



Huron River  
WATER TRAIL



River Management Society

# Water Trails for Connecting Communities to Rivers

River Rally • May 8-11, 2017 • Grand Rapids, Michigan



River Rally 2017

## Speakers

Greg Farnham, Rock River National Water Trail  
Elizabeth Riggs, Huron River National Water Trail  
Risa Shimoda, River Management Society



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## Session Outline

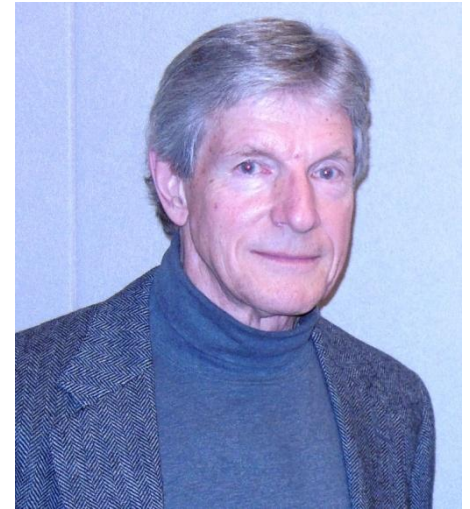
- A. Introductions
- B. Session Objectives
- C. The 7 Ps of Connection
- D. Q & A/Discussion
- E. Evaluation

## A. Introductions



Elizabeth

Risa



Greg





## B. Session Objectives – Water Trails for Connecting Communities to Rivers

- Best practices on public engagement, trail planning, wayfinding and safety signage, working with partners, securing funding, etc.
- Community connections and economic impacts of water trails
- Planning and programming for water trails to provide access to a diverse community of interests and abilities and to reach the future majority

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## C. The 7 Ps of Connection

1. Public Perception and Politics
2. Planning
3. Public Participation
4. Practices
5. Permission
6. Payment
7. Pursuance

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## C. The Ps of Connection

### 1. Public Perception and Politics

What are the effects of the dynamics and interplay of –

- political persuasions
- local history
- social consciousness (rural-urban, conservative-liberal, environmentalism)
- and more

on the receptivity to and support of a water trail by communities?



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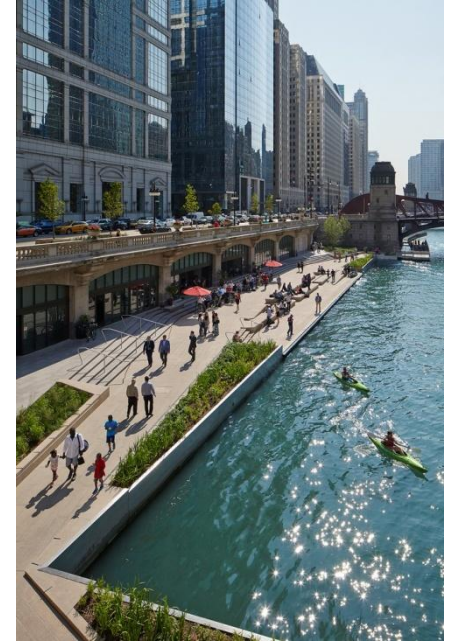
## Rural/Agriculture



## “Working” River



## Urban



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- The influence of community development on local recreation and leisure activities and the reciprocal influence of public demand for recreation and leisure activities on community development



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### 2. Planning



# Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives

## Vision: A Huron River Renaissance

Turning our communities toward the river to transform the Huron River corridor into a premier destination in Michigan and the Great Lakes.

Mission: A 104-mile inland paddling trail connecting people to the river's natural environment, its history, and the communities it touches in Michigan's Lower Peninsula.

## Goals:

- Stimulate local economies
- Improve recreational access and opportunities
- Encourage physical activity
- Improve community pride and encourage partnerships
- Make river and communities healthier
- Highlight cultural and historical significance



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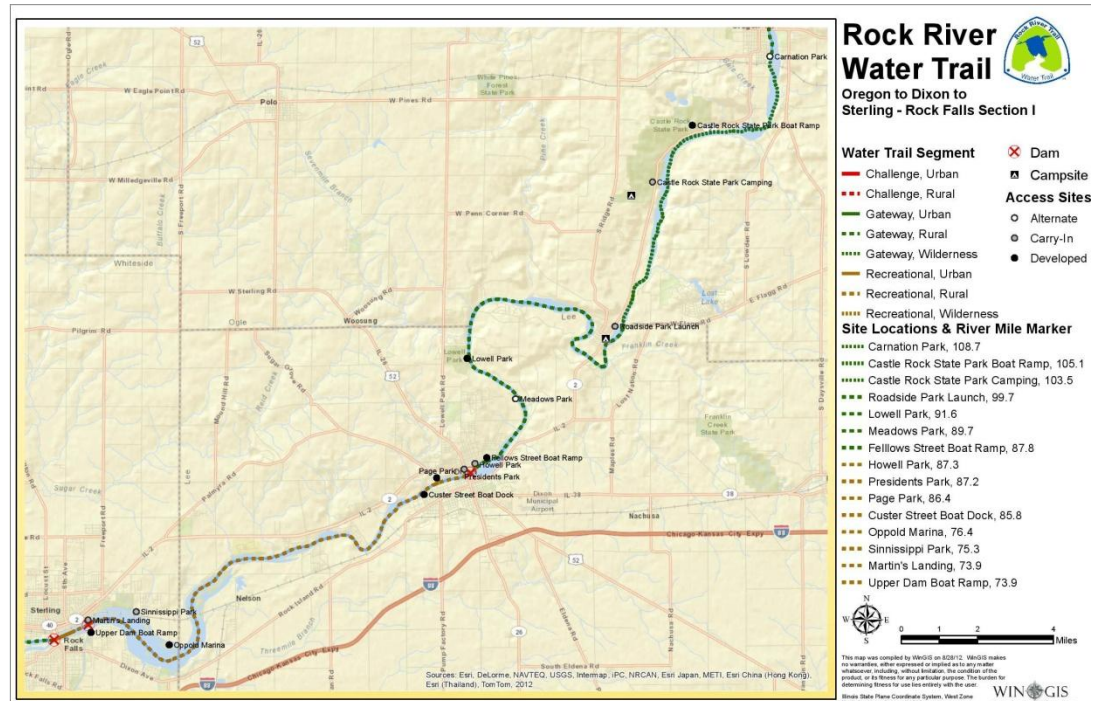
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# Inventory and Maps

