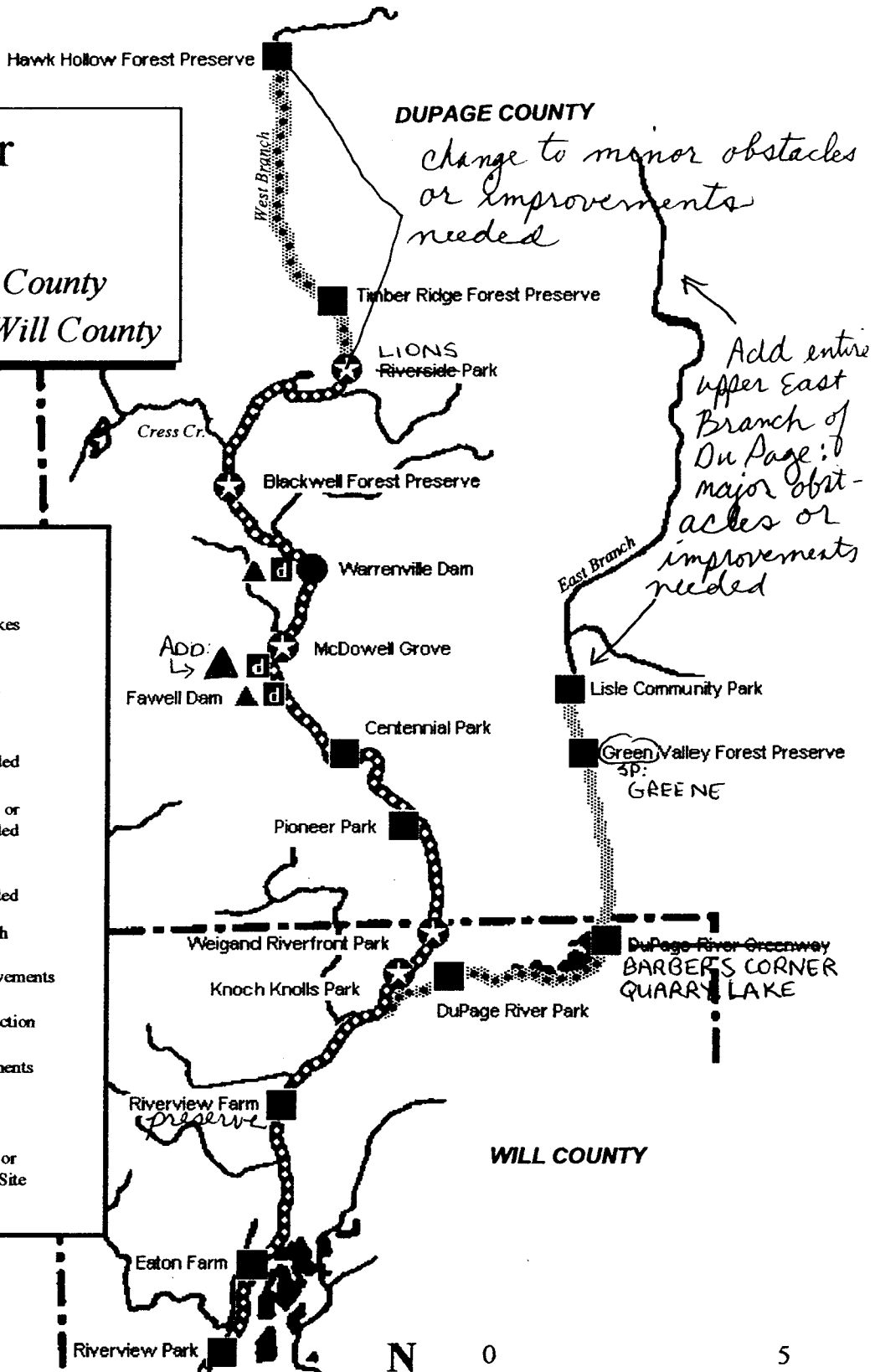
<u>Site Owner</u>	<u>Site Needs</u>
Lisle Park District	1 site needs construction
For Pres Dist DuPage Co	1 site needs construction

DuPage River Water Trail

within DuPage County
and northern Will County

LEGEND

-  Waterways and Lakes
-  County Boundaries
-  Minor obstacles or improvements needed
-  Moderate obstacles or improvements needed
-  Major obstacles or improvements needed
-  Established Boat Launch
-  Site needs minor improvements
-  Site needs some construction
-  Portage needs improvements
-  Dam
-  Illinois Nature Preserve or Natural Area Inventory Site



change to minor obstacles or improvements needed

Add entire upper East Branch of DuPage: major obstacles or improvements needed

ADD:

BARBER'S CORNER QUARRY LAKE

GREEN VALLEY FOREST PRESERVE

WILL COUNTY














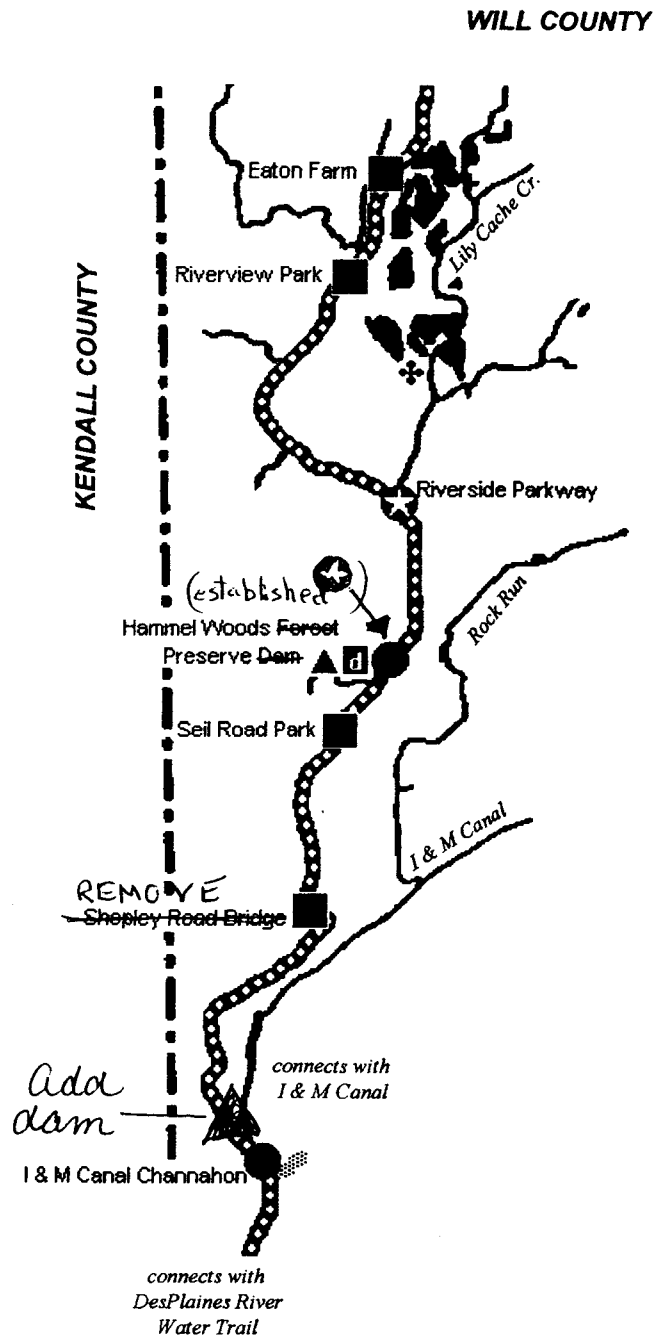
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DuPage River Water Trail

*Plainfield to Channahon
in Will County*

LEGEND

-  Waterways and Lakes
-  County Boundaries
-  Minor obstacles or improvements needed
-  Moderate obstacles or improvements needed
-  Major obstacles or improvements needed
-  Established Boat Launch
-  Site needs minor improvements
-  Site needs some construction
-  Portage needs improvements
-  Dam
-  Illinois Nature Preserve or Natural Area Inventory Site



miles

DuPage River Water Trail Sites

Waterway	Site Name	Location	Municipality	Ownership	Site Needs*	Priority Stretch**
DuPage River, East Branch	Liste Community Park	S side of Short St, 1 block W of Rt 53	Liste	Liste Park District	c	3
DuPage River, East Branch	Greene Valley Forest Preserve	S of Hobson Rd, E of Greene Rd	Naperville	Forest Preserve Dist of DuPage Co	c	3
DuPage River, East Branch	Barber's Corner Quarry Lake	S of Royce Rd, W of Concord Ln	Bolingbrook	Forest Preserve Dist of Will Co	c	2
DuPage River, East Branch	DuPage River Park	S of Royce Rd, at Braddock Dr	Naperville	Naperville Park District	c	2
DuPage River, West Branch	Hawk Hollow Forest Preserve	N of Schick Rd, E of Bartlett Rd	Bartlett	Forest Preserve Dist of DuPage Co	c	2
DuPage River, West Branch	Timber Ridge Forest Preserve	N of Geneva Rd, W side river	Winfield	Forest Preserve Dist of DuPage Co	c	2
DuPage River, West Branch	Lions Park	Beecher Ave, E side of river	Winfield	Winfield Park District	a	1
DuPage River, West Branch	Blackwell Forest Preserve	S of Mack Rd, E of river	Warrenville	Forest Preserve Dist of DuPage Co	a	1
DuPage River, West Branch	Warrenville Dam	NE side of Batavia Rd, between Main and 4th St	Warrenville	Forest Preserve Dist of DuPage Co	b,d	1
DuPage River, West Branch	McDowell Grove Forest Preserve	E side of Raymond Dr at McDowell Rd	Naperville	Forest Preserve Dist of DuPage Co	a	1
DuPage River, West Branch	Fawell Dam	E of River Rd and Brookdale Rd intersection	Naperville	IL Dept of Natural Resources	d	1
DuPage River, West Branch	Centennial Park	West St at Jackson St	Naperville	Naperville Park District	c	1
DuPage River, West Branch	Pioneer Park	E side of Washington St between Tamarack Ave and Clyde Dr	Naperville	Naperville Pk Dist/For Pres Dist Dup Co	c	1
DuPage River, West Branch	Weligand Riverfront Park	E side of Washington St at E end of Knoch Knolls Rd	Naperville	Naperville Park District	a	1
DuPage River, West Branch	Knoch Knolls Park	S of intersection of Knoch Knoll Rd and 95th St	Naperville	Naperville Park District	a	1
DuPage River	Riverview Farm Preserve	N of 11th St, E of Book Rd	Naperville	Naperville Pk Dist/For Pres Dist of Will Co	c	1
DuPage River	Riverview Park	N of the intersection of Rt 59 and Rt 126	Plainfield	Plainfield Township Park District	c	1
DuPage River	Eaton Farm	S of Pichan Rd (135th St), E of Rt 59	Plainfield	Plainfield Township Park District	c	1
DuPage River	Riverside Parkway Canoe Access	W/Frontage Rd of I-55, S of Canton Farm Rd	Plainfield	Plainfield Township Park District	a	1
DuPage River	Hammel Woods Preserve	E side of Rt 59, 1/4 mi N of Rt 52	Shorewood	Forest Preserve District of Will County	a,d	1
DuPage River	Oakwood Drive	Oakwood Drive	Shorewood	Shorewood	c	1
DuPage River / I&M Canal	I&M Canal Channation Access	S side of Bridge St between I&M Bridge and DuPage River Bridge	Channahon	IL Dept of Natural Resources	b	1

* Site needs* indicates the estimated level of site improvements needed (corresponding to map designations) using the following letters:
 a = established site b = site needs minor improvements c = construction needed d = portage improvements needed (note that a site may need access and portage improvements)

** "Priority Stretch" identifies the level of difficulty to implement the stretch (corresponding to the three varying map line textures) within which the site is located:
 1 = site is in 1st priority stretch 2 = site is in a 2nd priority stretch 3 = site is in a third priority stretch

Additional Agencies and Organizations
 DuPage River Coalition (Conservation Foundation); DuPage River Ecosystem Partnership

Fox River Water Trail

General Description

The Fox River enters Illinois between Spring Grove and Antioch in Lake County. Approximately three miles below the border it opens into Grass, Nippersink, and Pistakee Lakes in the Chain of Lakes area before becoming a banked river again. Through this area, the Fox Waterway Agency manages boat usage and in some areas, for safety and navigational purposes, confines the high speed, powered boat traffic to a series of channels in the middle of the lakes and river with more than 4,000 buoys. Approximately four miles downstream of the Chain O'Lakes the Fox flows over the McHenry Dam, the first of 14 dams on the way to its confluence with the Illinois River at Ottawa. Below the McHenry Dam there is moderate power boat activity which increases upon reaching Elgin. The dams on the middle section of the river restrict power boat traffic to the pools above each dam. As the river enters Kendall County below Montgomery it becomes a large, quiet, and scenic river flowing mostly through farmland.

The Fox River has numerous dams. All of the dams except the Kimball Street Dam in Elgin have developed or developable portages around them. The Kimball Street Dam, however, presents a real obstacle to public passage, creating two potential separate water trails. One starts at the north boat ramp in Chain O'Lakes State Park just south of Route 173 and ends at the Slade Avenue boat ramp in Elgin. The second Fox Water Trail begins below the Kimball Street Dam in Elgin and continues to its end.

Paddling the Fox River

The Fox River presents a number of varied paddling experiences and demands different skill levels in each section.

Upper Fox - The Chain O'Lakes section below Chain O'Lakes State Park is actually shallow lake paddling. Winds can create challenging conditions for open boaters (canoes). Choppy waters, power boats traveling at high speeds in all directions and their wakes can sometimes make canoeing difficult if not dangerous.

Of Note...

Because the planning area of this plan ends at Kane County's southern border, the lower Fox River is not considered here. However, it is the lower Fox River in Kendall and LaSalle Counties that is one of the most scenic, undeveloped, and popular canoe experiences in the Midwest.

The buoys of the Fox Waterway Agency on the upper Fox, below the lakes section, make it safer for non-motorized boaters to co-exist with the high speed power boaters by paddling along the banks outside of the buoy-defined channel. However, the nearly constant engine noise and wakes make this area a less attractive section for most paddlers.

Below McHenry Dam, stretches of tree lined banks and less riverbank development make this section a pleasant and easier trip suitable for less experienced paddlers.

Middle Fox - Through Elgin, South Elgin, St. Charles, Geneva, Batavia, and Aurora the river passes through highly urbanized areas and over several dams. Portaging around these dams varies in difficulty. The most difficult part of all the portages is determining from the boat which side of the dam would be the easier way around. Between the towns and dams the river passes through stretches of scenic forest preserves and wooded areas.

