

# Pennsylvania Water Trails Report

The Pennsylvania Water Trails Partnership has prepared a list of recommendations for non-motorized water trail access sites. These are outlined below.

## Water Trail Checklist

Every water trail must have...

- A Local Managing Organization
- State Designation
- Public Involvement
- A Map
- Free Information Provided to Users (internet and/or printed)
- Water Trail Feasibility Study
- Active Volunteers
- Signage

Every water trail project should consider...

- Designation by the CBGN (where relevant)
- For-Sale Map & Guide
- Volunteer Recruitment & Development Program
- Stewardship & Conservation Plan
- Interpretive Plan
- Safety Plan
- Management Plan
- Conducting Outreach Educational Programs
- Marketing & Promotion Plan
- Trail Amenities

Water Trail Working Session (April 2008):

Open Space Discussion Groups

MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

## Stewardship & Sustainability

1. Volunteer recruitment, retention and training programs to define what's needed of volunteers and how they can help.
2. Improve marketing efforts related to water trails by forming partnerships with the media to assist in spreading the word.
3. Conduct educational outreach programming, particularly with local schools.
4. Provide information to users about access point ownership issues, where camping is available and other private property concerns so that users know where to and where not to go.

## Rainbow of Users/Diversifying the Audience

1. Make sure that programs and activities are culturally appropriate for everyone considering differences in cultural expectations.
2. Develop and implement additional models for working with school districts.

### Making Water Trails More User Friendly

1. Consider distances between access points to assure that water trails are accessible to families with small children.
2. Engage the younger generations and inner city/urban populations through educational programming with schools.
3. Develop creative marketing strategies to attract new users (i.e., geocaching).
4. Improve water quality so that new users have a quality recreation experience.
5. Provide free opportunities for people to use water trails and grant programs for organizations to get free equipment.

### Insurance Liability

1. A risk management entity is needed to provide assistance for problem areas along trails.
2. Develop multi-county authorities to provide umbrella insurance policies.

### Log Jams

1. Work with property owners for access to blocked areas, for permission before applying for grants and to determine ownership of the trees.
2. Leave root structure intact to prevent erosion.
3. Get statewide agencies involved.

### Long-Term Management Strategies

1. Provide training for volunteer managers.
2. Identify successful models.
3. Coalitions as a model for long-term management.
4. Provide templates for: management plans for sustainability and forming a functioning coalition.

### Marketing

1. Coordinate statewide marketing within and throughout the PA Water Trails System taking into account local considerations.
2. Focus on safety, stewardship and participation.
3. Develop a new web site that is a coordinated effort among state agencies including a database of groups.
4. Use new methods of advertising.
5. Market all of the ways that people can get involved with water trails including habitat and invasive species.

### Maintaining the Primitive Nature of a Campsite

1. Policy recommendation – for islands develop a policy that facilities are on the shore at a PFBC access point.
2. Marketing strategy – “You pick up after your dog don’t you?”, “Going to the bathroom is fun.”
3. Develop guidelines for the minimal components that are needed for a primitive campsite.

### Creating Realistic Expectations for the Public

1. Provide information to users about what they can expect so that users are prepared for the current conditions. First time users are not going to want to purchase a guide so there should be free information readily available.
2. Provide adequate signage to users and development of a statewide template for signage.
3. Develop educational components to water trail development.

### Signage for Water Trails

1. Circulate standard signs templates to all organizations.
2. There is a need for a committee to look at the standardization throughout the water trails signage system and develop uniformity.
3. Coordinate with PennDOT to get signage in place.
4. Provide resources of where and how to get signage made.

### Susquehanna River Water Trail System

1. Work together on funding applications to avoid competition among groups.
2. Establish guidelines for consistent signage.
3. Initiate an interstate coalition of water trail groups.
4. Develop a forum for connecting all of the water trails.
5. Develop a joint system or organization for management of the water trails (i.e., Susquehanna River Trail Association or Susquehanna Greenway).

Water Trail Workshop (May 2004): *Developing a Statewide System*  
Open Space Discussion Groups  
MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

### Starting a Water Trail – What Makes a Great Water Trail?

1. Include information about hazards on maps and on signage at access sites.
2. For every new bridge project PennDOT should provide river access – it should be standard procedure. Give PennDOT contacts to local project managers.
3. Develop a list of desired access points under or near bridges. Give this list to MPO and RPO for planning purposes.

### Conservation is Business

1. Better communicate the benefits and successes of conservation to local governments.
2. Require an economic development component as part of River Conservation Plans.
3. Develop partnerships at all levels – local businesses, local officials, regional, state & federal.

### Interpretive Art & Signage

1. Develop statewide consensus on maps/guides.
2. Develop statewide interpretation guidelines.
3. Develop a template for signs – design package.

### Providing Camping Opportunities on Water Trails

1. Develop a sub-set of regulations for camping along water trails to allow for flexibility of use.

### Universal & ADA Compliant Accessibility

1. Develop guidelines to assist with the design aspects of water access. Especially for getting into the water.
2. Develop appropriate signage at access points to let users know how an area is accessible.
3. Develop a clearinghouse of information regarding accessible water trail sites.

### Recreation-Outreach beyond “Die Hard Enthusiasts”

1. In order to attract novice users project managers should do the following: include activities that will appeal to kids, incorporate both river and other community related aspects into

events, involve the public in the planning, schedule events that attract novice users, get the press out early and often, work in conjunction with other existing events and organize specialized outings that will attract specific audiences.

#### Role of Non-Profits and Water Trail Partnerships

1. Develop a vehicle to bring water trail leaders together from around the state.
2. Develop a forum for sharing information among water trail project managers.
3. Evaluate existing programs.

#### Marketing

1. Incorporate water trails into the state tourist promotion system.
2. Develop a bigger and better PaddlePA – online and print versions of outreach materials.
3. Develop an informal system for continuing discussions about statewide marketing of water trails and the development of PaddlePA.

#### Water Trail Maps & Guides

1. Determine what users would like to see on water trail maps & guides.
2. Develop a system for providing more information in a take home guide and offering a simpler map those users will take on the water with them.
3. Identify as many ways as possible to distribute information about water trails.