

## Rock River Water Trail Section H

### Rockford to Oregon 27 Miles (Winnebago and Ogle Counties)

Seven miles downstream of the Fordham Dam is the confluence of the Kishwaukee River, one of the water trails of northeastern Illinois. This segment marks a transition from the urban river environment of metropolitan Rockford to the rural and natural landscape of the middle counties of the Rock River Valley. Paddlers will travel by the Greater Rockford Airport and Blackhawk Island in this segment. Just downstream of the island are new campsites built by the Rockford Park District. Take out after Blackhawk Island is at Hinchcliff Memorial Forest Preserve, a short distance upstream on the Kishwaukee River. Two miles south of the Kishwaukee is the county line between Winnebago and Ogle counties. The second river segment to the City of Byron is through rural landscape, with farmland and natural settings. Illinois Route 2 runs parallel with and in proximity of the river, offering access at several unmarked road waysides on river right. The end of the segment is in Byron, named for the English poet Lord Byron and referred to as the Gateway to the Rock River Valley. Developed boat ramps in Byron offer restrooms, water and amenities of the city within a short walk.

The third segment of this river section has beautiful rural and natural landscape with limestone bluffs, a gentle gradient and slow-moving current, ideal as a gateway segment for paddlers wanting a day trip. New Rock River Trail campsites established by the Byron Forest Preserve District are available at river mile 120. Eight miles downstream the Illinois DNR has established a new boat launch at river right. At river mile 111 in Lowden State Park is the famous statue *The Eternal Indian* by Lorado Taft. The 48-foot concrete statue was dedicated in 1911. Commonly known as the Black Hawk Statue, it is on a bluff 77 feet above the river in the area that was one of the home lands to Black Hawk and the Sauk nation. The site was once the residence of Eagles Nest Artist Colony. About a mile downstream of the park is the Oregon Dam with portages on both river left (Oregon Park East) and right (Kiwanis Park). The portage at river right is within walking distance of downtown Oregon. The city has a heritage of preserving and fostering the arts. The Ogle County Courthouse in Oregon is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

	Length of Segment	Segment Skill Level	Segment Type	Access Sites
Rockford to Kishwaukee River Mouth	7 miles	Recreational	Rural	5
To Byron Boat Ramp	9 miles	Recreational	Rural	2
To Oregon Dam	11 miles	Gateway	Rural	5