Fox River Water Trail Action Recommendations

1st Priority Stretches (minor obstacles or improvements needed):

As a first priority, it is recommended that the owners of established and recommended sites improve and coordinate signage or wayfinding information for the sites in the following stretch:

- Chain O' Lakes State Park North to Fox River Forest Preserve Fee Ramp; and from Buffalo Park to Slade Avenue; and from South Elgin Dam to Montgomery Dam:

<u>Site Owner</u>	<u>Site Needs</u>
IDNR	2 established sites need coordinating signs 1 site needs minor improvements (site also needs portage improvements) 2 sites needs construction (both also need portage improvements) 2 sites need portage improvements
(Chapel Hill Rd Fee Ramp is private bowling alley, but <u>V. Of Johnsburg</u> has established site just north: use instead?)	1 established site needs coordinating signs
City of McHenry	2 sites need minor improvements
Lake Co For Pres Dist	1 established site needs coordinating signs
Kane Co For Pres Dist	4 established sites need coordinating signs 3 sites need minor improvements (1 of which also needs portage improvements)
City of Elgin	1 established site needs coordinating signs
City of Elgin	1 site needs minor improvements
St. Charles Park Dist	1 site needs minor improvements
City of Geneva	1 site needs minor improvements (site also needs portage improvements)
City of Batavia	1 established site needs coordinating signs 1 site needs minor improvements (site also needs portage improvements)
	1 site needs portage improvements
Fox Valley Park District	2 established sites need coordinating signs 1 site needs portage improvements
City of Aurora	1 site needs portage improvements

2nd Priority Stretches (moderate obstacles or improvements needed):

It is recommended that the owners of recommended sites improve and coordinate signage or wayfinding information for the sites in the following stretch:

- Fox River Forest Preserve Fee Ramp to Buffalo Park; and below Kimball Street Dam to South Elgin Dam

<u>Site Owner</u>	<u>Site Needs</u>
V of Fox River Grove	1 site needs construction
V of Algonquin	1 site needs construction
IDNR	1 site needs portage improvements

3rd Priority Stretches (major obstacles or improvements needed):

As third priority, it is recommended that the owner of the recommended site improve and coordinate signage or wayfinding information for the site in the following stretch:

- Slade Avenue to the Kimball Street Dam:

<u>Site Owner</u>	<u>Site Needs</u>
City of Elgin	1 site needs construction (site also needs portage improvements)












Additional Recommendation

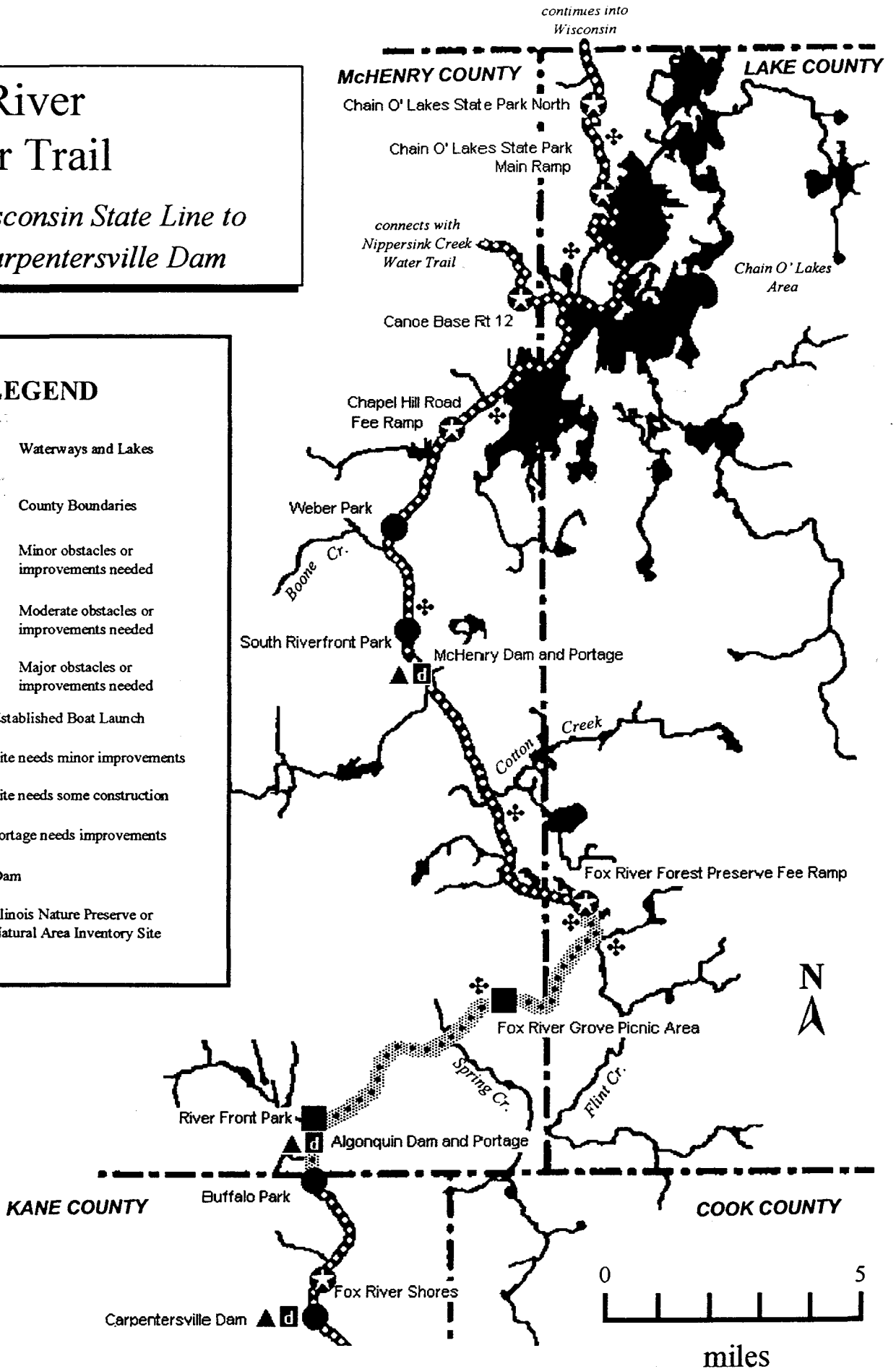
- It is recommended that a coordinating committee or other mechanism working to coordinate the Fox River Water Trail explore the potential for, or indicate with signage or wayfinding information, established trail connections in Wisconsin and Kendall County.

Fox River Water Trail

*Wisconsin State Line to
Carpentersville Dam*

LEGEND




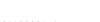







-  Waterways and Lakes
-  County Boundaries
-  Minor obstacles or improvements needed
-  Moderate obstacles or improvements needed
-  Major obstacles or improvements needed
-  Established Boat Launch
-  Site needs minor improvements
-  Site needs some construction
-  Portage needs improvements
-  Dam
-  Illinois Nature Preserve or Natural Area Inventory Site

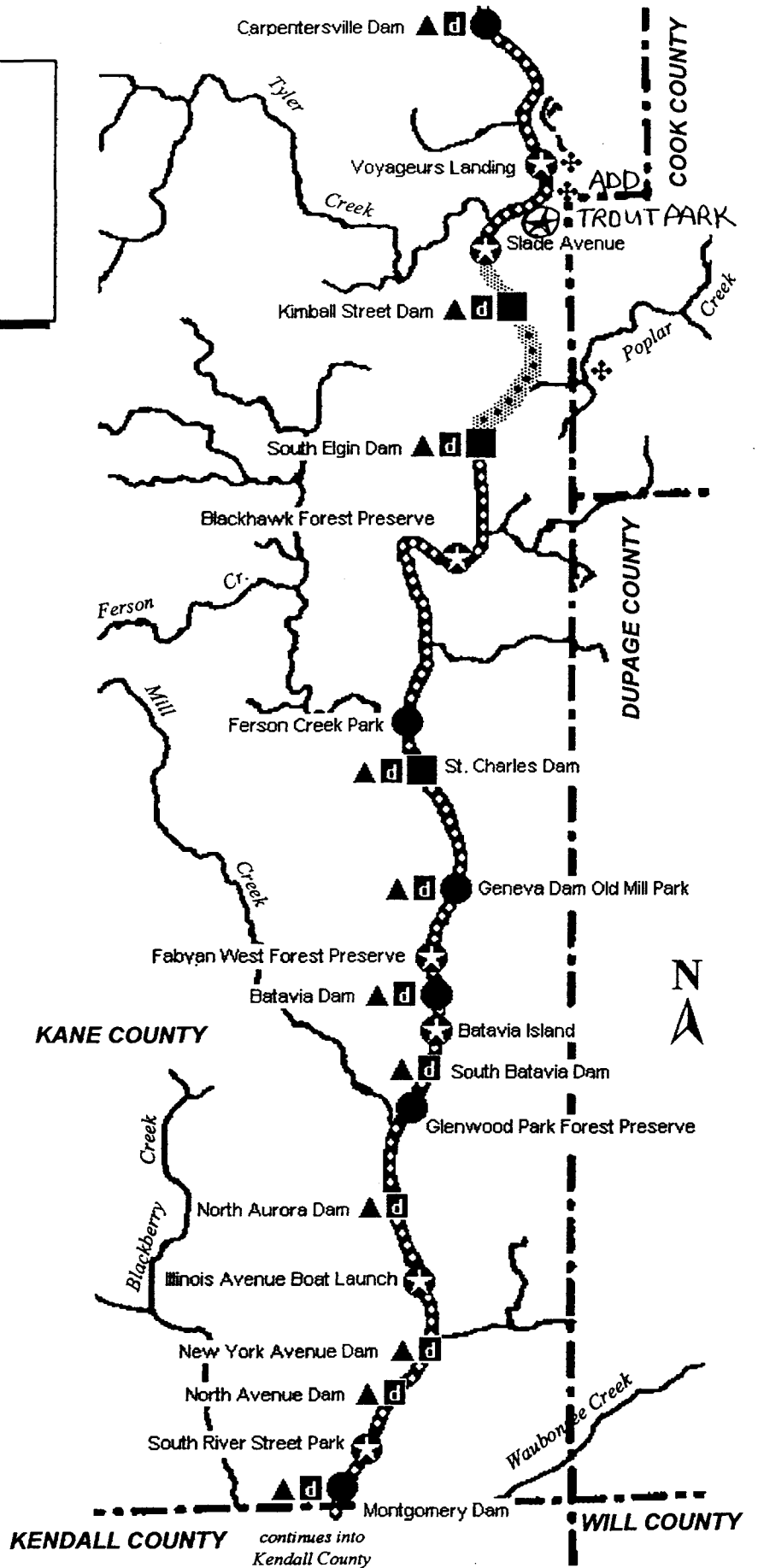
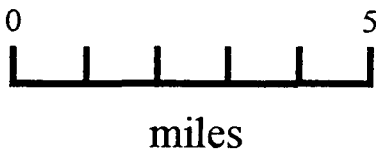


Fox River Water Trail

Carpentersville Dam to Kendall County Line

LEGEND

-  Waterways and Lakes
-  County Boundaries
-  Minor obstacles or improvements needed
-  Moderate obstacles or improvements needed
-  Major obstacles or improvements needed
-  Established Boat Launch
-  Site needs minor improvements
-  Site needs some construction
-  Portage needs improvements
-  Dam
-  Illinois Nature Preserve or Natural Area Inventory Site



Fox River Water Trail Sites

Waterway	Site Name	Location	Municipality	Ownership	Site Needs*	Priority Stretch**
Fox River	Chain O' Lakes State Park, North	S of Rt. 173, 1.2 miles E of McHenry - Lake County line	Fox Lake	IL Dept of Natural Resources	a	1
Fox River	Chain O' Lakes State Pk Main Ramp	N end of State Park Rd	Fox Lake	IL Dept of Natural Resources	a	1
Fox River	Chapel Hill Rd Fee Ramp	NE of Chapel Hill Rd, SE side of river	Johnsburg	Private - Bowling Alley	a	1
Fox River	Weber Park	E side of Riverside Dr, S of Broad St	McHenry	City of Mc Henry- Dept Park & Rec.	b	1
Fox River	South Riverfront Park	N of Bull Valley Rd, W side of river	McHenry	City of Mc Henry- Dept Park & Rec.	b	1
Fox River	McHenry Dam and Portage	W end of State Park Rd in Moraine Hills State Park	McHenry	IL Dept of Natural Resources	d	1
Fox River	Fox River Forest Preserve Fee Ramp	S of Roberts Rd, 2 miles W of Rt 59	Lake Barrington	Lake County Forest Preserve District	a	1
Fox River	Fox River Grove Picnic Area	NE of Rt 14 Bridge, NE end of North River Rd	Fox River Grove	Fox River Grove	c	2
Fox River	River Front Park	N of Rt 62, W side of river	Algonquin	Village of Algonquin	c	2
Fox River	Algonquin Dam and Portage	SW of Rt 62 Bridge	Algonquin	IL Dept of Natural Resources	d	2
Fox River	Buffalo Park	E of Rt 31 at Kane - Mc Henry County line, End of South St	Algonquin	Forest Preserve Dist of Kane County	b	1
Fox River	Fox River Shores	NW of Lake Maria Rd and William St intersection	Algonquin	Forest Preserve Dist of Kane County	b	1
Fox River	Carpentersville Dam	E of Lincoln, 1/2 mile N of Main St	Carpentersville	Forest Preserve Dist of Kane County	a	1
Fox River	Voyageurs Landing	1 mile E of Rt 31 (E end of Airport Rd), just N of I-90	Carpentersville	Forest Preserve Dist of Kane County	b,d	1
Fox River	Trout Park	1 mile E of Rt 31 (E end of Airport Rd), just N of I-90	Elgin	Forest Preserve Dist of Kane County	a	1
Fox River	Slade Avenue	Trout Park, E bank of Fox River	Elgin	Elgin	b	1
Fox River	Kimball Street Dam	W end of Slade Ave, 3/4 mile N of Kimball St Bridge	Elgin	Elgin	a	1
Fox River	South Elgin Dam	S of Kimball St Bridge, E side of river	Elgin	Elgin	a	1
Fox River	Blackhawk Forest Preserve	200' N of State St Bridge, W side of river	South Elgin	IL Dept of Natural Resources	c,d	3
Fox River	Ferson Creek Park	S of Rt 31, 3/4 mile E of Mc Lean Blvd	South Elgin	Forest Preserve Dist of Kane County	a	1
Fox River	St. Charles Dam	E of Rt 31, 1 mile N of Rt. 64	St. Charles	St. Charles Park District	b	1
Fox River	Geneva Dam Old Mill Park	1 block N of Rt 64 (Cedar St), E side of river	St. Charles	IL Dept of Natural Resources	c,d	1
Fox River	Fabyan West Forest Preserve	N of Rt 38, E side of river	Geneva	Geneva/IL Dept of Natural Resources	b,d	1
Fox River	Batavia Dam	E of Rt 31, N of Fabyan Pkwy	Geneva	Forest Preserve Dist of Kane County	a	1
Fox River	Batavia Island	N end of Batavia Island	Batavia	IL Dept of Natural Resources	b,d	1
Fox River	South Batavia Dam	W Edge of Batavia Island	Batavia	Batavia	a	1
Fox River	Glenwood Park Forest Preserve	W of Rt 25, N end of Glenwood Park Forest Preserve	Batavia	Batavia	d	1
Fox River	North Aurora Dam	W of Rt 25, between Bond Dr and Banbury Rd	Batavia	Forest Preserve Dist of Kane County	b	1
Fox River	Illinois Avenue Boat Launch	N of Rt 56 Bridge	North Aurora	IL Dept of Natural Resources	d	1
Fox River	New York Avenue Dam	S of Illinois Ave, in Illinois Ave Island Park	Aurora	Fox Valley Park District	a	1
Fox River	North Avenue Dam	Between New York Ave and Galena St Bridge	Aurora	Aurora	d	1
Fox River	South River Street Park	N of North Ave Bridge	Aurora	Fox Valley Park District	d	1
Fox River	Montgomery Dam	712 S River St, W side of river	Aurora	Fox Valley Park District	a	1
Fox River		W of Rt 25, at Marsch Ave	Montgomery	IL Dept of Natural Resources	b,d	1

* Site needs* indicates the estimated level of site improvements needed (corresponding to map designations) using the following letters:
 a = established site b = site needs minor improvements c = construction needed d = portage improvements needed (note that a site may need access and portage improvements)

** "Priority Stretch" identifies the level of difficulty to implement the stretch (corresponding to the three varying map line textures) within which the site is located:
 1 = site is in 1st priority stretch 2 = site is in a 2nd priority stretch 3 = site is in a third priority stretch

Additional Agencies and Organizations
 Kane-DuPage Soil & Water Conservation Dist, Kendall County, Yorkville, Fox Waterway Agency, Fox River Ecosystem Partnership

Nippersink Creek Water Trail

General Description

This 23-mile long creek with its 138 square mile watershed is a major tributary of the Fox River. The McHenry County Conservation District provides a water trail on the creek that can serve as a model for the region. Access and facilities are excellent from Keystone Landing below Wonder Lake to the Nippersink Canoe Base near the Fox River Chain O'Lakes and Route 12. Maps posted in several places along the trail tell paddlers where they are and where they are going. Rest stops and picnic areas are carefully thought out, and there is little sign of trampling or misuse.

