



# Wisconsin News



Sea kayakers on Wisconsin's Lake Michigan Water Trail at Point Beach State Forest. Photo: Ed Culhane, WDNR

## PROJECTS AND PARTNERS 2015



### CURRENT PROJECTS

1. Chippewa River Water Trail
2. Fox Wisconsin Heritage Parkway Water Trail
3. Interconnected Trail System of Grantsburg
4. Lake Michigan Trails Network
5. Mississippi River Connections Collaborative/Mississippi River Trail
6. St. Croix Falls River Walk and Mountain Bike Trails

Find out more about each project starting on page 2.

### ABOUT US

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

## Recent Successes

### Wisconsin's Lake Michigan Water Trail

Paddling one's sea kayak along the glacially formed, ancient shoreline of Lake Michigan can be a sublime or intimidating experience, depending on weather and one's familiarity with Great Lakes kayaking. The 523-mile Wisconsin shoreline offers extreme variation and beauty from sand dunes in the southern portion to welcoming harbors, soaring Niagara Escarpment cliffs, and an archipelago linking Wisconsin to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Along the way paddlers discover communities first established by the Anishinabe (Ojibwa) Indians followed by immigrants from Scandinavia.

The National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program staff provided technical assistance in conducting kayak access site analysis; planning; public workshops; developing interpretive displays, a website, and promotional development for the implementation of the project. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, as landowner of many sites, is an essential partner as well as regional planning organizations and local governments. A unique opportunity was incorporated into the project design when partners recruited a local art student to create bronzes for inclusion in three interpretive displays describing the water trail, the lakeshore natural resources, and the Works Progress Administration's contribution developing Point Beach State Forest where the displays are located

The 532-mile Lake Michigan Water Trail is designated an America's Great Outdoors Project by the Secretary of the Interior and as a State Water Trail, the first in Wisconsin's State Trail System. <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/parks/name/lakemichigan/>

# Current Projects

## 1. Chippewa River Water Trail

Project Partner: Water Street Business Improvement District

NPS Contact: Angie Tornes

Location: Eau Claire

Congressional District: WI - 3

### Project Goal

Develop a water trail action plan that identifies existing water access sites, their condition, and where more are needed; defines safety issues; and identifies opportunities for collaboration.

### NPS Role

Create a broad-based partnership around the water trail concept, facilitate planning to develop the water trail, make connections with existing and proposed riverside trails, develop new access sites, research opportunities, and research and provide information regarding river fluctuations.

## 2. Fox Wisconsin Heritage Parkway Water Trail

Project Partner: Fox-Wisconsin Heritage Parkway

NPS Contact: Angie Tornes

Location: Green Bay to Prairie du Chien

Congressional Districts: WI - 3, WI - 8



Paddlers on the Chippewa River. Photo: NPS

### Project Goal

Develop a well-marked, easily portaged, ADA accessible 280-mile water trail along the historic Fox and Wisconsin Rivers connecting the Mississippi River with Green Bay in Lake Michigan. Select format and begin work on website and print materials; improve designs for portages around locks and dams on the historic canal; and agree upon safety measures to adopt along the river.

### NPS Role

Assist in developing outreach / educational materials (map/brochure) and website; improve portage design to better withstand seasonal flow damage; assist in addressing safety

concern around dams. As time permits, assist with recommendations on developing sustainable programming events such as the annual Heritage Paddle; assist with making the portages ADA accessible and studying impacts on user health.

## 3. Interconnected Trail System of Grantsburg

Project Partner: Grantsburg Area Chamber of Commerce

NPS Contact: Randy Thoreson

Location: City of Grantsburg

Congressional District: WI - 7

### Project Goal

Build an interconnected trail system used by citizens and visitors.

### NPS Role

Assist Grantsburg in the planning, design, and implementation of an interconnected trail system.