## Access sites, amenities, dams and portages, locations, etc

**Rock River Water Trail Section I** Oregon to Dixon to Sterling-Rock Falls – 3.5 miles, Ogle, Lee and Whiteside Counties

Site No.	Site Name	Community	River Mile	Access Type	Signs	Restroom	Water	Shelter	Camping	Vehicle Access	Latitude D M S	Longitude D M S	Notes
11	Ogle County Canation Park	Oregon	108.7	Alternate	Y	Y	N	N	N	Parking Lot	42 00 14	89 19 38	Steep Banks - Emergency Only
12	Castle Rock State Park Boat Ramp	Oregon	105.1	Developed	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Parking Lot	41 58 29	89 22 03	
13	Castle Rock State Park Camping	Oregon	103.5	Carry-In	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Boat or Canoe	41 57 17	89 23 05	Access by boat/canoe/kayak only
14	Roadside Park Launch	Grand Detour	99.7	Carry-In	Y	N	N	N	N	Roadside	41 54 06	89 24 27	Historical Marker John Deere Steel Plow
15	LEE COUNTY Lowell Park	Dixon	91.6	Developed	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Parking Lot	41 53 24	89 28 59	Accessible Gangways and Dock
16	Meadows Park	Dixon	89.7	Alternate	Y	N	N	N	N	None	41 52 28	89 27 31	Potential for future access/camp
17	Fellows Street Boat Ramp	Dixon	87.8	Developed	N	N	N	N	N	Roadside	41 51 04	89 28 27	Portage Take Out
	DIXON DAM	Dixon	87.3	Portage	Y						41 50 48	89 28 51	
18	Howell Park	Dixon	87.3	Carry-In	N	N	N	N	N	Roadside	41 50 56	89 28 45	Need Safe PITD
19	Presidents Park	Dixon	87.2	Carry-In	N	N	N	N	N	Parking Lot	41 50 52	89 29 06	Steps Caution
110	Page Park	Dixon	86.4	Developed	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Parking Lot	41 50 38	89 29 56	Accessible Gangways
111	Custer Street Boat Dock	Dixon	85.8	Developed	Y	N	N	N	N	Parking Lot	41 50 19	89 29 56	Accessible Gangways
	WHITESIDE COUNTY												
112	Oppold Marina	Sterling	76.4	Developed	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Parking Lot	41 46 54	89 38 09	
113	Sinissippi Park	Sterling	75.3	Carry-In	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Parking Lot	41 47 40	89 39 09	
114	Martin's Landing	Sterling	73.9	Carry-In	Y	N	N	Y	N	Parking Lot	41 47 29	89 40 37	Sinissippi Dam Walkway
115	Upper Dam Boat Ramp	Rock Falls	73.9	Developed	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Parking Lot	41 47 12	89 40 32	Ardun Boat Launch at Hennepin Feeder Canal
	STERLING UPPER DAM	Sterling/RF	73.9	Portage	Y						41 47 20	89 40 43	Portage Right or Left