Paddling the Nippersink Creek

The Nippersink is a safe stream for canoeists with beginner abilities and fun for all paddlers. The Nippersink offers a quiet, enjoyable canoe experience away from noisy boat traffic, shoreline development, and potentially dangerous dams. Water quality is excellent in the Nippersink, and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency designates part of the water trail as a "highly valued aquatic resource."

Of Note..

To further improve habitat quality, the McHenry County Conservation District plans to de-channelize two and a half miles of Nippersink Creek's straightened sections, creating more than six miles of meanders along with adjoining wetlands. The District owns much of the land adjacent to the water trail, including Glacial Park.

Nippersink Creek Water Trail Action Recommendation

1st Priority Stretch (minor obstacles or improvements needed):

- The map indicates that 1st priority stretches are those having minor obstacles or improvements needed. The Nippersink Water Trail, however, is an established, well thought out water trail managed by the McHenry County Conservation District and currently needs no improvements to the five sites. If it were to see a large increase in usage, however, there may be a need to stabilize slopes at certain access sites to prevent further erosion, and develop pathways at some sites to prevent damage to vegetation.

Site Owner

McHenry Co Conservation Dist

Site Needs

5 sites, no improvements needed

Kishwaukee River Water Trail

General Description

The main branch of the Kishwaukee River is a narrow, shallow stream, passing mostly through wooded areas in the western part of McHenry County. The north and south branches extend north to the Wisconsin border and south of DeKalb. While these and the many smaller tributaries of the river drain a huge watershed, the section of the river from the confluence of the north and south branches at Millstream Road, northeast of Marengo, to the County Line Road at the Boone County border, is where the river first becomes deep and wide enough for a developable water trail.

The McHenry County Conservation District owns some of the riparian property along this section and plans to acquire more. The number of private property owners and the shallow meandering nature of the river, may make the development of a water trail in McHenry County a longer range project. In spite of current obstacles for paddling, the Kishwaukee River is one of the best river resources in the region in the quality of water and habitat and could provide a unique experience for paddlers.

Of Note...

Among the water trails in this plan, the Kishwaukee has the highest quality aquatic habitat as rated by the Index of Biotic Integrity. The Kishwaukee is a high quality recreational resource for paddlers in Boone and Winnebago Counties. The section of the river from Cherry Valley to the south side of Rockford is a very popular canoe trail.

Paddling the Kishwaukee River

The most popular recreational use of the Kishwaukee River in McHenry County is fishing. However, determined paddlers do occasionally explore this section despite the lack of official access and many difficult portages caused by fallen trees and low, muddy riverbanks.

Kishwaukee River Action Recommendations

3rd Priority Stretch (major obstacles or improvements needed):

- It is recommended that the owner of the recommended site improve and coordinate signage or wayfinding information (with Boone County water trail planning) for the site along the Kishwaukee River:

Site Owner

McHenry Co Conservation Dist

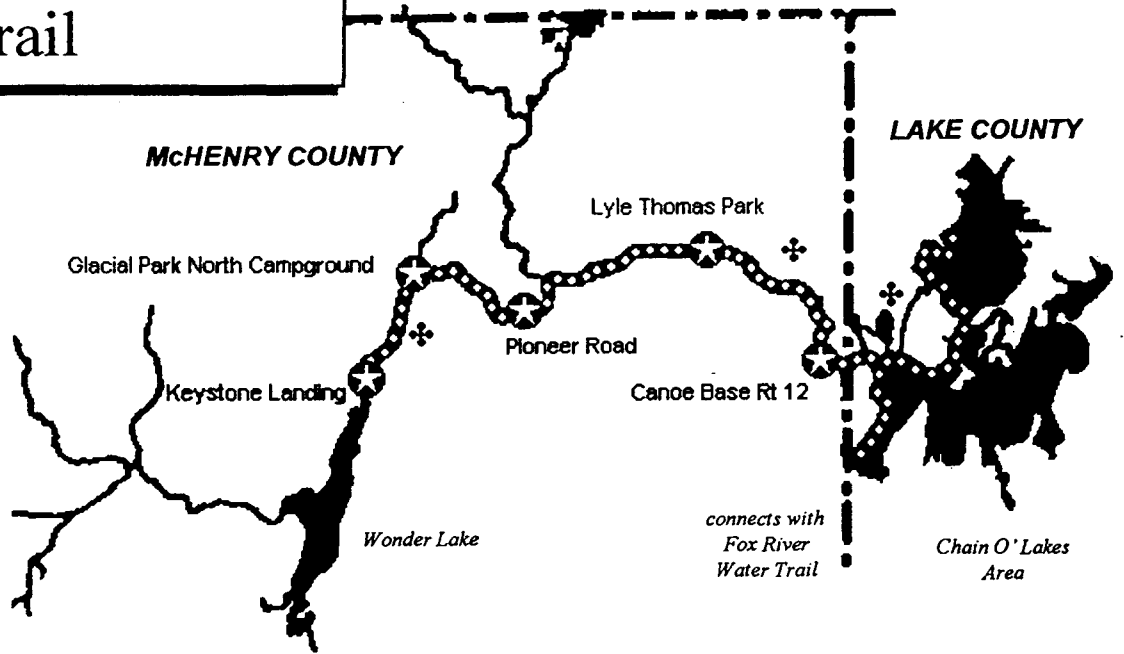
Site Needs

1 site needs construction

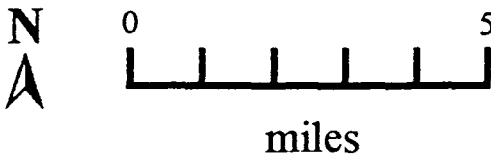
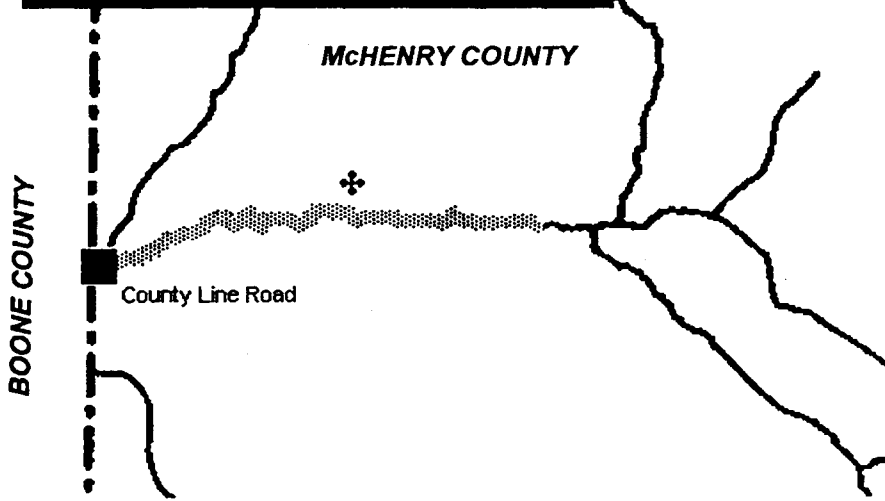
Additional Action Recommendation

- It is recommended that the IDNR, the McHenry County Conservation District, or other public land acquisition organization focus resources to acquire and preserve the Kishwaukee River riparian corridor, which is one of the best river resources in the region for water quality and habitat value. This would also be a first step in the longer range project to create a water trail.

Nippersink Creek Water Trail



Kishwaukee River Water Trail



LEGEND

- Waterways and Lakes
- County Boundaries
- Minor obstacles or improvements needed
- Moderate obstacles or improvements needed
- Major obstacles or improvements needed
- Established Boat Launch
- Site needs minor improvements
- Site needs some construction
- Portage needs improvements
- Dam
- Illinois Nature Preserve or Natural Area Inventory Site

Nippersink Creek Water Trails Sites

Waterway	Site Name	Location	Municipality	Ownership	Site Needs*	Priority Stretch**
Nippersink Creek	Keystone Landing	E of Keystone Rd and Barnard Mill Rd intersection	Wonder Lake	McHenry County Conservation District	a	1
Nippersink Creek	Glacial Park North Campground	SE of Keystone Rd and Tryon Grove Rd intersection (access limited)	Solon Mills	McHenry County Conservation District	a	1
Nippersink Creek	Pioneer Road	W of Pioneer Rd, N of Harts Rd	Solon Mills	McHenry County Conservation District	a	1
Nippersink Creek	Lyle Thomas Park	N of Rt 12, E of Blivin St	Spring Grove	McHenry County Conservation District	a	1
Nippersink Creek	Canoe Base	NE of Rt 12, S of Sunset Dr	Fox Lake	McHenry County Conservation District	a	1

Kishwaukee River Water Trails Sites

Waterway	Site Name	Location	Municipality	Ownership	Site Needs*	Priority Stretch**
Kishwaukee River	County Line Rd	N of Rt 20, E of County Line Rd, S side of river	Marengo	McHenry County Conservation District	c	3

* Site needs* indicates the estimated level of site improvements needed (corresponding to map designations) using the following letters:
 a = established site b = site needs minor improvements c = construction needed d = portage improvements needed (note that a site may need access and portage improvements)

** Priority Stretch* identifies the level of difficulty to implement the stretch (corresponding to the three varying map line textures) within which the site is located:
 1 = site is in 1st priority stretch 2 = site is in a 2nd priority stretch 3 = site is in a third priority stretch

Calumet Area Water Trail

General Description

This system is a number of connected natural and manmade waterways. The Little Calumet River is a small stream that begins in Indiana and crosses the Illinois border just south of 173rd Street in Lansing. It meanders in a generally northwest direction through wooded areas and neighborhoods to its confluence with the Cal-Sag Channel between Calumet Park and Riverdale. The river changes its nature at that point to become a wide industrial waterway that continues east and north to its confluence with the Grand Calumet at which point it becomes the historic Calumet River. Just north of 130th Street, the river branches to lead west into Lake Calumet and northeast to its mouth at Lake Michigan. The manmade Cal-Sag Channel runs mostly west from the Little Calumet to its confluence with the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal in Lemont.

Of Note...

An effort is underway to establish a National Urban Ecological Park in the Lake Calumet area that would be similar to the Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor. The goals are to preserve natural lands and habitats, highlight the historical and cultural aspects of the area's communities, and revitalize the area's economy.

Paddling the Calumet Area

Currently there is little recreational use of the natural part of the Little Calumet apart from bank fishing and power boating.

Upper Little Calumet River - Shallow water, lack of developed boat access, and a prohibition against powered boat use upstream of the Little Calumet Boat Ramp near the confluence with the Cal-Sag Channel make this stretch ideal for water trail development and use by less experienced paddlers. A number of parks and forest preserves, reasonably spaced along its banks, make trail development possible.

The upper part of the Little Calumet River is a small, shallow stream that runs through a number of southern suburbs. Through much of this stretch it looks very much like the popular canoe trail section of the North Branch of the Chicago River. These neighborhoods are, for the most part, lower middle and working class areas with a large population of minority and low income families. The development of a water trail on this part of the Little Calumet could provide boating and fishing access at a relatively low cost.

Lower Little Calumet River and Calumet River - Between the confluence with the Cal-Sag Channel and mouth of the river at Lake Michigan, industrial traffic, concrete and steel vertical bulkhead walls, and powered boats make this stretch a place for more experienced paddlers. However, the O'Brien Locks at 134th Street, Lake Calumet and the monumental, hulking, and rusting relics of the river's industrial past, create an interesting and unique river trip in this section. The Little Calumet Boat Ramp, the MWRD's innovative Side Elevated Pool Aeration (SEPA) Station #1 at Torrance Avenue and the boat ramp in Beaubien Woods require only the posting of trail signs to create a water trail on this stretch.

The Cal-Sag Channel - The banks of this manmade canal are lined along much of its western third with large stone rip rap that makes access either to or from the water dangerous, especially while carrying a boat. For this reason, the west end of the publicly accessible and developable water trail on this stretch of river currently ends (or begins) at the Howe's Landing boat launch, north of 127th Street at Laramie Avenue. The MWRD SEPA Station #4 in Worth on the east side of Harlem Avenue could be developed as a boat access extending this part of the trail another 2.3 miles. Between the confluence with the Little Calumet River and Howe's Landing, concrete and steel vertical bulkhead walls, industrial traffic, jetskis, and powered boats make this stretch a place for more experienced paddlers.

Calumet Area Water Trail Action Recommendations

1st Priority Stretch (minor obstacles or improvements needed):

As a first priority, it is recommended that the owners of established and recommended sites improve and coordinate signage or wayfinding information for the sites in the following stretches:

- Lake Calumet, Calumet River, and Little Calumet River west to Howe's Landing on the Cal Sag Channel:

<u>Site Owner</u>	<u>Site Needs</u>
MWRD	1 site needs minor improvements
Port Authority	1 site needs construction
For Pres Dist Cook Co	2 established sites need coordinating signs
	1 site needs construction
South Holland Park District	1 established site needs coordinating signs
Calumet Mem Park Dist	1 site needs construction
Village of Alsip	1 established site needs coordinating signs

- It is recommended that a committee or other mechanism formed to coordinate the Calumet Area Water Trail work with the Lake Michigan Water Trail committee and Chicago Park District to add signage or wayfinding information to connect these two 1st priority trails.

2nd Priority Stretch (moderate obstacles or improvements needed):

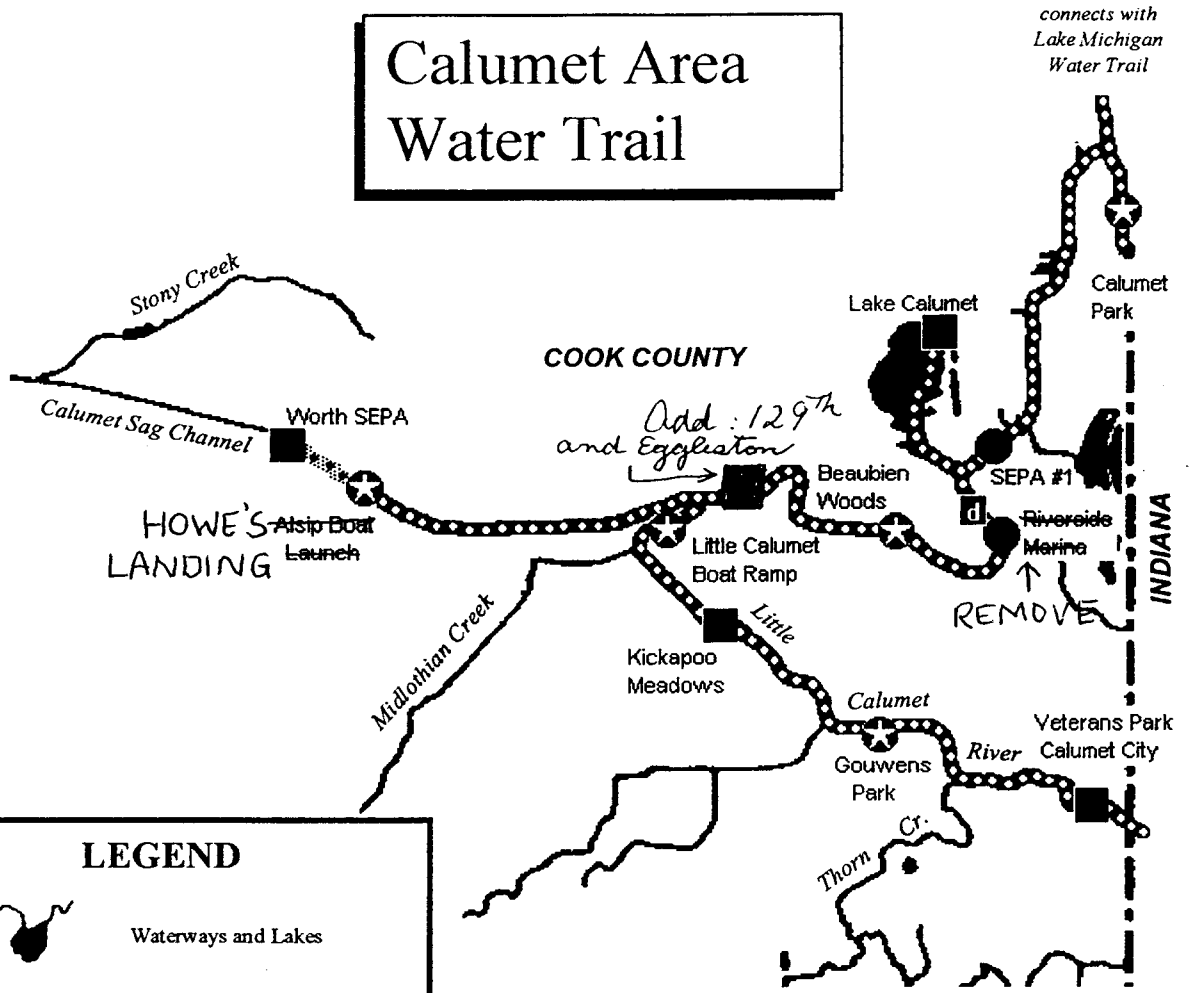
As a second priority, it is recommended that the owner, or a potential leaseholder, of the recommended site improve and coordinate signage or wayfinding information for the site in the following stretch:

- Alsip Boat Launch to Worth SEPA station on the Cal Sag Channel












Site Owner
MWRD

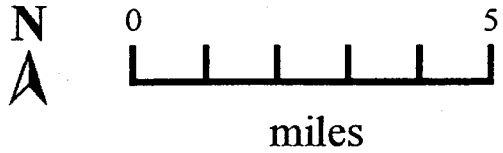
Site Needs
1 site needs construction

Calumet Area Water Trail



LEGEND

-  Waterways and Lakes
-  County Boundaries
-  Minor obstacles or improvements needed
-  Moderate obstacles or improvements needed
-  Major obstacles or improvements needed
-  Established Boat Launch
-  Site needs minor improvements
-  Site needs some construction
-  Portage needs improvements
-  Dam
-  Illinois Nature Preserve or Natural Area Inventory Site



Calumet Area Water Trail Sites

Waterway	Site Name	Location	Municipality	Ownership	Site Priority Needs* Stretch**
Calumet River	SEPA #1	E of Torrence Ave, S of 122nd St	Chicago	Metropolitan Water Reclamation District	b 1
Lake Calumet	Lake Calumet	W of Stony Island Ave, N of 116th St	Chicago	Port Authority	c 1
Little Calumet River	Beaubien Woods	S of 130th St, entrance on Doty	Chicago	Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	a 1
Little Calumet River	Little Calumet Boat Ramp	N of Jackson St, E of Ashland Ave	Riverdale	Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	a 1
Little Calumet River	Kickapoo Meadows	E of Halsted St, between 145th St and 146th St	Riverdale	Forest Preserve Dist of Cook Co	c 1
Little Calumet River	Gouvens Park	N of 159th St, E of Cottage Grove Ave	South Holland	South Holland Park District	a 1
Little Calumet River	Veterans Park Calumet City	W of Burnham Ave, N of 170th St	Calumet City	Calumet Memorial Park District	c 1
Cal-Sag Channel	Howe's Landing	W end of Platter Dr, N of 127th St, W of Laramie Ave	Alsip	Alsip	a 1
Cal-Sag Channel	Worth SEPA	E of Harlem Ave, S of 116th St	Worth	Metropolitan Water Reclamation District	c 2

* Site needs* indicates the estimated level of site improvements needed (corresponding to map designations) using the following letters:
 a = established site b = site needs minor improvements c = construction needed d = portage improvements needed (note that a site may need access and portage improvements)

** Priority Stretch* identifies the level of difficulty to implement the stretch (corresponding to the three varying map line textures) within which the site is located:
 1 = site is in 1st priority stretch 2 = site is in a 2nd priority stretch 3 = site is in a third priority stretch

Additional Agencies and Organizations
 Lake Calumet Study Committee, Chicago; Northwestern Indiana Reg Planning Commission, Hammond Park Foundation, Porter, IN; Southeast Environmental, Chicago; Center for Neighborhood Technology, Chicago

Kankakee River Water Trail

General Description

The Kankakee River begins northwest of South Bend, Indiana, near the Michigan border. The first eight miles of the river as it enters Illinois, although not considered in this plan, is the most scenic and least populated section. The river through the section from Kankakee to Wilmington is wide and shallow. One of the cleanest rivers in the Midwest, the Kankakee is well developed for recreational use by fishermen and boaters. Explored by LaSalle in 1679, this largely rural river must, in some sections, look much like it did when he first saw it.

Paddling the Kankakee River

While the Kankakee can occasionally be difficult to paddle at times of low water, and require expert skill at high water and during spring floods, it is generally an easy float. The gentle current at normal water levels makes it ideal for novice paddlers. The wooded banks provide scenic appeal for all paddlers.

A number of established developed boat access sites between Kankakee and through the Kankakee River State Park area make development of a water trail easy on this section of the river. Lack of access on the section from the Area 9 Boat Launch in the State Park to Wilmington, approximately eight miles, makes for a long trip for less experienced paddlers.

The dam in Wilmington needs a developed portage in order for paddlers to legally launch on the downstream side of the dam and continue on to the multi-functional Kankakee River Boat Launch Area in the Des Plaines Fish and Wildlife Area.

Of Note...

A well established canoe rental business in Kankakee makes a variety of trips of various lengths available to a large number of renters from all over the Midwest. Unlike most of the other waterways considered in this plan, a number of private campgrounds and the IDNR's Kankakee River State Park make paddling and camping on this river easy.

Kankakee River Water Trail Recommendations

1st Priority Stretch (minor obstacles or improvements needed):

As a first priority, it is recommended that the owners of established and recommended sites improve and coordinate signage or wayfinding information for the sites in the following stretch:

- From Chippewa Boat Launch to Wilmington Dam; and from Kankakee River Boat Launch into Grundy County:

Site Owner
IDNR

Site Needs
3 established sites need coordinating signage

2nd Priority Stretch (moderate obstacles or improvements needed):

As a second priority, it is recommended that the following owner of the recommended site improve and coordinate signage or wayfinding information for the sites in the following stretch:

- From the Wilmington Dam to the Kankakee River Boat Launch

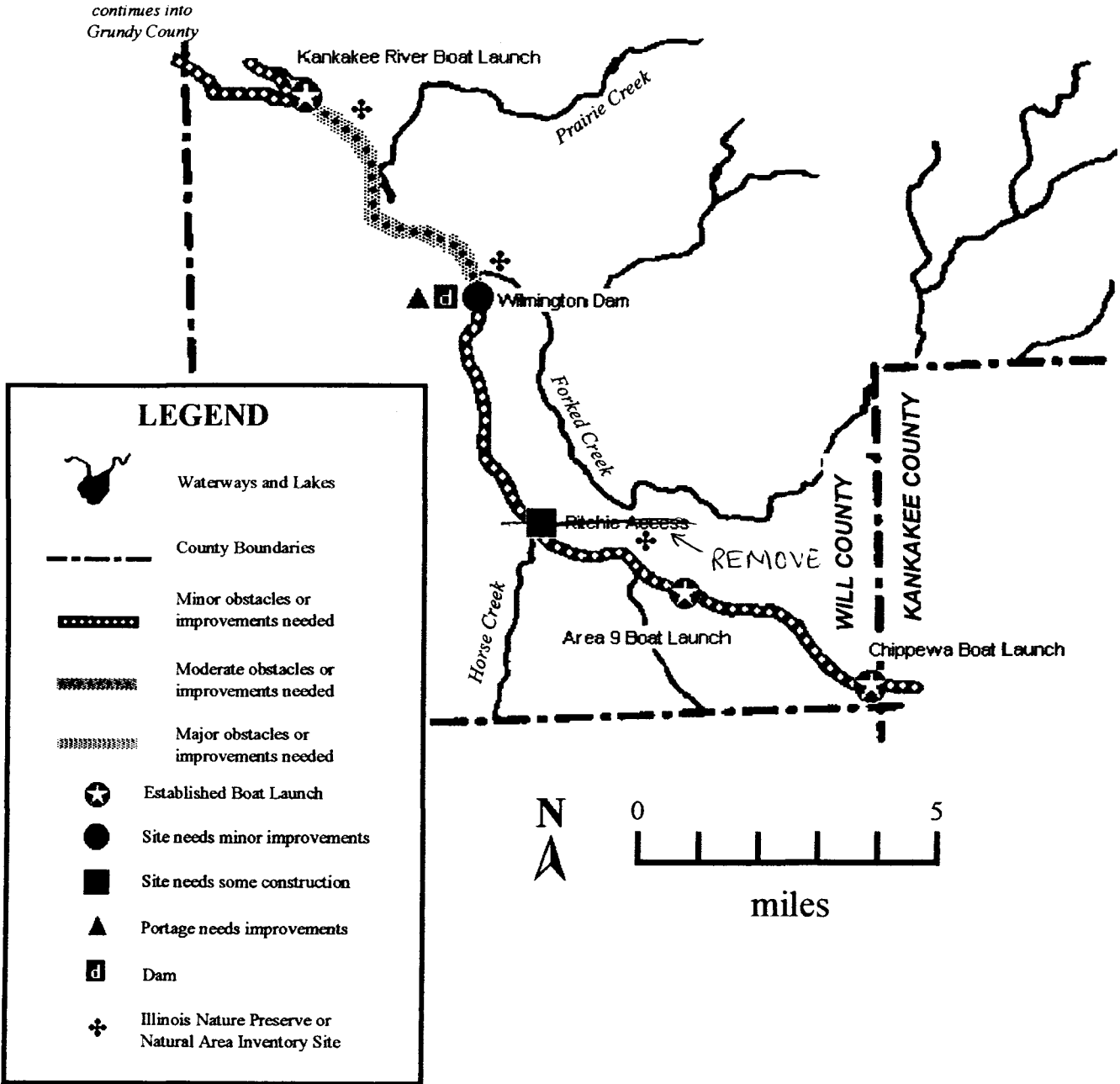
Site Owner
City of Wilmington

Site Needs
1 site needs minor improvements (site also needs portage improvement)

Additional Action Recommendation

- It is recommended that a coordinating committee or other mechanism working to coordinate the Kankakee River Water Trail explore the potential for, or indicate with signage or wayfinding information established trail connections in Grundy County and Kankakee County.

Kankakee River Water Trail



Kankakee River Water Trail Sites

Waterway	Site Name	Location	Municipality	Ownership	Site Needs*	Priority Stretch**
Kankakee River	Chippewa Boat Launch	W of Warner Bridge Rd, N of Warner Bridge	Rockville Township	IL Dept of Natural Resources	a	1
Kankakee River	Area 9 Boat Launch	N of Rt 113, 1.9 miles E of Irish Ln, between hunting areas 9 and 10	Custer Township	IL Dept of Natural Resources	a	1
Kankakee River	Wilmington Dam	W side of South Island Park	Wilmington	Wilmington	b,d	2
Kankakee River	Kankakee River Boat Launch	W of North River Rd, between Blodgett Rd and I-55	Wilmington Township	IL Dept of Natural Resources	a	1

* Site needs* indicates the estimated level of site improvements needed (corresponding to map designations) using the following letters:
 a = established site b = site needs minor improvements c = construction needed d = portage improvements needed (note that a site may need access and portage improvements)

** "Priority Stretch" identifies the level of difficulty to implement the stretch (corresponding to the three varying map line textures) within which the site is located:
 1 = site is in 1st priority stretch 2 = site is in a 2nd priority stretch 3 = site is in a third priority stretch

Additional Agencies and Organizations
 Kankakee Valley Park District; Kankakee County; Kankakee County; Reed's Canoe Trips, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Grundy County; Prairie Parklands Macro-site Partnership

Additional Action Recommendations

The following are additions to and expansions of the recommendations listed in the section entitled "Major Recommended Actions."

Local Government Providers

To effectively implement a coordinated regional water trail system, it is recommended that local government providers of water trail access:

- make low-cost improvements at identified sites a high priority, not just for economy, but also because paddlers generally prefer more naturalistic, less engineered facilities
- explore opportunities to share amenities and facilities such as parking with nearby recreational, institutional, or other developments
- apply for funding from the Boat Access Area Development Program and other applicable sources to develop access, portage and related initiatives for the first priority segments first, then second priority segments, and lastly, third priority segments
- provide boat safety, education, trail, and other pertinent information (such as presence of nature preserves and natural area inventory sites) to paddlers through signs, maps, and other informational material, seeking opportunities for assistance from river groups, canoe clubs, advocacy organizations and outdoor related businesses
- work with river groups to solicit outdoor, recreation, and boating related businesses for support with promotion, maps, signage, and events
- initiate contacts with water trail planners in adjacent states and counties beyond the NIPC region to encourage development of connections between northeastern Illinois and other areas, and coordinate with the current IDNR effort to develop a water trails plan for the rest of the state
- develop a management plan (including emergency procedures and risk management if not already provided for)
- explore opportunities for river clean-ups, streambank restoration, education, and other stewardship and maintenance activities through advocacy organizations, Scouts, schools, River Watch, etc.

- use environmentally sensitive development practices and, where feasible, maintain or incorporate naturalized stream banks and native plant material
- ensure sensitivity to habitats, streambank integrity, and flood considerations when maintaining streams for paddling purposes (see pages 25-29 in *Restoring and Managing Stream Greenways, A Landowner's Handbook, 1998, NIPC*). An additional resource is the *Stream Obstruction Removal Guidelines* prepared in 1983 by the Wildlife Society and American Fisheries Society.
- coordinate with paddling groups to seek input regarding needs, obstacles to safe paddling, and other water trail issues
- for potential water trails on non-navigable waterways, acquire private streambank property when appropriate in order to facilitate greenway protection, water trail recreation, streambank protection and restoration, and stewardship activities. (The IDNR's OSLAD Program funds greenway land acquisition)
- consider options (through ordinances or incentives for developers) to enhance and/or protect beneficial stream functions through protection or establishment of native vegetation buffer strips and setbacks for buildings/roads/parking lots
- insure that new and reconstructed dams are boat friendly and/or provide portage where appropriate
- explore and promote the elimination or reconfiguration of dams to eliminate navigation constraints (this concept is being actively pursued by IDNR and others as a means of improving fisheries and water quality).
- coordinate development of access sites with transit stops and with surface trails where feasible to allow alternate transportation modes to access sites where canoes can be rented or stored
- as trails and sites are developed, coordinate with NIPC, IDNR, and the Illinois Bureau of Tourism, Department of Commerce and Community Affairs to insure paddling opportunities in northeastern Illinois are included in maps, brochures, and promotional material

Planning, Advocacy, and Stewardship Organizations

Planning, advocacy and stewardship organizations can help implement this plan through

- working with local governments to encourage implementation of the water trail plan
- providing input and assistance with maintenance, trail promotion, user maps, education, and safety

- seeking opportunities to promote the plan, emphasizing the recreational, economic, tourism and stewardship values of water trails
- working with local providers and constituents to insure that identified improvements are carried out
- encouraging formation of trail coordination groups where needed
- continue raising the visibility of and promoting the values of the region's rivers through tours and other initiatives, especially in coordination with local jurisdictions and site owners (paddling and river advocacy groups)
- creating and promoting paddling opportunities for those less frequently seen on our waterways such as tourists, students, youth, seniors, disabled, and lower income groups. An example is the Friends of the Chicago River's U-CAN program, which addresses social issues through recreational use of the river
- promoting boater registration to monitor increasing use of waterways by paddlers.
- evaluate and promote removal of unnecessary dams that obstruct the channel

Illinois Department of Natural Resources

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources can help implement this plan through

- considering, where permitting is required, developing a memorandum of understanding as to the process involved, and/or intergovernmental agreements in order to expedite permitting

The following list includes recommendations for IDNR's Boat Access Area Development Program. It is based on input from the paddling community, local governments, and other organizations during the process to develop this plan. It is proposed that the IDNR can further assist the implementation of this plan by considering revisions to the Boat Access Area Development Program to reorient the program from a *site* emphasis to a *trail* emphasis. Changes to consider include, for example:

- broadening eligible activities to include (and encourage) bank stabilization in the immediate area of the trail and access development, especially through low cost, ecologically sensitive techniques. (Larger, more general stabilization projects are eligible for OSLAD.)
- including as eligible for funding the creation of portages around dams, locks, and warning signs and devices near aeration stations and controlling structures.
- advocating, in future increases of the state motor fuel tax, increases for the Boat Access Area Development Program to reflect the increases in the manufacture, purchase, use, and registration of non-motorized watercraft. (If increased, local units of government that have

multiple water trail sites and/or sites on more than one waterway should be made eligible for funding of more than one site per year.)