Boys fishing at access point and portage route around locks on the Lower Fox River, part of the Fox Wisconsin Heritage Parkway Water Trail. Photo: NPS

# Current Projects

## 4. Lake Michigan Trails Network

Project Partner: Lake Michigan Water Trail Association

NPS Contact: Diane Banta

Location: IL, IN, MI, WI along Lake Michigan

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

### Project Goal

Provide access to Lake Michigan in four states through planning recreation travel modes while marketing the trail for increased tourism and economic development opportunities.

### NPS Role

Convene quad state regional planning organizations, local governments, and state governments to implement vision, mission, and goals/outcomes leading to the development of land and water trails, US Bike Routes, and enhance the Lake Michigan Circle Route.

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

Project Partner: Mississippi River Trail, Inc.

NPS Contact: Rory Robinson

Location: the Mississippi River Ten States

Congressional Districts: WI - 3, WI - 7

### Project Goal

Improve the Mississippi River Trail for recreation, tourism, and community development; assist in the development of the Mississippi River Connections Collaborative and increase



Opening of Wisconsin's Lake Michigan Water Trail. Photo: Peter Dajevskis

long-term organizational viability; further develop the Mississippi River blueway portion of the trail system; develop geotourism initiative with National Geographic Society.

### NPS Role

Assist the Mississippi River Connections Collaborative with organizational development, outreach to other organizations and agencies, and development and implementation of their strategic and operations plans. Increase Mississippi River Trail's capacity to develop water- and land-based trails along the Mississippi River. Assist with the development of a sustainable destination tourism (geotourism) initiative in partnership with the National Geographic Society.

## 6. St. Croix Falls River Walk and Mountain Bike Trails

Project Partner: City of St. Croix Falls

NPS Contact: Randy Thoreson

Location: St. Croix Falls

Congressional District: WI - 7

### Project Goal

Plan and implement two projects within the community: the St. Croix Falls Riverwalk Trail and a system of mountain bike trails.

### NPS Role

Assist the city of St. Croix Falls in the planning, design, and implementation of a river walk along the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway. Assist the City of St. Croix Falls in the planning, design and implementation of mountain bike trail projects within the community and linking to area recreational trails.

*“Thanks again for all your good work to help get the LMWT established and growing.”*

- Ken Braband, Wisconsin Representative, Lake Michigan Water Trail Association

## We're Here For You.

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



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## 2014 Nationwide Partnership Success

3,278.74 Miles of Trail Developed

2,046.25 Miles of River Conserved

9,411.06 Acres of Open Space and Parkland Protected

Find more information online at  
[www.nps.gov/rtca](http://www.nps.gov/rtca)



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## Recent Successes cont.

### Lower Fox River Segment, Fox Wisconsin Heritage Parkway Water Trail

The 39-mile Lower Fox River segment of the 280-mile Fox Wisconsin Heritage Parkway connects large, glacial Lake Winnebago with the head of Green Bay, Lake Michigan's well-known harbor. Filled with natural areas as well as urban-industrial obstacles such as hydropower projects, locks, canals, and various other dams, the Lower Fox was an uncharted nightmare for paddlers wishing to explore the river and its natural and human communities.

*"Your help in revising the water trail map and showing us examples and numbering systems for other water trails has been a great help."*

- Tom Young, Fox Wisconsin Heritage Parkway Committee Member.

National Park Service staff provided technical assistance in developing a map which clearly indicates access points, hazards, and crucial navigational routes and offers important safety advice. The Lower Fox River map will serve as a template for developing Upper Fox and Lower Wisconsin River maps.

Staff developed the concept of and framework for hosting a paddling safety workshop for federal, state, regional, and local river planners and managers to identify shared safety issues and ways to address them.

The Fox Wisconsin Heritage Parkway committee members and Wisconsin's East Central Regional Planning Commission were key partners.  
<http://www.heritageparkway.org/category/water-trail/>



Boaters enjoying this year's annual paddle on the Lower Fox River, part of the Fox Wisconsin Heritage Parkway Water Trail. Photo: Jeff Mazanec