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# On-The-Water Plan

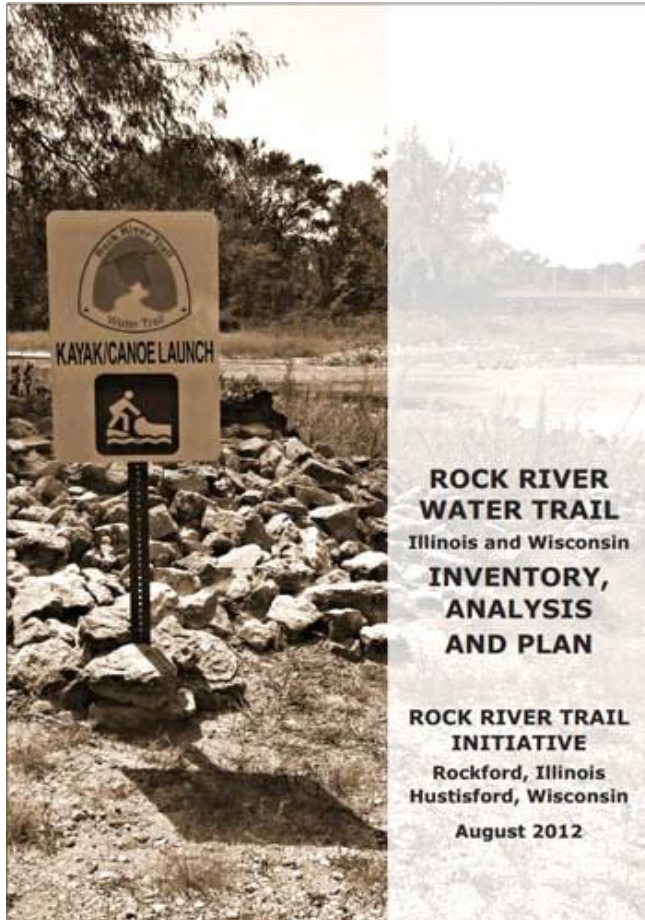


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Rock River

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### 3. Public Participation & Engagement



- The need for public information meetings, presentations to local, county and state governmental units, conservation and recreation NGOs, tourism associations and CVBs, etc.
- To actively solicit public input, engagement and ownership of the planning process and for long-term sustainability



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# Public-Private Partnerships



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- Land and water trails connectivity
- Inspired design
- Heritage interpretation
- Wildlife habitat



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## C. The Ps of Connection

### 4. Practices

# Best Management Practices

- Recreation Opportunities
- Education
- Conservation
- Community Support
- Public Information
- Maintenance
- Planning



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# NATIONAL WATER TRAIL DESIGNATION REQUIREMENTS



More information about the National Water Trail designation can be found at [www.nps.gov/WaterTrails](http://www.nps.gov/WaterTrails).

## 7 Best Management Practices

1

### RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

The water trail route has established public access points that accommodate a diversity of trip lengths and provide access to a variety of opportunities for recreation and education.

2

### EDUCATION

The water trail provides opportunities to learn about the value of water resources, cultural heritage, boating skills and outdoor ethics.

3

### CONSERVATION

The water trail provides opportunities for communities to develop and implement strategies that enhance and restore the health of local waterways and surrounding lands.

4

### COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Local communities provide support and advocacy for maintenance and stewardship of the water trail.

5

### PUBLIC INFORMATION

The public is provided with accessible and understandable water trail information, including details for identifying access and trail routes; cultural, historic and natural features; hazards; and water quality. The water trail is promoted to the community and a broad national audience.

6

### TRAIL MAINTENANCE

There is a demonstrated ability to support routine and long-term maintenance investments on the water trail. Facilities are designed, constructed and maintained by incorporating sustainability principles.

7

### PLANNING

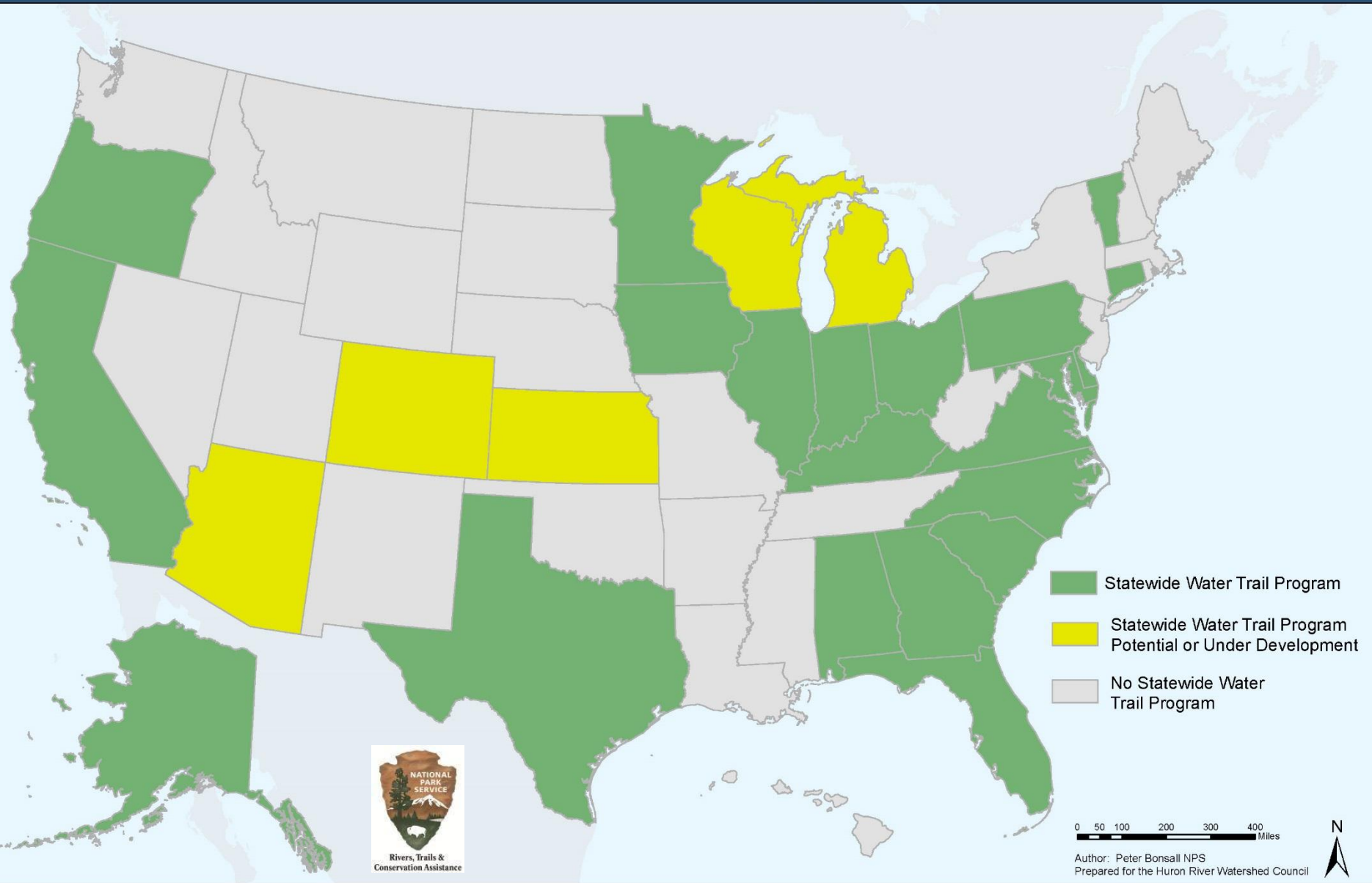
An applicant must also incorporate and maintain a water trail plan that describes a vision, desired future conditions, and strategies to strengthen best-management practices.