- increasing the current \$50,000 maximum for non-motorized facilities in cases where the site cannot be developed for less than \$100,000 due to steep or higher river banks requiring more grading and landscaping to make the sites safe for the general public and accessible for disabled users (for example)

Other Parties

Implementation of this plan can further be aided by:

- IDOT, CDOT, and other transportation providers considering, in their assessments of projects, any potential impacts on and/or possible improvements to existing and proposed water trails in this plan, including providing access where road improvements cross rivers
- IDOT, CDOT, and other transportation providers keeping existing accessible sites open when rebuilding bridges and other structures
- transportation providers coordinating with the local jurisdiction on opportunities to provide trail and roadway identification signs on bridges that cross potential or existing water trails
- sponsors and producers of land-based trail maps (such as IDOT, IDNR, Illinois Prairie Trail Authority, Chicagoland Bicycle Federation, NIPC and others) include existing and proposed water trails in their maps
- the US Army Corps of Engineers offering special permitting consideration for launches and portages that are developed as part of the Water Trails Plan

MANAGING AND DEVELOPING WATER TRAILS

Policies, Rules and Guidelines

Launch Site Hours

The hours for paddler's access to launch sites may by necessity coincide with the hours of operation of the park, forest preserve or other facility where the site is located. If there is flexibility, however, there are advantages to allowing use of a trail and sites from sunrise to sunset or later. This would enhance the experience for those interested in fishing, birding, and other wildlife observation, activities that are uniquely compatible with non-motorized boating. In addition, there is less likelihood of conflicts with motorized craft during the early morning and evening hours. Where this is not practical on a regular basis, it may be possible for the land owning agency to make later hours available for special programs or events that would include paddling opportunities.

In areas where conflict between users is a concern, consider establishing time periods during which use of motorized craft would be restricted. Zoning by time or space is an option increasingly under consideration by those responsible for managing recreation on the region's lakes.

As noted in the section on signs, it is important users are made aware of when they can use sites and by when they will need to leave the area.

Rules and Regulations

The rules and regulations for use of a launch site and water trail will depend on the nature of the site and the property owner. The following is a list of categories for which it may be desirable to establish and communicate policies or regulations:

- Alcohol Consumption
- Boat Storage
- Fishing
- Fires
- Hours of Use
- Large Groups
- Parking
- Personal Flotation Devices
- Pets
- Picnics
- Plant/Animal Treatment
- Safety Rules and Emergency Procedures
- Swimming
- Trail Use
- Trespassing
- Vehicle Use
- Waste Disposal

In addition to local regulations, it is recommended that the requirements set forth by the state of Illinois for canoeists be communicated to users. For example, all canoes used in Illinois must be registered and titled in Illinois and display the registration decal unless the canoe is registered in another state. Also required is one U.S. Coast Guard approved life preserver for each person in the canoe.

There are streams and stretches of streams in the region that are not legally open to public use and are bounded on both sides by private land. This plan in no way is intended to encourage trespassing on private property without permission of the adjacent landowner. There are also waterways, such as the Des Plaines River, where a "public" stretch is designated in this plan as a water trail, but the stretch adjoins a non-public stretch.

Emergency Procedures

It is recommended that water trail providers insure an emergency response system is in place that is coordinated with emergency service providers and local jurisdictions along the trail. Intergovernmental agreements for emergency services have been used in this region, along the Fox River for example, to coordinate provision of the service. Regardless of the type of agreement that is established, it is important to:

- Identify a system for accident reporting
- Identify emergency service providers and/or fire districts
- Identify geographic limits of services
- Identify and communicate locations for emergency services to access the water
 - Identify equipment needs
 - location of boat or special equipment such as air boats or hovercraft
 - potential for sharing special equipment among jurisdictions
- Consider how a caller might describe the location of emergency along trail (consider for example, placing periodic address markers)
- Ensure that the authorities (police, forest preserve district staff, etc.) in the vicinity are aware of the policies and regulations regarding use of water trail

It is also useful to establish a system among jurisdictions to enable communications about conditions such as obstructions, hazards, or closings. As noted earlier, a contact person could be established in each applicable jurisdiction along a water trail stretch to facilitate communication and coordination.

Maps and Signs

Geographical and logistical information is perhaps the most valuable data for water trail users. This information describes where you are, where you are going, and what you can expect along the way. Before paddlers begin a trip they need to know where the put-in launch site is located, the distance and time required to paddle to the take-out, the location and access to the take-out, parking, fees,

rules and restrictions, and other related information (e.g., dams, portages, picnic areas, playgrounds, restrooms, public phones, camping, points of interest, etc.). This plan recommends that water trail maps, brochures, and signs incorporate detailed trail and launch site information.

Appropriate map information includes:

- the user's current position on the map
- the course of the waterway
- the distance between sites and location of the next few sites
- the location of obstacles and/or dangers such as dams and preferred portage routes
- other nearby or adjacent trails and trail links
- services such as telephones, drinking water, stores, fuel and hospitals
- interesting sites or attractions along the way
- appropriate information on access for disabled users
- Illinois Nature Preserves and Natural Areas Inventory sites

Appropriate sign information includes:

- map (see above)
- site name and location
- manager contact number
- warning of downstream obstacles and other safety information
- emergency contact number
- small boat safety information such as Illinois and Coast Guard boating requirements
- contact number for reporting information about the site or waterway
- environmental and cultural information about the river stretch
- contact number for stewardship and volunteer opportunities
- appropriate information on access for disabled users
- Illinois Nature Preserves and Natural Areas Inventory sites

In some cases, it may be appropriate to provide more general information on a sign relating to downstream obstacles and other conditions so as not to create the perception by the public that every possible situation has been covered, when some conditions are unforeseeable.

Launch Site Design

With the exception of certain facilities for people with disabilities, construction of expensive, high-maintenance facilities such as fixed docks, ramps, large parking lots, boat drop-off areas at the water's edge, and elaborate signs can be minimized. Most paddlers prefer more naturalistic, less engineered facilities. However, good information about where they are going, interesting features,

and potential safety hazards along the way, and what to expect at the destination are of great value to non-motorized watercraft users.

Developing a launch site may be as simple as placing a sign identifying the site. Other sites may require some construction to make the site safe for the general public to access, such as a path to the water that is wide, flat, and hard enough to carry boats without difficulty. In many cases, a stable bank is all that is needed to provide an adequate launch site for paddlers. At locations with higher river banks, stairs or a path of a reasonable grade may be required. Launch sites may require protection for the riverbank such as geo-textile grid or other methods of bank stabilization; riverbank, ramp or dock materials that do not damage the boats; and devices that protect users from injury such as railings, fences, and lighting.

[3 Illustrations as examples of Streambank Types and Launch Treatments]

As noted in the section, "What Makes a Water Trail Access Site", many established launch sites are designed for launching open boats such as canoes, rowboats, john boats, and skiffs. These sites are more difficult or impossible to use safely for launching or landing boats such as rowing shells, sea kayaks, white water kayaks, Olympic racing kayaks, and decked canoes. While beaches and ramps can accommodate all types of boats, other types of access may require some retrofitting to accommodate all classes of non-motorized watercraft. The following is a summary of the basic requirements of non-motorized boat types.

Canoes and Other Open Boats

Open boats require the least launchsite construction. Natural riverbanks, decks, bulkheads and docks are all sufficient if they are no more than two to three feet above the water or low enough to drop a boat in the water and easily step down into it.

Kayaks and Decked Boats

Boats that are decked, such as kayaks and decked canoes, require a launchsite where the paddler can stabilize the boat by holding it or by placing a paddle across the cockpit and the dock, riverbank or wall. Once the paddler is sitting in the boat, these craft can be very stable. However, stepping down into, standing in the boat and then getting seated from a wall, riverbank or dock higher than the deck of the floating boat is more difficult than in a canoe. Standing up and stepping out of a decked boat by a high riverbank, wall or dock can be far more difficult, if not impossible.

Resources are available that provide design guidelines and other considerations for launchsite development. The IDNR's *A Guide To Boating and Canoe Access Development in Illinois* addresses

design in some detail. For natural resource considerations, see NIPC's publication "Managing and Restoring Stream Greenways: A Landowner's Handbook." It addresses stream and buffer issues such as developing and managing riparian land in ways that protect the natural resource functions of streams and their adjacent land. The section on trails in stream greenways cites a publication that describes ways to handle building trails and facilities in wet areas, entitled *Geosynthetics for Trails in Wet Areas*.

The following is a checklist of potential facilities and other considerations for developing a launch site for non-motorized craft. As noted earlier, minimal facilities serve the needs of many paddlers, and certainly not all of the items listed below are appropriate in all areas. Whether a trail includes some of the accessory facilities such as picnic areas, can be worked out among the site providers coordinating to create the water trail.

- Getting to the Access Site - streets and highways, public transportation, links to other trails and/or greenways (see Northeastern Illinois Regional Greenways Plan)
- Bike Parking - allows paddlers to bike to the put-in and/or shuttle themselves
- Boat Racks, Long and Short Term Equipment Storage - boat storage is a limiting factor for many would-be paddlers who live in apartments; storage racks or lockers make it possible for paddlers to take public transportation to the launch-site avoiding the problems of parking on-site
- Camping Area - many water trails around the country involve camping on islands, remote areas, or areas inaccessible by road or foot trails; siting launch sites in or near established or planned camping areas allows longer travel on the waterway
- Landscaping and Stream Buffer Vegetation - see "Restoring and Managing Stream Greenways: A Landowner's Handbook," NIPC, 1998
- Launch - beach, dock, shelf or ramp clearly identified from both land and water; non or low-abrasive surfaces are preferred by owners of more expensive gel-coated fiberglass boats; low walkway piers between launch ramp's lanes make the pier usable by kayakers; ramps and floating docks allow access at any water level
- Lighting - parking, walkways, unloading area, stairs and dock or ramp
- Parking - adequate for site, handicapped spaces, reasonable walking distance to launchsite but screened so that stream is buffered, hours of accessibility
- Picnic area - lawn, benches, picnic tables, grills, shelter
- Playground - a place to wait with children at takeout can make the site and river family-friendly
- Signage - consider signs on bridges for paddlers that identify water trail and road

name; road signs locating and directing traffic to the entrance of the access site; and signs identifying phone, parking and unloading areas (also see section on maps and signs)

- Security - fencing, lighting, public phones, emergency phone
- Stairs, walkways, and paths as necessary
- Swimming area - where the waterway is clean and safe enough
- Toilets
- Unloading/tie-down area for boats - separate from parking, near launch, dock or ramp, allows parking to be located further from the launchsite
- Waste disposal - containers large enough may encourage people to collect garbage found along the waterway
- Water - drinking fountains, faucets for filling tanks and canteens, washing

It may also be desirable to establish stopping spots along trail stretches. This would allow opportunities for rest, contemplation, photography, or a refuge from conflicting motor boat traffic.

Portages

It is recommended that portages be developed around obstacles such as dams, locks, aeration stations and controlling structures. Signage and/or buoys sufficiently upstream should warn and inform boaters of the distance to the portage and on which side of the river it is located. It is recommended that safe portage around obstacles include a clearly marked upstream take-out, a safe path to carry boats around the obstacle, and a downstream put-in. Portages close enough to existing roads have been recommended for development as access sites where possible and logical in this plan. It may be possible to incorporate these access improvements into scheduled road improvement projects.

There may be dams in existence that were not identifiable at the time this plan was developed. It is recommended that the process for planning and developing a water trail include the research necessary to confirm or supplement information in this plan regarding dams and their ownership. Dams, even short ones, can be dangerous for paddlers.

Design Considerations for Persons With Disabilities

According to the *Recommendations for Accessibility Guidelines for the Recreational Facilities and Outdoor Developed Areas*¹², access for disabled paddlers may not be appropriate at every site, nor on every water trail. It is desirable however, to have a regional water trail system that provides a representative cross section of experiences for the disabled. Periodic review may be required as the water trail plan is implemented to determine whether this is being achieved. If after a period of time, the region falls short of this objective, specific methods of encouraging development of these facilities will be needed. For example, funding agencies could give a higher priority to proposals that provide disabled access on certain trail stretches.

Especially important to disabled users is that they are provided information regarding which trails do have disabled access and where the sites are located in the system.

Water trails that are intended to be accessible to disabled users are best located where there are no obstacles that need to be portaged around such as dams and logjams, since they can present a dead end for those unable to portage. A management plan for debris removal is especially important in trails that are indicated as accessible to disabled users.

While powered boat use does not preclude the use of a part of the waterway by disabled paddlers, such stretches require more experienced users and/or guides. Facilities at access sites for disabled users require parking and paths that conform to existing guidelines for handicapped access. Launchsite design should enable users to get into and out of a boat from a wheelchair. The resource mentioned above recommends that the boat launch ramps themselves should not be intended to be accessible (i.e., 15% or less slope) since that would make it very difficult to get a trailered boat in the water. However, ramps that are steeper than 15% should be designated such, to warn people with disabilities not to use the launch as an accessible route into the water.

Cost Estimates for Developing Access Sites

Most of the access sites identified in this plan need small improvements or minor, inexpensive amenities. For example, public parking is generally available at most established and potential water trail access sites, but simple, low-cost directional signs and maps showing the continuous water trail system are usually lacking.

The expense of developing a canoe/kayak launch site can vary considerably depending on the level

¹² These non-enforceable guidelines were developed in 1994 by the Recreation Access Advisory Committee for the U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board, charged with providing the Access Board, a federal agency, with recommendations on accessibility guidelines for recreation facilities and outdoor developed areas.

of support facilities already in place. Land acquisition and driveways/parking can be the most expensive aspects of a fully developed site, but as noted above, most of the sites identified do not need expensive improvements. Signage should be a relatively minimal cost. The paddle craft access to the water body can be simple and basic, but designed to be sensitive to major hydrological changes to the water body and the enormous energies flowing water can bring to bear on any shoreline structure or facility. (See Fig. x for the basic features of a well designed paddle craft access facility.) A fully developed facility can also include public restrooms, phones, and shelter, but this level of development is more related to intensity of site use, multiple site uses, and the desires of the local facility provider, than the requirements for establishing a coordinated water trail system throughout the region.

If a street already exists within a reasonable distance, a canoe launch facility that includes a parking lot and security lights (no restrooms) can usually be constructed for much less than \$50,000, which is the grant limit for canoe launches for the Illinois Boat Access Area Development Program. One example from the region is a concrete canoe launch with a four step approach to the water. The cost of that facility (parking and a path were already there) was around \$12,500.

(Photo here)

In many cases, a stable bank is all that is needed to provide an adequate launch site for paddlers. This is the foundation for a safe and serviceable launch area. A stable bank provides a secure and functional beginning and ending to the water trail user's experience. A trampled, heavily used launch site streambank will erode without structures to protect it. The cost of bank stabilization ranges from \$50 per foot to more than \$150 per foot, depending on the site and the degree of use.

An example of a low cost basic launch with parking, signs, bank stabilization, and other features is the launch in Blackwell Forest Preserve at Mack Road on the DuPage River's West Branch. An itemized estimate of a *similar* design is shown in the table below.

