The Black Canyon Water Trail flows through narrow canyons, steep cliffs and spectacular scenery. The river is clear, cold and at times, swift.

**Sauna Cave (NV-63)** During the construction of Hoover Dam, workers started to drill a tunnel in this area. When they encountered the water’s intense heat, they abandoned this site. The cave entrance is up a slight embankment and contains mineral-rich spring water that becomes warmer as the cave becomes darker. Inside, breathe deeply and listen to the sounds of dripping water. Avoid touching the cave walls to preserve the cave’s inner coating of minerals.

**Goldstrike Canyon (NV-62 ¾)** This historic and colorful canyon invites exploration. A short walk up the canyon from the river’s edge leads to several warm, spring-fed pools and a gentle waterfall. Bright orange, green, yellow and copper algae grow on rocks below the springs and seeps. The more vivid the algae color, the hotter the water. Be mindful that thermal water can scald. Cautiously test the temperature of springs, pools and waterfalls before entering them.

**Boy Scout Canyon (NV-61 ¾)** This is a popular stop for dayboaters, overnight campers and hikers. The canyon offers a variety of terrain to explore and the reward of several hot springs and warm waterfalls. Lush vegetation clings to rock walls, and spring-fed pools invite a soak.

**The Ear (NV-61 ¾)** Seeping water has gradually eroded an indentation in the canyon wall, forming what looks like a human ear.

**Ringbolt Rapids (AZ-60)** Watch for a large iron ring set into the rock, about 50 yards above the rapids and 15-20 feet above the high water mark. This is one of many ringbolts that were placed in the canyon walls and used to winch steamboats up through the rapids from 1865 to 1890. The construction of Davis Dam and the resulting Lake Mohave significantly tamed these rapids which at one time were one of the most challenging on the Colorado River.

**Arizona Hot Spring (AZ-59 ¼)** From the river, enter a twisting slot canyon. The trail leads to a warm waterfall, 20 feet (6 meters) high. A steel ladder, bolted into canyon rock, provides access to the shaded mineral pools above. Subterranean pressure pushes the hot spring water (111° F, 44° C) through fractures in the volcanic rock.

**Dragon’s Back (AZ-__)** A volcanic dike high on the Arizona canyon wall is a remnant of past volcanic activity that took place deep beneath the earth’s surface.

**Gauging Station (NV-54-¼)** Seen clinging to the canyon wall, this gauging station was used prior to and during the construction of Hoover Dam for monitoring water levels, flow rate and silt content of the river. The cable car provided access to the gauging station from the Arizona side, where the gauger’s house was located.

**Emerald Cave (AZ-54)** Glide into this small cave backwards and have your camera ready. When the afternoon light is just right, the cave becomes a radiant grotto of shimmering green.

**Gauger’s Homesite (AZ-53 ½)** The gauger, who collected important information about the Colorado River between 1935 and 1939, lived at this site. Today, only the concrete foundation and rubble retaining walls of the homesite remain. It along with the gauging station and other structures are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Look, wonder, and imagine, but do not climb on any of the structures. Leave them intact so that other people can enjoy them, too.

**Willow Beach National Fish Hatchery (AZ-53)** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service raise endangered and game fish at this national hatchery. The public is welcome to take a self-guided tour. Please moor your vessel south of the buoys on the Arizona shore that mark the area closed to all watercraft.

**Willow Beach (AZ-52 ½)** This is the place to end a journey or to take a rest and stock up on snacks before continuing along the trail. The full-service marina offers a café, grocery store, picnic tables, restrooms, campsites, boat rentals, along with boating and fishing supplies. There is also a beach to launch a kayak or canoe and start a new journey.

The water in the canyons below the dam is 53° F year-round. Life jackets must be worn while underway.

The water level can fluctuate considerably during the day, sometimes as much as 4-6 vertical feet. When stopping to camp, picnic or explore, canoes or kayaks should be pulled well up out of the water and secured.
In 2014, the Secretary of Interior designated this portion of the Colorado River as a National Water Trail, making it the first in the Southwest and the first to flow through a desert.