## NATIONAL WATER TRAILS SYSTEM



A distinctive national network of exemplary water trails which are designated by the Secretary of the Interior. The trails within the National Water Trails System are cooperatively supported and sustained.

# Statewide Water Trail Programs





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### 5. Permission



# Access

Who's responsible for public safety on water trails?

Private landowners generally immune except for

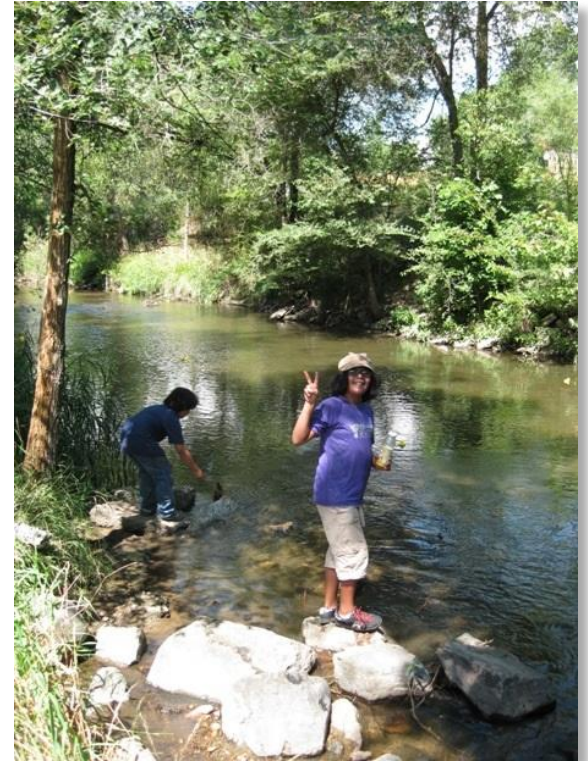
- Fees, with exceptions
- Attractive nuisance
- Dangerous conditions

State and local agencies protected, assuming

- Reasonable care
- (No) Hidden dangers

Important to know

- State recreational use statutes
- Guidelines related to public easements
- Property insurance coverage



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# Permitting

- State water quality
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- Easements
- Ownership vs. lease
- City, County, State



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# Portages

Land routes to transport boats around dams or other obstructions, to and from a launch area or between access sites.



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# Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Access for persons with disabilities and universal access for all

Physical – Structural modification to provide access to the shore or launch site, as well as the watercraft.

- Access route
- Cross slope
- Level and stable landing/loading area
- Transfer Assistance
  - Transfer step
  - Transfer board
  - Overhead handles (grab bars)
- Surface Textures



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# ADA and Universal Accessibility



C. Burkhour



Surface  
Grade  
Open Space  
Close to parking



C. Burkhour



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# Universal Design:

A design useable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, while both maintaining the character and experience of the setting and providing access, without separate or segregated access for persons with disabilities.



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### 6. Payment



# Economic Benefits

- Build strong, economically vital communities  
#1 amenity for potential homeowners
- Provide communities with a valuable amenity  
increase housing values
- Revitalize neighborhoods  
spur development in adjacent sites
- Build local businesses  
trail users spend money