Table 6: Cost Estimate for Canoe Launch Similar in Design to Blackwell Forest Preserve's at Mack Road on DuPage's West Branch (7-27-98)

ITEM	QUANTITY	UNIT	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL PRICE
Erosion Control Fence	30	lin. ft.	\$3.00	\$90.00 ¹
Earth Excavation	215	cu. yd.	\$10.00	\$2,150.00
Aggregate Base Course 8"	215	cu. yd.	\$25.00	\$5,375.00
Furnish & Place Topsoil 6"	135	sq. yd.	\$2.00	\$270.00 ²
Seeding Class 1	0.03	acre	\$4,000.00	\$120.00
Mulch Method 2	0.06	ton	\$1,000.00	\$60.00
Cable Gate	1	ea.	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
Sign-Entrance	1	ea.	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00
Sign-General Info.	1	ea.	\$500.00	\$500.00
Sign-Preserve Regulations	1	ea.	\$200.00	\$200.00
Sign-No Dumping/Fine	1	ea.	\$200.00	\$200.00
Sign-Recycle	1	ea.	\$150.00	\$150.00
Sign-Take Out	1	ea.	\$50.00	\$50.00
Sign-Stop	1	ea.	\$90.00	\$90.00
Wheel Stops	3	ea.	\$40.00	\$120.00 ³
Refuse Can	1	ea.	\$100.00	\$100.00
Recycle Can	1	ea.	\$100.00	\$100.00
				\$13,575.00
				X 1.20
				(contingency)
				\$16,290

¹Assuming fence is placed along stream bank
²Assuming a 2' wide restoration around perimeter
³Used to prevent cars from entering water

Estimates provided courtesy of the Planning and Development Department, Forest Preserve District of DuPage County

The cost of a launch site increases under more extreme conditions such as very steep banks, high velocity water, large fluctuations in water level, and other obstacles. For the most part, this plan avoided recommending sites where these conditions are present. Costs also may be higher to develop handicapped access, but this will vary depending on land and water conditions, the disability or disabilities being provided for, and the particular facilities desired at the site.

Funding

Boat Access Area Development Program

This grant program is targeted specifically at boat access to Illinois' lakes and waterways. It covers up to 90% of land acquisition costs and 100% of access development costs. It limits grants to \$50,000 for non-motorized access, and \$200,000 for motorized access (which can have a non-motorized access component). Applicants are required to maintain funded improvements. Grant applications are due September 1 of each year. One million dollars per year has been made available in recent years. Grant requests usually exceed the amount available. (See Appendix D for a synopsis of this program). Answers to questions and requests for manuals containing the procedures and application forms can be obtained through the IDNR, Division of Grants Administration at (217) 782-7481.

Conservation 2000 Ecosystems Program

The Ecosystems Program is a program to provide financial and technical support to groups of individuals representing both public and private interests, which seek to maintain and enhance ecological and economic conditions in key watersheds. Administered by the Department of Natural Resources, the program is funded by Conservation 2000, a 1994 multi-agency, multi-year initiative reauthorized until 2009. Ecosystem projects are competitively awarded and funded projects that are solicited or formulated by Ecosystem Partnerships to address watershed concerns. Funded project categories include habitat, capital, public outreach, research and resource economics. A variety of river-related projects could be funded with this Program because of the potential to promote stewardship and environmental education.

Open Space Land Acquisition and Development Program

This is the traditional park and open space acquisition and development grant program administered by the IDNR. It is a 50-50 grant/local match program and will grant up to \$400,000 for acquisition and \$200,000 for development. A paddlecraft access development proposal must be only a component of a broader project proposal. The application deadline is July 1 of every year. Approximately \$10-15 million has been available in past years. It is a heavily oversubscribed and thus competitive program.

Volunteer and Private Funds

Since the actual access point facility and associated signage is a reasonably inexpensive project, and can be made more so by donated labor and materials, the development of many points of access along this proposed regional water trails plan can be undertaken by local canoe clubs and river conservation organizations working together with the public land owner. This is especially recommended at potential access sites where drives, parking, and other facilities are already in place.

Other Funding Sources

A variety of creative funding and site access and development opportunities are available from non-traditional sources. Possibilities include:

- Tax increment financing districts
- Local community development funds
- Corporate sponsorship
- Local governmental capital improvement budgets
- Dam reconstruction financing
- Road jurisdictions (land access at river/stream crossings)
- Local civic center authorities
- River/stream access (and potentially development) through planned unit development negotiations or through other public land donation and park development aspects of the land development process)
- Multiple use of existing public properties (sewage treatment facilities, energy facilities, water treatment facilities)
- Multiple use of private utility properties (Commonwealth Edison utility corridor crossings of rivers/streams)

Risk Management

It can be argued that next to walking, paddle craft is the oldest form of human transportation. The development of a recreational system by local governments for paddle craft use by the general public is therefore not a jump into high risk sports, "extreme" sports, or sports based on new equipment and technologies. Local governments have come to terms with managing the risks involved with in-line skating, rock wall climbing, snowboarding, tobogganing, power boating, jet skiing, hunting, and snowmobiling. Paddling is more akin to a rediscovery of our roots, and the provision and coordination of a recreational system for paddlers more closely parallels the development of the walking and bicycle trail system which was developed regionally in the 1980's and 1990's and enjoys great public acceptance and popularity

On the other hand, this plan recognizes that there are unique potential hazards associated with water trails. It is important that water trail providers understand and convey to paddlers the need to know the risks and unpredictable hazards, and to encourage novice canoeists to take instruction, and/or travel with an experienced canoeist on their initial expeditions. The Illinois Paddling Council Access Project (see section on "Contacts") distributes a brochure on the availability of canoe and kayak instruction in the region for individuals and groups. A few water trail sections will be suitable only for experienced paddlers, and it is recommended that be conveyed to paddlers through signage or other means. Further study of each water trail will be required to address these issues, perhaps under the direction of the water trail committees in coordination with paddlers, and, where applicable, channel maintenance and water management agencies.

Potential Safety Considerations

Water trails are very sensitive to changes in water elevation due to storms that can quickly change the level of expertise necessary or may preclude use entirely for temporary periods. They also present obstructions which must be portaged around at all times (such as certain dams), or at certain times (unexpected logjams and certain water control structures) depending on the level of blockage to passage, water elevation, or the experience of the user. Fast, unexpected changes in water levels due to gate movements at water control structures, pumping stations, and aeration facilities can be safety problems, including examples such as the Lockport power station, Wilmette Harbor sluice gates, the Lawrence Avenue pumping station, the Devon Avenue aeration site, and certain other sites managed by the MWRD. It is recommended that a one half mile zone of influence be identified around each of these hazards and safety signs be posted notifying paddlers of potentially dangerous flow conditions.

In smaller streams, underwater holes can develop beneath tree falls. A stream at a normal one foot depth could develop a chest-deep eroded hole below the water line due to water's tremendous erosive force. An experienced or advanced paddler knows this. A beginner may be unaware. Certain of our streams and rivers are very polluted, and while the level of paddling experience may be very enjoyable, unexpected spills in the water may require a doctor's visit for antibiotics. Power boat enthusiasts have, or should have, some of these same concerns, and thus these situations are not unique to paddlers.

The following list includes safety considerations important for paddlers:

- *Equipment:* Each person must have in their possession (and wear) a U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation device. (As required by the New Illinois Child Personal Flotation Device Law). Each boat should carry one or more spare paddles.
- *Skill Levels:* It is recommended that each person know how to swim or be accompanied by someone with water safety training, and that caution and good judgement be used when entering unfamiliar waters. Novice canoeists are encouraged to take instruction, and/or travel with an experienced canoeist on their initial expeditions.

- *User Conflicts:* It is recommended that paddlers avoid areas heavily used by motor boats and jet skis. It is important that private property is not used without permission of the owner. It is illegal to shoot a rifle or handgun into or across a stream.
- *Dams and Other Obstacles:* It is important for paddlers to know the locations of all dams and other hazards and portage around them on designated trails.
- *High Water Flow:* Paddlers should find out river conditions before launching, and be alert for signs indicating potential danger from fast flowing water.
- *Cooperation and Assistance:* It is recommended that paddlers be encouraged to try and assist others who need help or medical attention.
- *Water Quality:* It is recommended that paddlers be instructed not to drink water from rivers and creeks. On some of the more polluted urban streams, there is also a risk of disease from exposure (e.g., wading) to bacteria and other pathogens¹³.

Landowner Risks and Responsibilities

The conditions under which the paddler is using the owner's land (i.e., whether the user is an invitee, a licensee, or a trespasser) has a bearing on the responsibilities of owners. The following are the three potential scenarios that describe the paddler's role in using the property, and the corresponding responsibility of the property owner:

- *Invitee:* A person who has been invited to use the property by the owner for the mutual benefit of the owner and invitee. The highest standard of care is owed to an invitee. At the point of invitation, through signage at the access point to the water body and on printed brochures easily available, clear directions should be given as to the level of experience expected or required by the invitee to utilize the water trail stretch. If this level of experience is not present, signage and brochures should make it clear that the visitor will not be considered an invitee and will be considered a trespasser.

¹³ Although the water quality of most streams has improved considerably in the past few decades, urban stormwater runoff and treated wastewater effluent usually contain significant quantities of pollutants. These pollutants include ammonia, bacteria, sediment, heavy metals, and a large number of organic chemicals (polychlorinated biphenols, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, pesticides and many others). Unless swallowed in quantity, these contaminants are not likely to cause illnesses or be carcinogenic to humans, but can affect the biodiversity of aquatic life and the aesthetics (odor and clarity) of the water. Viruses, bacteria, and other pathogens, however, can be cause for concern. Paddlers should be aware of this and not ingest stream water or maintain lengthy physical contact with streams, especially during cooler months. (Many publicly and privately owned wastewater treatment facilities in northeastern Illinois are allowed by permit to discharge water to streams and water trails. The treatment process often uses chlorination to disinfect liquid wastes. However, during cooler months of the year when water temperatures are very low, typically December through March, disinfection is not always required since most bacteria and other pathogens will not spread and multiply under very cold conditions).

- **Licensee:** A person using a property with the implied or stated consent of the owner but not for the benefit of the owner. Property owners owe a lower standard of care to licensees than to invitees. It is the owner's duty to inform or warn licensees of potentially hazardous situations and to prevent any willful harm. The owner, however, is not required to inspect the property for any potential or unknown hazards. A person who has requested permission to enter or cross a piece of property in order to launch a canoe, and a Boy Scout troop that requests permission to use a private greenway are examples of licensees. The licensee could be a contracted or volunteer maintenance crew. A licensee could also be an experienced volunteer monitor of waterway conditions whose purpose is to uncover and make known to the local management agency or local government any dangerous or risky conditions which have evolved. The duty of care for licensees thus may vary and should be agreed upon in memorandums of understanding or contracts.
- **Trespassers:** A person who uses property without the owner's implied or stated permission and not for the benefit of the property owner. The lowest standard of care is owed to a trespasser. If the owner knows that a trespasser is on the property, he or she has a duty not to injure the trespasser in any manner. Under certain conditions children are not regarded as trespassers and, therefore, are legally due a standard of care equivalent to that of a licensee. Well-signed and improved facilities and access points might be considered attractive nuisances to children. Care needs to be taken to design and manage these facilities so that injuries can be avoided. Normally natural features, i.e., the water body itself, will not fall into the attractive nuisance category.

Private riparian property owners have had their liability exposure limited by state law when they make their land and water areas available to the public for recreation. (ILCS 65/1-7). As long as they do not charge for the use of their property, private landowners, who either directly or indirectly invite or permit any person to use their property for recreational or conservation purposes, does not:

- extend any assurance that the premises are safe for any purpose,
- confer upon such person the legal status of invitee or licensee to whom a duty of care is owed,
- assume responsibility for or incur liability for any injury to person or property caused by an act or omission of such person or any other person who enters upon the land, or
- assume responsibility for or incur liability for any injury to a person or property caused by any natural or artificial condition, structure or personal property on the premises.

Duties of the Recreation Provider

The duties of the recreation provider involved in the management of a water trails system are:

- to keep the water trail in a reasonably safe condition, recognizing that it is a natural system and to a large degree dependent on natural conditions and changes
- to monitor and inspect the water trail on a periodic basis to discover hazards, both evident and hidden
- to remove or mitigate the hazards consistent with the natural and sustainable function of the water body and all laws relating to the maintenance of these functions
- to anticipate foreseeable uses and activities by invitees and take reasonable precautions to protect invitees from foreseeable dangers
- to conduct operations on the water body and its shore or bank with reasonable care for the safety of the invitee.

In addition to these duties, it is also recommended that water trail providers, advocacy groups, and/or other applicable organizations:

- use the safety guidelines developed by the American Canoe Association in user information, regulation, and enforcement policies
- organize safety training programs for each local water trail
- form partnerships between agencies, local governments, and paddling associations and experienced individuals in order to maintain responsible levels of safety training and skill development, and water body hazard monitoring and reporting.

Additional assistance for developing a risk management plan can be found in the book Risk Management - Park, Recreation, and Leisure Services by Peterson and Hronek, Sagamore Publishing, Champaign, Illinois 1997. Guidelines for emergency procedures, rules, regulations, and policies can be found at the beginning of this plan's section on Managing Water Trails.

Additional Resources

Recreation Access Advisory Committee, *Recommendations for Accessibility Guidelines: Recreational Facilities for Outdoor Developed Areas*, U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board, July, 1994.

IDNR *Canoeing, Open Spaces, Family Places: Illinois Canoeing Guide*, 1994.

IDNR, Illinois Boat Registration, Titling and Safety Act Digest, April 1996.

IDNR, A Guide To Boating and Canoe Access Development in Illinois, 1998.

Kaiser and Wright, *Liability and Immunity: A National Assessment of Landowner Risk for Recreational Injuries*. (For information contact: Texas A&M University Environmental Policy Group, Suite 156 Francis Hall, College Station, Texas 77843)

Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission, *People on the Water: Workshop Report and Recommendations*, February 1997.

Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission, *Restoring and Managing Stream Greenways, A Landowner's Handbook*, 1998.

Peterson, James A. and Hronek, Bruce B., *Risk Management: Park, Recreation, and Leisure Services*, 1997.

U.S. D.A., Forest Service, Technical Report 0E02A40: *Geosynthetics for Trails in Wet Areas*, 1995.

