

Rock River Water Trail G
Beloit to Rockford Section 27 Miles (Rock and Winnebago counties)

From the John Rose Canoe & Kayak Launch in Beloit to the Fordham Dam in Rockford is 27 miles, a river section that offers both rural and urban segments at the gateway skill level and two challenge segments due to power boating in the lower reaches of the river before the dam. Put in sites downstream of the Beloit Dam include John Rose Launch and Water Street parkway, both sites owned by the city. South Beloit has two access sites, one just south of the Shirland Avenue Bridge and the other at the Turtle Creek confluence. The river south of Turtle Creek is several hundred feet in width, with a steady current and islands. Staying on the right side of the river near Rockton the paddler reaches the Rockton Spillway Dam, the first of eight Illinois dams. Unusual in appearance, the dam has a curved face. Portage is at river right. In the left river channel several hundred feet downstream of the spillway dam is a second dam with a long millrace leading to a hydropower facility. The millrace dam should be avoided. About 2 miles downstream of the spillway dam is the confluence with the Pecatonica River, which has a designated water trail.

The Winnebago County Forest Preserve District has five river parks that offer access for paddle craft. The Macktown site is rich in early settlement history and paddlers can view several of the pioneer buildings at this park. The landscape is generally rural from the state line; development transitions to an urban landscape near Atwood Homestead Park. The segments from Atwood to Sportscore and then to the Fordham Dam are designated challenge skill level primarily due to heavy river use by power boats, especially on weekends in the summer. The river roughly divides the metropolitan area of Rockford and there are a number of access sites available to paddlers as rest stops and for exploring the recreational, cultural and historical offerings of the city. The Grand Illinois Trail crosses the Rock River at the State Street Bridge. Rockford has beautiful parks and public facilities along the riverfront, including the Burpee Museum of Natural History and Nicholas Conservatory. Portage of the Fordham Dam is a challenge due to high concrete walls and the need to lower the craft over a steep portage. The city is taking steps to improve the portage infrastructure. Camping facilities for river paddlers are available at Hononegah Forest Preserve and near Sportscore.

	Length of Segment	Segment Skill Level	Segment Type	Access Sites
Beloit to Rockton Spillway Dam	5 miles	Gateway	Rural	5
To Hononegah Forest Preserve Park	4 miles	Gateway	Rural	6
To Atwood Homestead Forest Preserve Park	7 miles	Gateway	Urban	2
To Veterans Memorial Park Sportscore	6 miles	Challenge	Rural	2
To Fordham Dam	5 miles	Challenge	Urban	10