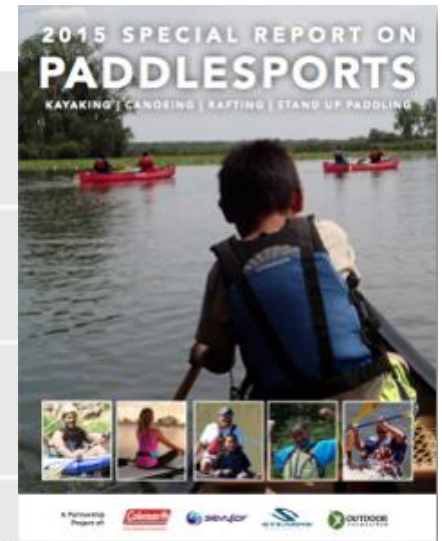
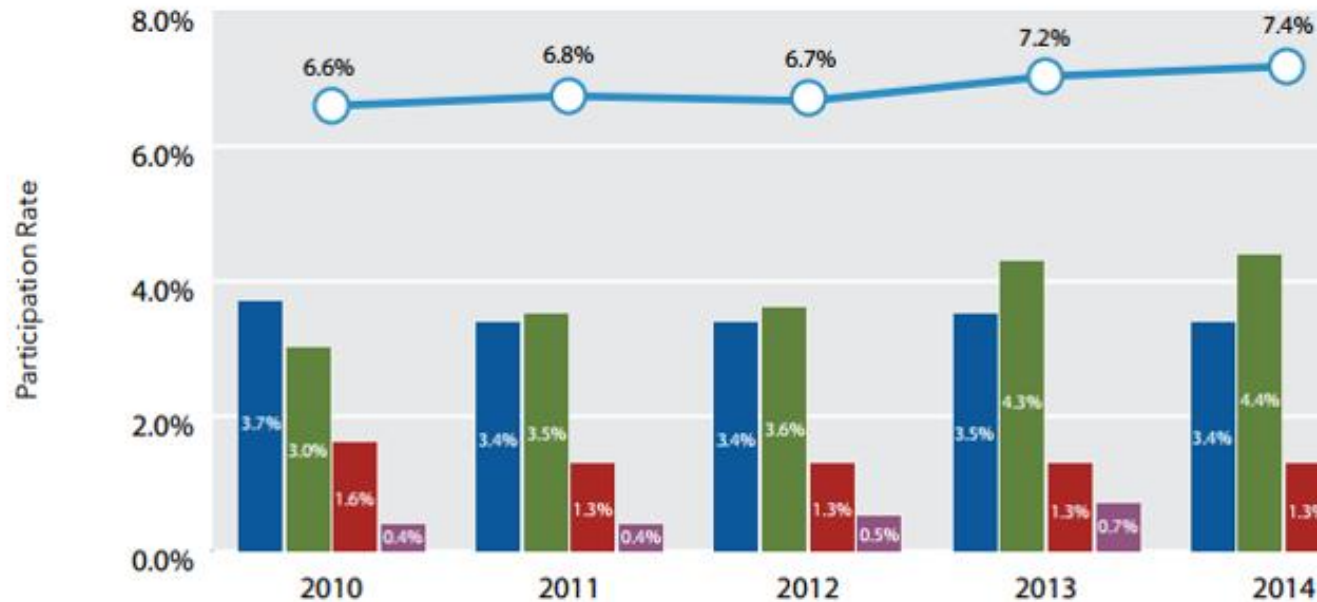


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## Participation in Paddlesports All Participants, Ages 6+



### 2014 Participants

Paddling (Any Type)	21.7 Million	Rafting	3.8 Million
Canoeing	10.0 Million	Stand Up Paddling	2.8 Million
Kayaking (Any Type)	13.0 Million		

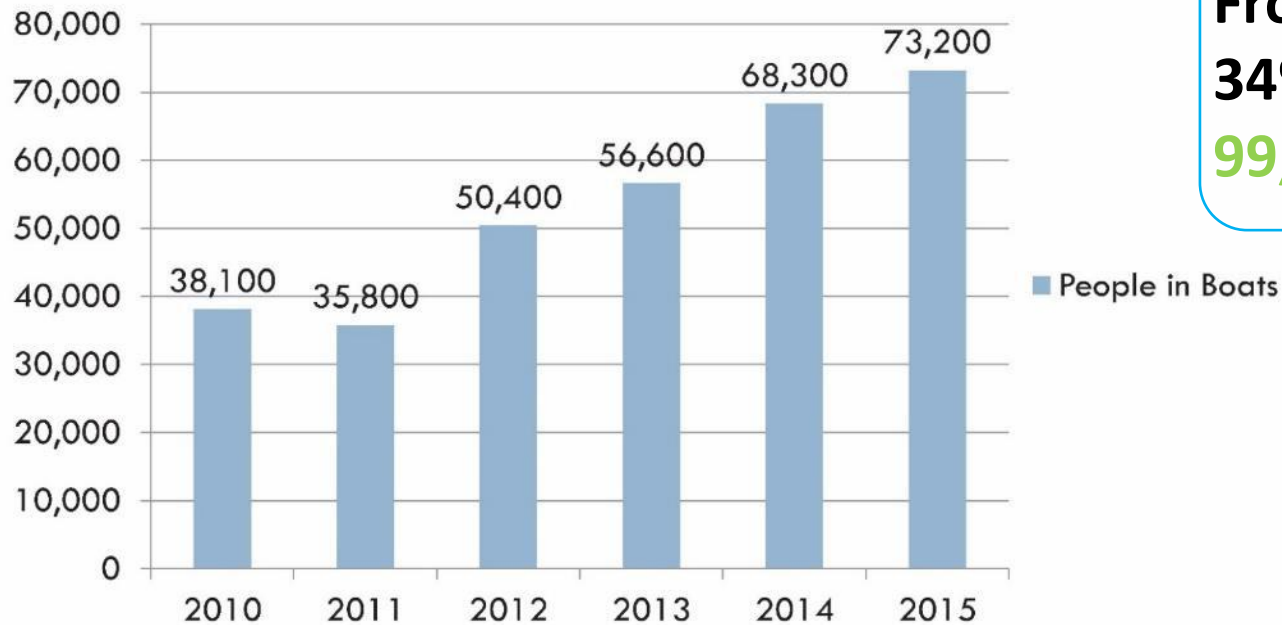
# River Recreation Pays

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# Number of people renting boats