Contacts

Federal, State, Regional, County Agencies

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Chicago Illinois Field Office
1000 Hart Rd., Ste 180
Barrington, IL 60010
(847) 381-2253

National Park Service
Center for Conservation,
Recreation, and Resources
310 West Wisconsin Avenue, Ste. 100 East
Milwaukee, WI 53203
(414) 297-3617

IDNR
524 South 2nd Street
Springfield, IL 62701
Division of Planning: (217) 782-3715
Grants Administration: (217) 782-7481

Illinois State Water Survey
Office of Water Quality Management
P.O. Box 697
Peoria, IL 61652
(309) 671-3196

Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission
222 South Riverside Plaza, 1800
Chicago, IL 60606
(312) 454-0400

Openlands Project
25 East Washington Suite 1650
Chicago, IL 60602
(312) 427-4256

Illinois Prairie Trail Authority
c/o DuPage County Forest Preserve District
P.O. Box 2239
Glen Ellyn, IL 60138
(630) 682-7179

Forest Preserve District of Cook County
536 North Harlem Avenue
River Forest, IL 60305
(800) 870-3666

Forest Preserve District of DuPage County
P.O. Box 2239
Glen Ellyn, IL 60138
(630) 682-7179

DuPage County
Development Department
421 North County Farm Road
Wheaton, IL 60187
(630) 682-7130

Kane County Forest Preserve District
719 Batavia Avenue, Building G
Geneva, IL 60134
(630) 232-5924

Lake County Forest Preserve District
2000 North Milwaukee Avenue
Libertyville, IL 60048
(847) 367-6640

McHenry County Conservation District
6512 Harts Road
Ringwood, IL 60072
(815) 678-4431

Forest Preserve District of Will County
22606 South Cherry Hill Road
P.O. Box 1069
Joliet, Illinois 60434-1069
(815) 727-8700

Metropolitan Water Reclamation District
of Greater Chicago
100 E. Erie Street
Chicago, IL 60611

Kane-DuPage Soil and
Water Conservation District
545 Randall Road
St. Charles, IL 60174
(630) 584-7961

Lake County Soil and
Water Conservation District
100 N. Atkinson Road, Suite 102-A
Grayslake, IL 60030
(847) 223-1056

North Cook County Soil
and Water Conservation District
899 Jay Street
Elgin, IL 60120
(847) 468-0071

Federal, State, Regional, County Agencies (Continued)

McHenry County Soil
and Water Conservation District
1143 N. Seminary Avenue
Woodstock, IL 60098
(815) 338-0099

Will-South Cook County Soil
and Water Conservation District
1201 S. Gouger Rd.
New Lenox, IL 60451
(815) 462-3151

Lake County Stormwater
Management Commission
333-B Peterson Road
Libertyville, IL 60048
(847) 918-5260

Chain O Lakes Fox Waterway
Management Agency
45 S. Piskatee Lake Road
Fox Lake, IL 60020

Chicago Park District
425 East McFetridge Drive
Chicago, IL 60605

City of Chicago
Dept of Planning and Development
20 North Clark, 28th Floor
Chicago, IL 60602

River and Lake Advocacy Groups

Friends of the Chicago River
407 South Dearborn, # 1580
Chicago, IL 60605
(312) 939-0490

Lake Michigan Water Trail Group
1100 Wilmot Road
Deerfield, IL 60015
(847) 948-8794

Lake Michigan Federation
220 South State # 2108
Chicago, IL 60604
(312) 939-0838

Des Plaines River Watershed Alliance
c/o Gary Mechanic
4905 N. Hamlin
Chicago, Illinois 60625
(773) 267-0146

Salt Creek Watershed Network
c/o Jeff Swano
8738 Washington Ave
Brookfield, IL 60513

Friends and Critters of Salt Creek
Nick Nicola
114 Essex Road
Elk Grove Village, IL 6007
(847) 593-5410

DuPage River Coalition of the Conservation Foundation
Brook McDonald
10 S. 404 Knoch Knolls Rd
Naperville, IL 60565
(630) 428-4500

Friends of the Kishwaukee River
Neil Sachs
20441 Parade Court
Marengo, IL 60152
(815) 568-3019

Kankakee River Valley Forest Preserve District
150 N. Schuyler Avenue -Suite 1008
Kankakee, IL 60901
(815) 935-3839

Des Plaines River Access Group
c/o Tom Allabastro
227 North Lombard
Oak Park, IL 60302
(708) 383-5546

Paddling Groups

Illinois Paddling Council
Access Project - Gary Mechanic
4905 North Hamlin
Chicago, IL 60625
(773) 267-0146 (e-mail: accessproject@chicagopaddling.org)

American Canoe Association Inc.
7432 Alban Station Boulevard, Suite B-226
Springfield, VA 22150
(703) 451-0141

Prairie State Canoeists
Chairman: John Shaw
1620 Albermarle Ct.
Naperville, IL 60563
(630) 961-3479

Chicago White water Association
Sigrid Pilgrim
2750 Bernard Place
Evanston, IL 60201
(847) 328-0145

Lincoln Park Boat Club
2241 N. Cannon Dr.
Chicago, IL 60614
(773) 549-2628

Chicago Area Sea Kayakers Association
Contact: Vic Hurtow
4019 N. Narragansett
Chicago, IL 60634
(773) 777-1489

Contacts in Adjacent Areas

Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
Old Courthouse
P.O. Box 1606
Waukesha, WI 53187

Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission
6100 Southport Road
Portage, IN 46365

Kendall County
Director of Planning, Building, Zoning
Kendall County Office Building
111 West Fox Street
Yorkville, IL 60560
(630)553-4138

Forest Preserve District of Kendall County
110 West Ridge Street
Yorkville, IL 60560
(630) 553-5444

Boone and Winnebago Greenways Advisory Committee
Rick Strader
Rockford Park District
1401 North 2nd Street
Rockford, IL 61107
(815) 987-8865

APPENDICES

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Appendix A

The History of Paddle Craft on the Region's Waters

Paddlecraft are the oldest form of watercraft to use the rivers and lakes of northeastern Illinois, and in fact have been continuously on our waterbodies for over 300 years in post-Columbian history, and undoubtedly a thousand or more years longer by native Americans. (Native Americans first appeared in our region over 10,000 years ago, but the development of the canoe is a more recent tradition, yet to be accurately dated.)

Late 17th century, 18th century, and early 19th century maps, diaries, and historical accounts carry substantial information relative to the use of northeast Illinois rivers and streams. This information is relatively abundant with regard to Lake Michigan, and the Lower Des Plaines, Chicago, and Kankakee Rivers. These waterways not only saw the passage of historic figures such as La Salle, Jolliet, Marquette, DuSable, Schoolcraft, and Kinzie but also hundreds of unnamed or little known *courier de bois*¹⁴, engages, traders, trappers, missionaries, explorers, and soldiers from France, England, and Colonial America.

The Essential Role of Rivers and Canoes in the Fur Trade

Records at the American Fur Company on Mackinac Island, and other historic repositories of early trade documents, frequently mention traders heading into the Chicago country and the Illinois country. The *courier de bois* were especially expert at adapting to local native American culture and the use of canoes as a primary travel mode. Traders working through the major fur trading corporations, on the other hand, had furs brought to them by local native Americans and the independent traders.

Specific locations, or trading posts, of these early traders were unrecorded until Du Sable's enterprise at the mouth of the Chicago River in 1772. He not only maintained the local trade network but also outfitted various travelers through the Chicago region until 1800. As an example, when Hugh Heward, a trade clerk, arrived at the Chicago River in the spring of 1790 after a 48-day paddle from Detroit with Canadian voyagers, they exchanged their lake canoe for shallower draft perogues from Du Sable in order to continue down to the Mississippi. Du Sable's post was maintained by several successors including Lalime (beginning in 1800) and John Kinzie (beginning in 1804).

¹⁴ *Courier de bois* was the term used to describe independent hunters and trappers of French descent.

In efforts to control the fur trade, the U.S. government opened up its "factory" at Fort Dearborn. Although much of this region was substantially trapped out of beaver by the end of the 18th century, there was still a market for all types of pelts. The Ft. Dearborn factory records show thousands of fur pelts annually shipped out to Niagara and Philadelphia from trapping activities that pervaded the region. Canoes were the only means of moving these heavy goods to the Fort Dearborn factory from the hinterlands. During the French era prior to DuSable (1670's thru 1759), large "freighter" canoes called *canots du nord* moved these goods up Lake Michigan to Ft. Michilimackinac and down to Detroit.

In 1807, pelts from 8313 muskrat, 3310 raccoons, 460 deer, 146 minks, 45 wolves, 37 wildcats, 64 otters, 7 fox, and 1 bear were shipped out on the Sloop Contractor from Ft. Dearborn.

This fur trade era left a fairly detailed record of the use of the larger rivers and the Lake Michigan shoreline. Trade activity on other waters in the region is less well documented but can be deduced from the existing maps and records. Records refer to, for example, the French trapper DuPazhe settling at the confluence of the East and West Branches of the DuPage River, the Potawatomi village of Mettawa located on the Des Plaines River near today's Route 22 crossing, and the largest Potawatomi village in DuPage County in 1834 on the east branch of the DuPage where Glen Ellyn is today. Maps also indicate a portage between the Kishwaukee and Fox River systems. Scharf's early maps showed native American village sites on Salt Creek, Hickory Creek, Thorn Creek, the Ausagaunaskee, the DuPage, and Calumet Rivers. Juliet Kinzie, in her famous diary of traveling from the Rock River in 1831, mentions the Kishwaukee known as the Grand Marais River, the deep and fast flowing east branch of the DuPage, and the ubiquitous canoe being used by native Americans when she reached the Fox River. During this era it is not too much of a presumption to believe canoes were available in every native American village along a reasonably sized water body, and that trappers had access to the same. Wild rice can only be harvested efficiently with a canoe, and thus they would have been common sights during the harvest season in the Chain of Lakes and the Calumet area.

The canoes produced locally were dugouts because of the lack of birch trees in this area. However, visiting native Americans, early explorers, and traders coming from Wisconsin and Michigan villages and posts would have brought birchbark canoes. Just as paddlers know today, the canoe would travel anywhere half a foot of water depth was available. It is easy to imagine the local trading economy and the procurement and shipping of goods by canoe occurring commonly throughout the region. But changing fashion styles in the early 19th century and the sudden influx of settlers and their new economies into northeastern Illinois during the same period caused the fur trade here to die out.

A Shift in Focus on the Waterways: Specialized Transport Routes and Recreation

As the new American culture and development spread over the northeastern Illinois landscape, the larger rivers became primarily conduits for bulk goods and other forms of commerce, and most of the historic documentation from the 19th century onward relates to these larger river systems. The rapid development of a road system within 20 years after the Black Hawk War in 1832 made the smaller waterbodies unimportant for either transportation or the movement of commodities. The small rivers and streams were used primarily for recreational pursuits - hunting, fishing, and swimming - and remain in the collective memories of our culture as some of the most common popular images of "the good old days." (forgetting that there was a 150 year French, British and Colonial history in this region prior to our coming, and a native american culture which goes back 10,000 years earlier).

Through the remainder of the 1800's and through the 1950's rivers and streams and creeks were used by the local community, mostly children and fishermen, hunters, and trappers. There are many examples of written local community histories portraying certain stretches of our many streams as "gathering spots...swimming holes...fishing holes..." etc.

Contemporary Approach: From Abuse to Growing Respect

As the water quality in our regional streams became degraded due to continued development and cultivation in their watersheds, they became thought of more as dumping grounds and less as community assets. As thousands of homes were built in floodplains through the 50's and 60's, adjoining residents began, correctly or incorrectly, to consider their nearby stream segment as private property, further discouraging community use. From the 1970's through the present, pollution controls and regulations, better land use planning, and citizen stream cleanup efforts have resulted in a substantial new respect for our waterways in general. Streams are again the focus of pride in many communities, and there is a burgeoning rediscovery of the many fascinations and beauties of a healthy stream system. Not surprisingly, there is also a growing desire to renew the experiences which people enjoyed in the past, and to gain public accessibility to these important landscape features. Where in the past one would float a paddlecraft, there is a desire by a growing segment of the public to do so again.

Appendix B

Waterway Access Site Survey Form

Waterway: _____ date of survey _____
Site Name _____ Site number _____
General description _____

Location: _____
County _____ Twnshp. _____ Rng. _____ Sect. _____ USGS Quad. _____

Property Ownership: public _____ private _____ rec'd acquisition or lease _____
Owner/Operator: _____
Contact: _____

Facilities: Hours of operation: _____ locked when closed? _____
Parking: street-free _____ metered _____ on-site-free _____ metered _____
restrictions _____ phone _____
restrooms _____ drinking water available _____
boat storage area _____ picnic area _____
bike racks _____ garbage containers _____
playground _____ camping area _____
shelter _____ signage _____

Accessibility: Major roads _____
public transportation _____
handicapped accessible - parking _____ paths _____ launch _____
nearby businesses: food _____ fuel _____ other _____
nearby trails or trail links _____ distance _____

Paddle craft Access:
Developed _____ boat unloading area _____
Undeveloped _____
condition of waterway at access: usable all year? _____ seasonal _____
power boating allowed _____

Recommended actions: _____

Appendix C

The Local Paddling Community: Statistics, Characteristics, and Local Groups¹⁵

Who Is On The Water?

The IDNR is the state agency responsible for the registration of recreational watercraft. The following figures are from the IDNR Boat Registration/Title System count of currently registered non-motorized boats for June 8, 1998. The total number of non-motorized boats registered in the state is 107,516.

Registration in northeastern Illinois is as follows:

Table 4: Northeastern Illinois
Non-Motorized Boat Registration

County	Count	% of State Total
Cook	18,738	17.4
DuPage	6,147	5.7
Kane	3,165	2.9
Lake	6,722	6.3
McHenry	3,780	3.5
Will	4,287	4.0
TOTAL	42,839	39.8

From IDNR, 1998

Compliance by boat owners with boat registration laws is far less than 100%. Although difficult to quantify, the numbers above suggest the existence of a much larger number of non-motorized watercraft and users.

¹⁵ Based on existing studies: *Traveling the Waters of the Chicago River*, by Joan M. O'Shaughnessy; *Resident Use and Perception of the Chicago & Calumet Rivers*, by Dave Wallin, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers & Chicago Rivers Demonstration Project; and, *Characterization of the Chicago River by the Chicago District*, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

A study by Joan O'Shaughnessy in 1994 surveyed a representative sample of 138 individuals who were recreational users (canoers and kayakers) of the Chicago River to identify user characteristics, motivations and preferences in order to make management recommendations. Results indicated that the Chicago River is a viable resource for recreational activities of canoeing and rowing.

Chapter 5 of the study identifies the demographics of respondents. Two tables are of interest here. The first table identifies respondents' gender and ages, and the second chart identifies household income:

Respondents Ages (n=133)

AGE	%
under 21	2
21-29	13
30-39	24
40-49	30
50-59	20
> 60	11
Females = 44% Males = 56%	

Joan O'Shaughnessy, 1994

Respondents Household Income (n=120)

INCOME RANGE	%
less than \$15k	4
15,001-25,000	6
25,000 -50,000	28
50,000 -75,000	22
75,000 -100,000	18
more than 100k	22

Joan O'Shaughnessy, 1994

The study also indicated that the respondents were also very well educated, with the majority having not only college degrees but some graduate education. Respondents' occupations reflected this high level of education, almost half having jobs that were classified as professional or technical.

The Local Paddling Community: Organized Members

There are five mid- to large- size paddle craft clubs in northeastern Illinois, with a total of nearly 2500 members. There are several more smaller public and private clubs such as university rowing clubs and the recreational clubs of large corporations such as Abbott Laboratories in North Chicago. The following is a description of northeastern Illinois paddling clubs that are open to the public, have more than 100 members, run regular events, and publish newsletters.

- ***Prairie State Canoeists (PSC)*** - A large, well organized, family oriented canoe club of over 1200 members. PSC runs over 120 trips a year in northern Illinois, the midwest, around the country, and occasionally abroad.

- **Chicago Whitewater Association (CWA)** - CWA, a whitewater kayak club with over 500 members, runs an extensive and excellent winter pool training program. Beginning in mid-October through mid-March, weekly classes are taught at a number of pools in the city and suburbs. The course teaches beginners basic boat control skills, Eskimo rolling, other self rescue skills, and culminates with a series of trips on increasingly challenging local and Wisconsin rivers.
- **The Lincoln Park Boat Club (LPBC)** - This club of over 400 members was formed in 1910 and has its own boathouse. The membership of LPBC consists of two groups; rowers and paddlers. The rowers are individuals who use one and two person rowing shells, and groups who are organized as 8 to 12 person crews. The paddlers are canoers and kayakers. For the first time in the club's history, the paddlers outnumber the rowers. The club owns a variety of shells, canoes and kayaks that range from beginner to expert level boats. The club also rents boat storage space to its members.
- **Chicago Area Sea Kayakers Association (CASKA)** - A group of over 250 sea kayak owners formed in 1987. CASKA runs Wednesday night paddles on the Chicago and Illinois lakefront, and weekend trips around the midwest throughout the warm weather months. Other regular events include full moon paddles in the summer, trips to view the city's fireworks shows in Grant Park Harbor and an annual fall camping trip to the islands of Door County, Wisconsin.
- **The Illinois Paddling Council (IPC)** - The IPC was organized 30 years ago to represent the interests of Illinois paddlers to local and state governments and the general public. It serves as an umbrella organization for paddling clubs throughout the state. It sanctions canoe and kayak races at all levels from weekend family recreational events to championship marathon races. Over the last three years an infusion of new members has brought a new focus energy to the IPC with participation in Illinois' Conservation Congress, partnerships with state and local agencies on conservation projects, the 1996 "People on the Water" workshop and this Regional Water Trail Plan.

