

Rock River Water Trail Section J

Sterling-Rock Falls to Prophetstown to Erie Section 36 Miles (Whiteside County)

At the Upper Dam parking lot in Rock Falls is a state historical marker commemorating the Illinois and Mississippi Canal (Hennepin Canal). The Guard Lock Gate of the Hennepin Feeder Canal is just to the east of the marker. The feeder canal provides water to the main canal and is part of the Hennepin Canal Parkway State Park. The feeder canal and main canal are open to paddlers. Less than a mile separates the Upper and Lower dams in the cities of Sterling and Rock Falls. Access to this urban segment and portage from the Upper Dam can be made at Swards Riverside Park in Rock Falls. The Lower Dam has boat ramps above and below the dam at Lower Dam Park at river left for portage take out and put in. Access is also available at Lawrence Park at which point the river environment transcends from urban to rural. The gentle gradient of the river, relatively undeveloped shoreline and agricultural landscape provide a safe and enjoyable experience for even novice paddlers. Several river meanders are long and scenic.

Access sites in the 23-mile segment between Lawrence Park and Prophetstown are infrequent and include Como (between the US 30 and I 88 Bridges), Moline Road, Lyndon and the Prophetstown State Park. Prophetstown is a site of historic significance with the medicine man "Prophet" and opening battles of the Black Hawk War in 1832. A state historical marker on W. 2nd Street in Prophetstown commemorates the events. Prophetstown State Park has camping facilities and is located about 2 miles downstream of the Lyndon access. Glen Miller Marina at Erie is just over 12 miles from the state park with an alternate rest stop at the Big Bend Conservation Area at river mile 42.9. There are several islands along this segment with the conservation area along the left bank and a steady river current. The marina (Erie Boat Ramp) is on river left just after the Erie campground and before the Erie Road Bridge; the boat ramp is located at the southwest corner of the bridge. The marina is the last designated access site for the next 19 miles of the water trail to Cleveland.

	Length of Segment	Segment Skill Level	Segment Type	Access Sites
Upper Sterling/RF Dam to Lower Sterling/RF Dam	1 mile	Recreational	Urban	1
To Prophetstown	23 miles	Gateway	Rural	6
To Erie	12 miles	Gateway	Rural	2