**Revenue FY2016:**  
**\$1.45 million**



**From 2015 to 2016:**  
**34% increase**  
**99,270 people**

River Recreation Pays

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# Trail Towns Grow Businesses



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Huron River Watershed Council  
presents

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# Fly Fishing the Huron

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A RiverUp! Story

[You Tube](#)



# Measuring Economic Impact

The Huron River and Huron River National Water Trail are estimated to have the following economic impact on the five-county region in which they are located:

- \$53.5M in economic output (\$29.9M direct + \$23.6M indirect ) annually
- \$628M in added property value
- 2.6M visitor days annually
- \$3.8B total economic value of services provided by the Huron River corridor

Survey conducted 2016 by Seidman Research Office of Grand Valley State University



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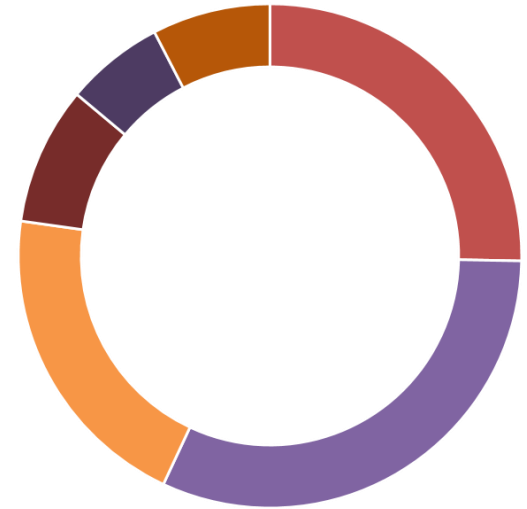


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# Funding trails

## Capital Campaigns, I & II (2012-2018)

- Grants
- Private Foundations
- Community Foundations
- Businesses
- Individual Donors/Campaign Cabinet
- Municipal and Federal Contributions



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### 7. Pursuance

# Construction, Implementation, and Operation

- New paddle craft access sites
  - Primitive campsites – siting, approval and design
  - Recreational Trails Program of FHWA
  - Section 4(f) federal DOT Act of 1966 – FHWA funded projects
- Avoid and minimize impacts to recreational resources



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# Construction, Implementation, and Operation

- Unique site solutions
- FERC-licensed dams



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# Construction, Implementation, and Operation

- Enhanced paddle craft access sites – universal accessibility
- Dam removal



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# Wayfinding and Safety Signage

River Management Society and  
South Platte River Working Group

Basis for approach – interviews with

- City officials, rescue, parks & rec, law enforcement
- Outfitters, private boaters
- Community leaders, educators



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# Wayfinding and Safety Signage

## Objectives

- Educate river awareness, on-water environment
- Minimize river accidents and fatalities
- Be relevant for young males

## Creative Strategy

- Keep it simple
- Assume readers know nothing about river safety
- Provide in-depth information where people stop and linger
- Avoid 'death and destruction' messaging intending to evoke fear
- Avoid standardized symbols if they don't 'read' quickly



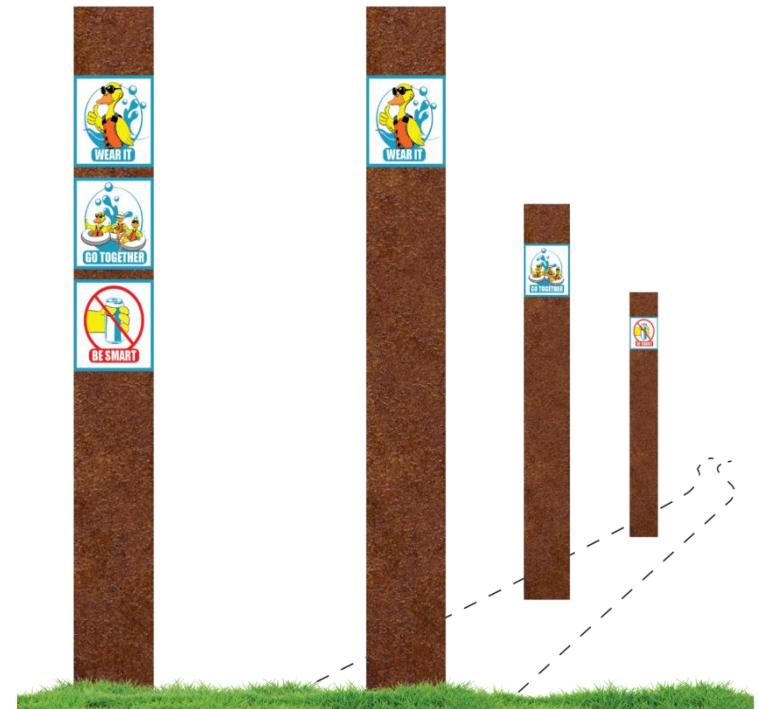
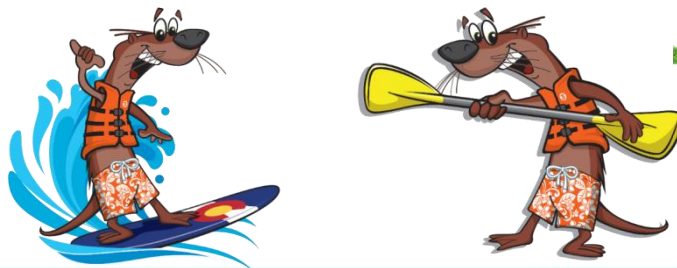
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# Wayfinding and Safety Signage