Non-Members

While the membership of local paddling clubs is fairly easy to determine, and may total nearly 3000 members, far more canoers and kayakers do not belong to organized groups. Every year the Des Plaines River Canoe Marathon is run between Libertyville and Mt. Prospect, a course of approximately 19 miles. Started in 1957, the race annually draws six to seven hundred boats competing in 23 classes. Since all but three classes are for canoes that typically have an average of more than two people per boat, the number of participants is well over 1200. Local paddling club members are estimated by the race organizers to be between 10% and 20% of the participants.

Appendix D

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES' BOAT ACCESS AREA DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Outdoor recreation opportunities and open spaces are important parts of the quality of life enjoyed by Illinois citizens. Providing quality, close-to-home recreation opportunities and open space is a difficult challenge for many units of government in Illinois. To assist in this effort, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), Division of Grant Administration, administers several grant programs including the Boat Access Area Development Program.

Boat Access Area Development Program

The Boat Access Area Development Program provides financial assistance to local government agencies for the acquisition, construction and expansion/rehabilitation, including necessary A/E services, of public canoe and boat access on Illinois' lakes and rivers. The program provides up to 100% of approved project construction costs and 90% of approved land acquisition costs. Grant awards are limited to a \$200,000 annual maximum per project for motorized access areas and \$50,000 for non-motorized access facilities.

The Program operates on a cost reimbursement basis to local governments for approved project elements. Funding is competitively awarded on an annual basis based upon written applications submitted to the Department. Applications for Boat Access Area Development grant assistance are evaluated and prioritized by the Department for funding according to specific criteria and goals designed to make selection of projects equitable and responsive to statewide and local needs. Applications must be received by IDNR between July 1 and September 1 of each calendar year. Grant awards are typically announced the following spring. Revenue for this state funded program is derived from marine motor fuel tax and boat/canoe registration fees.

Examples of eligible project activities include:

- ◆ water frontage land acquisition for public access areas; and
- ◆ new construction or renovation of:
 - canoe/boat launching ramps and courtesy docks;
 - restrooms and security lighting;
 - parking areas, access roads and walkways; and
 - other appropriate boating related facilities.

In 1998 over \$1 million is being awarded to 14 local governments for construction and improvements to canoe and boat access areas. The Boat Access Area Development Program has funded nearly 370 projects totaling approximately \$29 million in assistance at more than 170 sites throughout Illinois during the past 30 years.

All grant assisted facilities must be designed to accommodate the physically disabled and be open to the general public without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, or residence.

To request grant application manuals or additional information regarding any of the outdoor recreation grant programs, contact:

Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Division of Grant Administration
Lincoln Tower Plaza
524 South Second Street
Springfield, IL 62701-1787

Tele: (217) 782-7481 or (217) 782-9175 (TDD)

Appendix E

Representative Paddling Trips

The proposed water trails in this plan offer a variety of paddling experiences. This section is intended to give examples of the variety of paddling trips available on northeastern Illinois waterways. As noted elsewhere in this plan, it is advisable for novice paddlers to seek instruction and/or be accompanied by an experienced paddler. This is not an exhaustive list, and many of the river trails identified fit into more than one of the categories that follow. The five categories of trip types include:

Family/Beginner: These are stretches of rivers or lakes that are suitable for novice paddlers and families with young children. They are located where there are shorter stretches between access sites, where power boating is not possible or allowed, and some include interesting landings or destinations.

Scenic: These are trips that include scenic areas and/or vistas but are not necessarily in quiet and/or natural areas.

Unique: Several stretches of northeastern Illinois waterways provide paddling experiences unavailable elsewhere.

Quiet/Natural/Wildlife: These are trips where the waterway is generally further away from roads, industrial and more populated areas. These include longer stretches through forest and nature preserves where resident and migrant wildlife are more evident.

Handicapped Accessible: While no existing launch sites are developed as handicapped accessible, paddlers with various types of disabilities can, with some aid, access and enjoy many stretches of local waterways. These recommended trips are stretches that are clear of portages around obstacles such as dams and where power boating is not possible or allowed.

Paddling speed and number of miles covered varies according to the skill level of the paddler and the paddler's objectives. For example, beginners or experts out for a leisurely ride will paddle about two miles an hour. On the other hand, the top paddling speed on the Des Plaines River Marathon is about 5 or 6 miles an hour. It should be noted however that these figures are paddling miles as opposed to river miles, since river currents and other conditions can greatly affect these speeds.

Family & Beginner Trips

- ***The Skokie Lagoons*** consist of seven man-made lagoons connected by channels that provide an excellent place to paddle with children and to learn and practice canoeing and kayaking. Access is at the Tower Road Boat Ramp, just south of Tower Road on the east side of the Edens Expressway. The entire system of lagoons and channels provide scenic, natural, and wildlife viewing areas. Quieter areas are on the east side of the islands away from the interstate expressway. Deer, beaver, muskrats, waterfowl and other birds are commonly seen throughout the Lagoons. The lakes are stocked with several species of game fish. Picnic areas surround the lagoons. The North Shore Bike Path passes through the area on the east side of the lagoons.
- ***Busse Lake*** is another manmade body of water created by a dam on Salt Creek in the Ned Brown Forest Preserve. Row boats and canoes are available for rent at the concession at the Busse Lake Boating Center. Enter on the south side of Higgins Road (Route 72) approximately one-half mile east of Route 53.
- ***The West Branch of the DuPage River*** provides a safe and easy river trip for families and beginners. Two sections are recommended here for those who own or have access to a canoe or kayak. The first section is between Riverside Park in Winfield (on Beecher Avenue) and the Blackwell Forest Preserve Canoe Launch on the south side of Mac Road, just east of Route 59. It is a shallow and quiet prairie stream flowing much of the way through West DuPage Woods and Blackwell Forest Preserves. This section is approximately 4.25 miles long. Another 2.25 mile section continues from the Blackwell Forest Preserve Canoe Launch on Mack Road to the park at the Warrenville Dam in Warrenville. These shallow sections are both easier to paddle during periods of higher water levels.
- ***The Upper Des Plaines River:*** A number of Lake County Forest Preserve District canoe launch sites provide access to the upper Des Plaines River. One 5.75 mile section starts at the Van Patten Woods Canoe Launch on the east side of the river, on the south side of Russell Road. This section of the river runs entirely through Lake County forest preserves. The trip ends at the Wadsworth Road Canoe Launch on the east side of the river, on the south side of Wadsworth Road in Wadsworth.

Scenic Trips

All of the above described trips also qualify as scenic. The trips described below are somewhat longer and may require more paddling experience because power boating is allowed and/or present on all of these waterways.

- ***Fox River:*** The middle section of the Fox is a wide river running alternately through towns, rural residential areas, and forest preserves. Two sections are recommended here with a combined length of approximately 6.3 miles. Put-in below the dam in South Elgin on the west bank and travel downstream 2 miles to the Blackhawk Forest Preserve Canoe Launch on the north bank of the river. A longer trip could begin at the Blackhawk Forest Preserve Canoe Launch and continue 4.3 miles down to the St. Charles Park District's Ferson Creek Park located on the west bank at the mouth of Ferson Creek. On the opposite (east) bank is Norris Nature Preserve. At higher water levels, a short trip up Ferson Creek leads to a small interesting wetland area in the Wildrose Valley subdivision.
- ***Kankakee River :*** The Kankakee is a wide, shallow river that is one of the highest rated rivers in the state for aquatic habitat quality. Tree lined with numerous islands and great fishing, the Kankakee provides many miles of scenic paddling. Canoe rentals are available in Kankakee, Kankakee River State Park and Wilmington. Two sections are recommended here. The first is a 13-mile trip between Bird Park in Kankakee and the Chippewa Boat Launch on the north side of the river, on the west side of the Warner Bridge Road in Kankakee River State Park. The state park provides nearby camping areas so these two sections can be paddled over two days by stopping over in the park. The second section is approximately 7 miles from the Chippewa Boat Launch to the Wilmington Dam in Wilmington. Take out above the dam in the city owned Wilmington Island Park.
- ***Lake Michigan, 12th St. Beach:*** This trip is recommended for more experienced sea kayakers or newer kayakers with an experienced group or guide. The beach just south of the Planetarium on Chicago's lakefront affords easy access to the world class skyline of the downtown area. A 4-mile round trip to the end of Navy Pier and back provides exciting views of the city, Grant Park Harbor, the Shedd Aquarium, and the Chicago River Locks.

Unique Trips

- **Chicago River , Downtown:** Passing through the urban canyons of the main stem and South Branch of the Chicago River in the downtown area is unlike any paddling experience in any other big city. While there is a system of launch sites around New York City and a water trail on the front doorstep of Seattle in Puget Sound, nowhere else in this country can you canoe or kayak through the midst of skyscrapers of such architectural grandeur and significance as in Chicago's loop. Access to the downtown area is currently not easy. The amount of commercial boat and ship traffic and their wakes, the width and depth of the river, and the nearly continuous vertical steel and concrete walls with few ladders make this an area for more experienced and well equipped paddlers. However, it is a navigable waterway and non-motorized watercraft have the same legal right to enjoy these stretches as the commercial and recreational motorized craft. Put in at the I & M Canal Origin site at 2701 South Ashland where the Chicago Park District is creating an innovative new public park and small boat access. This site is nearly four river miles to Wolf Point, at the confluence of the north and south branches. It is another 1.5 miles east down the main branch of the river to the Chicago Locks.
- **Calumet River & O'Brien Locks:** While most paddlers look for river trips that take them away from the development of urban areas, one local river provides access to the giant rusting relics of the past industrial age. Like colossal sculptures, cranes, old factories, huge conveyor belts and ocean-going ships provide the scenery along the Calumet River. Put-in at the Cook County Forest Preserve District's Beaubien Woods Launch Ramp (on the north side of the river, on the west side of the I-94 Bishop Ford Freeway). An alternate put-in for a slightly shorter trip is at the Riverside Marina at 13601 South Calhoun at the dead-end of 136th Street on the east side of the river. Pass through the O'Brien Locks at about 134th Street. Approximately 6 miles north are dry-docks on the right bank just before passing under the enormous Chicago Skyway Bridge. One and a half miles upstream is the mouth of the river at Lake Michigan. Check the weather and waves before entering the lake. The take-out at the Calumet Park Boat Ramp is one-half mile south of the mouth of the river.
- **The Confluence Loop Water trail:** The confluence of the Kankakee and Des Plaines Rivers creates the Illinois River. A unique loop water trail is created by the configuration of connecting waterways in the area of this confluence. The water trail is an 8-mile loop with two access sites and camping available near the launches. The loop trail encompasses four rivers: the Kankakee, Des Plaines, Grant Creek Cut-Off, and the Kankakee Cut-Off. The trail may be entered at the Kankakee River Boat Launch Area in the Des Plaines Wildlife Conservation Area. (Exit I-55 at New River Road on the north side of the Kankakee River. Turn right and drive northwest on North River Road one half mile to the first left. Follow the road to the boat launch area.). Once on the river, paddle approximately 3.5 miles downstream on the Kankakee to the confluence with the Des Plaines River. Approximately one mile up the Des Plaines is the other access site on the left bank at Will County's

McKinley Woods Forest Preserve. Landing is possible at the small limestone shelter overlooking the river. Campsites are available at the nearby Boatman's Landing Area in the Forest Preserve. Approximately one-half mile upstream is the mouth of the Grant Creek Cut-Off. A little less than a mile into the Cut-Off, Grant Creek enters on the left bank. Do not enter Grant Creek but continue another one-half mile south on the Cut-Off to its end. Portage over the small strip of land into the Kankakee Cut-Off on the other side. Paddle south another one-half mile until you enter the Kankakee River. Less than one-half mile upstream from the mouth of the Kankakee Cut-Off is the Kankakee River Boat Launch Area on the left bank.

A somewhat longer trip can be paddled by adding two more waterways, the I&M Canal and the DuPage River, to the loop. Begin at the I&M State Trail Access parking lot on the south side of Bridge St. in Channahon. Launch on the east side of the parking lot into the DuPage River. Paddle approximately three-quarters of a mile south to the confluence with the Des Plaines River. Another 1.5 miles downstream enter the Grant Creek Cut-Off on river left. Portage into the Kankakee Cut-Off and out into the Kankakee. Turn right and paddle downstream to the confluence with the Des Plaines. Take out on the opposite (north) bank and portage over the levee and down into the I&M Canal. Paddle upstream (to the east) past McKinley Woods. From the McKinley Woods landing it is another 3.25 miles on the canal back to the I&M State Trail Access parking lot.

Quiet/Natural/Wildlife Trips

- ***Lower Des Plaines River:*** The 4.5-mile section of the lower Des Plaines River between the Lemont Road Bridge and historic Isle a la Cache offers several attractions. Wildlife abounds on the shore and river. Along the right bank of the first 2 miles of this stretch are Cook and Will County forest preserves. The take-out is at Romeo Road (135th Street) on the west side of Isle a la Cache, one of the only islands in the river. It was used as a storage place by the first fur trappers and traders in this area over 200 years ago. A small historical museum on the site provides an interesting destination at the end of this trip.
- ***Nippersink Creek:*** This small creek has been developed as a canoe trail by the McHenry County Conservation District. Five access sites create an approximately 11.75 mile long water trail. The first three sites are all within the Conservation District's largest site, Glacial Park. Put-in at the Keystone Road landing. The take-out is 4.75 miles downstream at the Pioneer Road landing. Contact the McHenry County Conservation District at 815-678-4431 for a map of the trail.

Handicapped Accessible Trips

- ***Little Calumet River:*** While no access area in this plan is developed as handicapped accessible, hard surfaced boat ramps make it possible for disabled paddlers to get from a wheelchair into and out of a boat. This is one stretch where there are adjacent ramps, no power boat use and no obstacles to portage. A new canoe launch ramp in South Holland's Gowens Park begins a 7.5 mile trip to the Little Calumet Boat Ramp on one of the least traveled waterways of this area. Gowens Park is on the west side of the Bishop Ford Freeway (I-94) two blocks north of River Oaks Drive (162nd Street). The take-out is on the right bank at the Cook County Forest Preserve's Little Calumet Boat Ramp on the east side of Ashland Avenue, on the north side of Jackson Avenue in Blue Island.

Appendix F

Suggested Future Projects and Research Needed

- Where permits are required by the Army Corps of Engineers and/or IDNR, Office of Water Resources, determine a process to expedite permitting through a memo of understanding regarding the process and/or intergovernmental agreements.
- For non-public waterways in this plan, determine the number of landowners, the amount of their property along the river, and a potential range of costs to purchase their property or an easement in order to allow public access for water trail use.
- Update this plan in five years, examining possibilities for adding streams with water trail potential such as Hickory and Thorn Creeks, and the I&M Canal. Include the lower Fox (outside this region) in the planning process and site recommendations.
- Supplement this Plan (or include in future updates) the issues, opportunities, and obstacles for non-motorized boating on the numerous lakes in the region.
- Assess, within 2 years, the implementation progress of this plan including development of disabled access trails, geographic distribution and variety, and popularity of trails.
- Hold another regional water trail workshop to continue the momentum for advocacy, to discuss issues and obstacles, and to monitor progress of water trail development and use. A useful model may be the 1996 People on the Water Workshop, with the inclusion of more implementors.
- Meet with Department of Commerce and Community Affairs to discuss possible funding for trail maps and other promotion material.
- Produce a brochure that combines elements of IDNR's Guide to Developing Boat Facilities and the regional water trail plan. The brochure would include steps to developing access. (This could be prepared and distributed as part of a regional workshop project)
- Develop a regional user map package.
- Develop a database clearinghouse and web page for information on water trail development.
- Digitize water trails in NIPC's Geographic Information System; update periodically.

- Develop a regional open space plan incorporating regional water trails, regional greenways plan, regional biodiversity recovery plan, regional bike/ped plan(s), county natural areas and floodplain plan, etc.