You can access the water trail through a guided tour at the base of the Hoover Dam, from Willow Beach, Arizona, or near an old mining town in Eldorado Canyon, Nevada.

As you travel the 30-mile trail, you'll find beaches, caves, hot springs, desert bighorn sheep and other wildlife often seen on the cliffs along the river. Historic structures associated with the construction of Hoover Dam can also be viewed.

Desert bighorn sheep and other wildlife are often seen on the cliffs along the river.

Camping areas are suggestions. Dispersed camping is allowed. Please check website for camping rules.

Primitive camping is allowed. Dispersed camping is allowed. For recreation purposes, always use a published map for navigation. Always use a published map for navigation. Always use a published map for navigation.

For more information and updates, visit the Department of the Interior.

This map is for reference only and not intended for navigational purposes. Always use a published map for navigation. Always use a published map for navigation.
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You can access the water trail through a guided tour at the base of the Hoover Dam, from Willow Beach, Arizona, or near an old mining town in Eldorado Canyon, Nevada.

As you travel the 30-mile trail, you'll find beaches, caves, coves, hot springs, wilderness and solitude. Desert bighorn sheep and other wildlife are often seen on the cliffs along the river. Historic structures associated with the construction of Hoover Dam can also be viewed.

Willow Beach (AZ-52 ½) is where you can start your journey along the southern half of the Black Canyon Water Trail. The full-service marina offers a café, grocery store, picnic tables, restrooms, campsites, boat rentals, along with boating and fishing supplies.

South of Willow Beach, the river continues to flow through a narrow, deep canyon for about 3 ½ miles.

It is recommended that a powerboat accompany any trips traveling south of this point. Strong upriver winds are often encountered on this remote section of the trail. Powerboats add a measure of safety should unexpected weather or other emergency conditions.

**Burro Wash** (NV-49 1/4) Notice as the river widens and flattens, so does the topography. Burro Wash is a broad side canyon that offers excellent exploring and camping options for boaters and those who travel by high-clearance vehicle along a National Park Service-approved road to the river's edge.

**Monkey Hole** (AZ-48 1/2) As the river widens, use your imagination, squint and keep studying the rock formation high on the canyon walls of the Arizona river edge. Do you see Monkey Rock?

**Big Horn Cave** (AZ-48) was named for the routine sightings of desert bighorn sheep in the area. The sheep need little water during winter months when green vegetation is available. As the weather warms, small herds of six to ten sheep move closer to the river. The desert bighorn sheep blends into surrounding scenery. To spot one, keep an eye out for their white rumps.

**Mead-Liberty Powerlines** (NV/AZ-48) The power lines mark the boundary between the Black Canyon and Eldorado Wilderness areas on the Nevada side of the river.

**Windy Canyon** (44-45) Expect strong winds on this stretch of water. In the winter, north winds blow downriver. In the summer, winds blow upriver from the south. Below mile 44, the river spreads out into Copper Basin and several canyons open out in this area providing camping opportunities.

**Chalk Cliffs** (NV-43) Below Windy Canyon, on the Nevada side are the Chalk Cliffs. A navigational light and marker 43 high on the Nevada side mark the mouth of Black Canyon.

**Eldorado Canyon** (NV-39) In the late 1700s, Spaniards searched for gold along the Colorado River. They named their camp “Eldorado” in honor of their quest for the legendary city of gold.

At one time, thousands of men, driven by gold fever, lived within the narrow confines of the canyon. This was more men than in the nearby town of Las Vegas.

The Eldorado Canyon marks the end of the Black Canyon Water Trail. Paddlers must carry their watercraft ¼ mile up a desert wash to a vehicle.

Those who continue south from Eldorado Canyon need to be prepared for open water, possible windy conditions and extreme temperature ranges. The distance to Cottonwood Cove is 17 miles and it is 40 miles to Katherine Landing.

Life jackets must be worn while underway. The water level can fluctuate considerably during the day, sometimes as much as 4-6 vertical feet. When stopping to camp, picnic or explore, canoes or kayaks should be pulled well up out of the water and secured.

**Clean. Drain. Dry.** Stop the spread of quagga mussels. Do your part. Clean, drain and dry your watercraft before transporting it.