- The ideal configuration shows one graphic in plain sight at a time
- For short trails, image 'groups'
- Cartoons can read well and avoid need to address gender, diversity



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# Wayfinding and Safety Signage

- Wear a life vest
- Know the water conditions
- Stay sober
- Float with friends
- Know where you are
- Practice river etiquette



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# Wayfinding and Safety Signage

- Reach-wide map graphic 'parent' for signs at individual access points
- Real time flow readouts above rapids and primary access points (not yet completed)



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# Wayfinding and Safety Signage

## Launch Sites and Dam Warning Signs



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# Maintenance

- Trail maintenance – monitor PITO conditions, portage infrastructure, light maintenance, install and repair signage, monitor river for safety concerns
- River cleanup and clearing of blockages and hazards



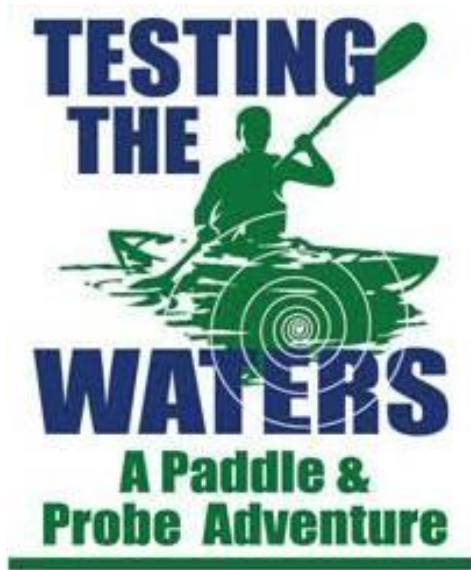
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# Stewardship

- Water quality monitoring and community education
- Natural resource conservation and environmental planning and design



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# Stewardship

- Volunteerism and responsible outdoor ethics
- Huron River Water Trail Ambassadors
- Rock River Trail 10,000 trees annual project



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# Promotion

- Branding, marketing and programming strategies and materials
- Partner with tourism associations and regional CVBs
- Trail towns as a promotional concept and economic driver
- Tailoring long-term promotional and use planning for diversity and the future majority

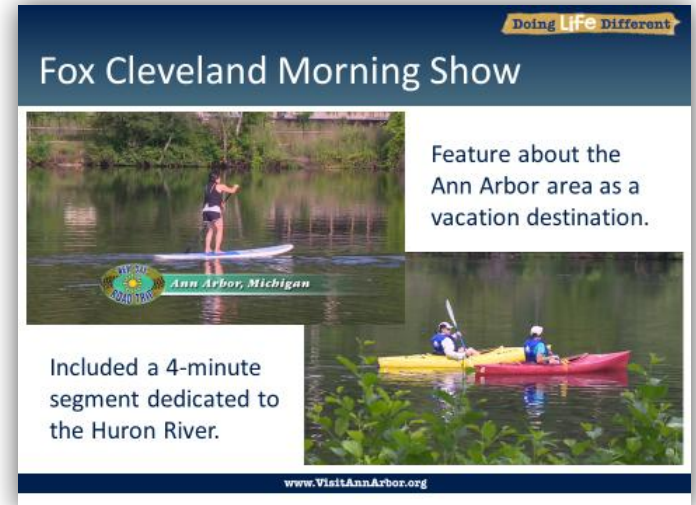


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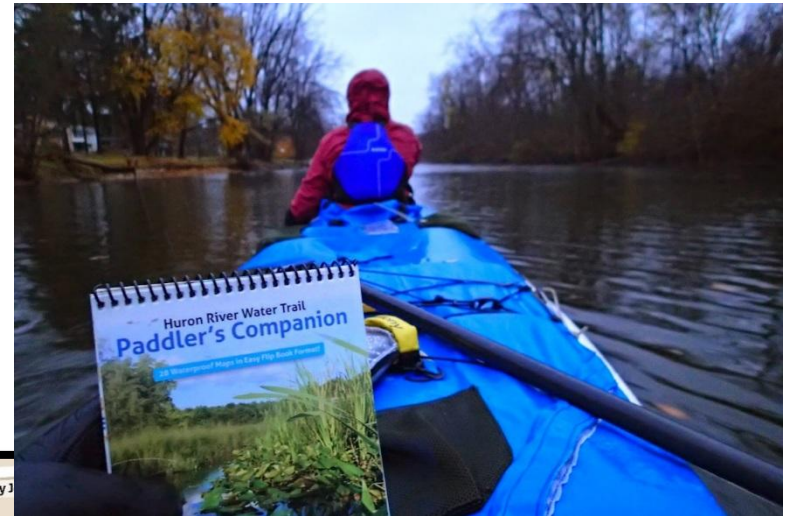
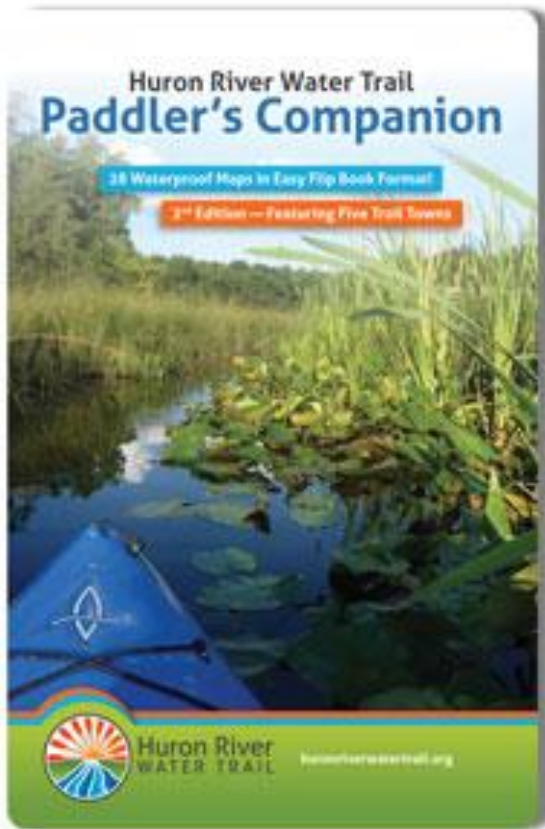


