

Rock River Water Trail Section K

Erie to Colona to Quad Cities Section 38 Miles (Whiteside, Henry and Rock Island Counties)

The long paddling distance of 19 miles between the two designated sites of the first segment makes this a challenge skill level. The scenery is rural, the river wide and much of the shoreline undeveloped, with islands common in the Hillsdale area. A state historical marker commemorating an event in the Black Hawk War is located on the Hurd Road Bridge over the river. There is an undesignated access site that could be used as an intermediate rest area at the IL Route 92 Bridge, 11 miles downstream of Erie. The end of this segment is at the Cleveland Boat Ramp at river mile 18.8. Less than a mile downstream of Cleveland and just before the I 80 Bridge is Lundeen's Landing in Barstow on river right, a privately-owned campground with a store and launch facilities. Five miles further down river the Hennepin Canal joins the Rock at lock number 29 on river left. The City of Colona has a park and boat launch facility at lock 29 and paddlers can use the launch for take out, as a rest stop or to paddle a ways on the Hennepin.

About a quarter mile from Hennepin Canal Lock 29 the Green River enters the Rock on river left. The river environment continues as rural landscape with little development for the next 4 miles to Green Valley Park on river right at Moline. After Green Valley the landscape of this segment changes quickly to urban within the Quad Cities metropolitan area. Care should be exercised when approaching Ben Williamson Park as the local water ski club, the Backwater Gamblers, uses the park access for practice and shows. Safety considerations mean that paddlers should approach the Milan Steel Dam on river left soon after passing Ben Williamson Park. Traveling river right to the Sears Dam should be avoided; safe portage of that dam is not available. Take out before the Steel Dam at Hennepin Canal Lock 30. Put in at a safe distance below the dam in the tailwater or paddle the Hennepin for a ways before crossing the canal bank to the river. Near the end of Vandruff Island a series of mild rapids occur in the location of the US 67 Bridge. On the bluffs at river right is the Black Hawk State Historic Site on land that was Saukenuk, the main village of the Sauk Nation. The last 3 miles before the Mississippi River are rural in landscape. Continue on the water trail to river right and look for the Pettifer Slough that connects the river with Lake Potter and Sunset Park and Marina. Alternatively, paddle to the Mississippi and head upstream on river right to Sunset Park. From Sunset Park trailhead the traveler can enjoy the many recreational, cultural and historical interests in the river communities of the Quad Cities area.

	Length of Segment	Segment Skill Level	Segment Type	Access Sites
Erie to Cleveland	19 miles	Challenge	Rural	2
To Colona	6 miles	Gateway	Rural	2
To Milan Steel Dam	8 miles	Gateway	Urban	4
To Mississippi River (Sunset Park)	5 miles	Recreational	Rural	1