  
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# Marketing and Advertising



# Marketing and Advertising



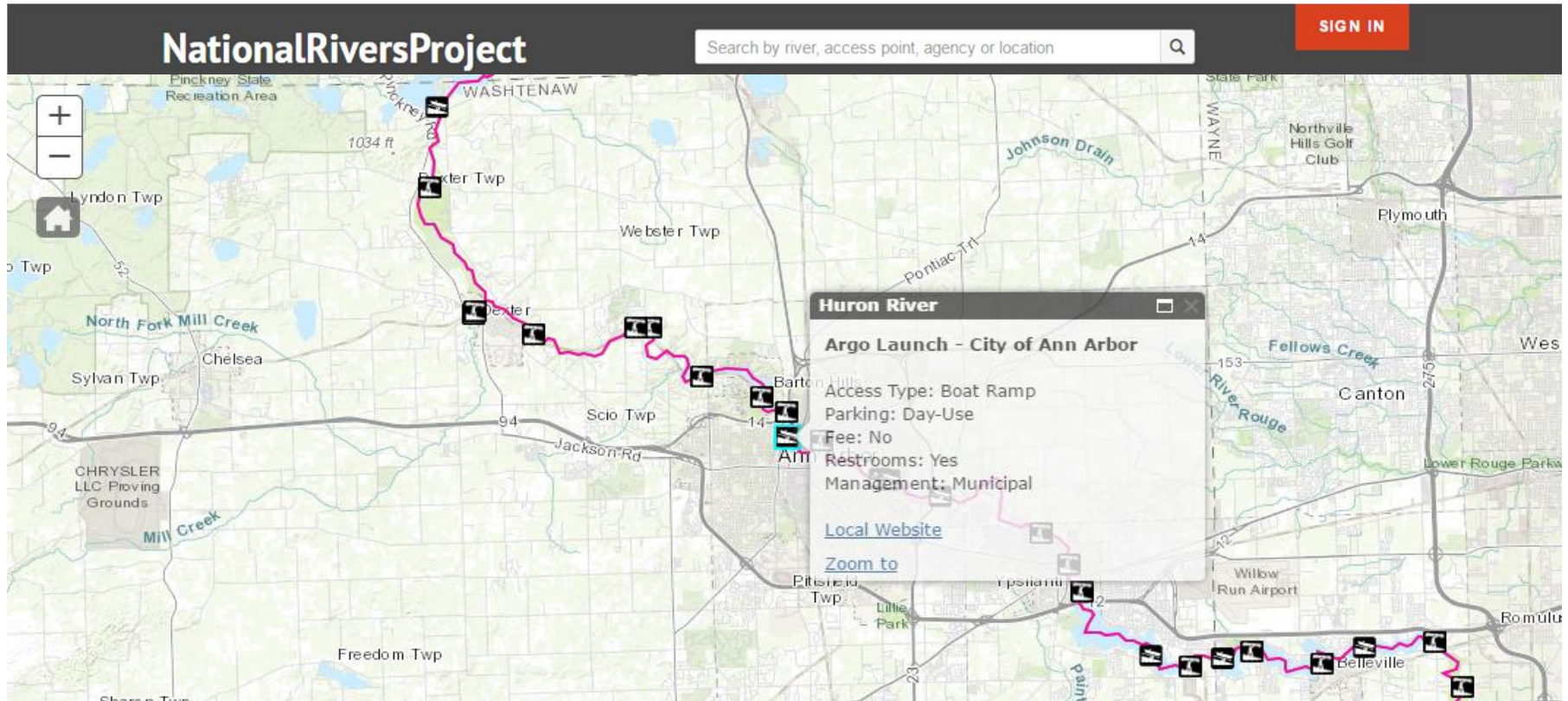
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# Marketing and Advertising



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# Local Media and Event Promotion

**Paddle Horicon Marsh**  
Saturday, June 28th  
Launch 7:30 - 11:30am

Start at Green Head Boat Landing  
N8600 Green Head Rd., Horicon, WI  
End at Nebraska St. Boat Landing in  
Horicon, WI \* Paddle 6 1/2 miles

## FEATURES:

Stationed interpreters on the marsh  
Improved parking  
Port-a-potties

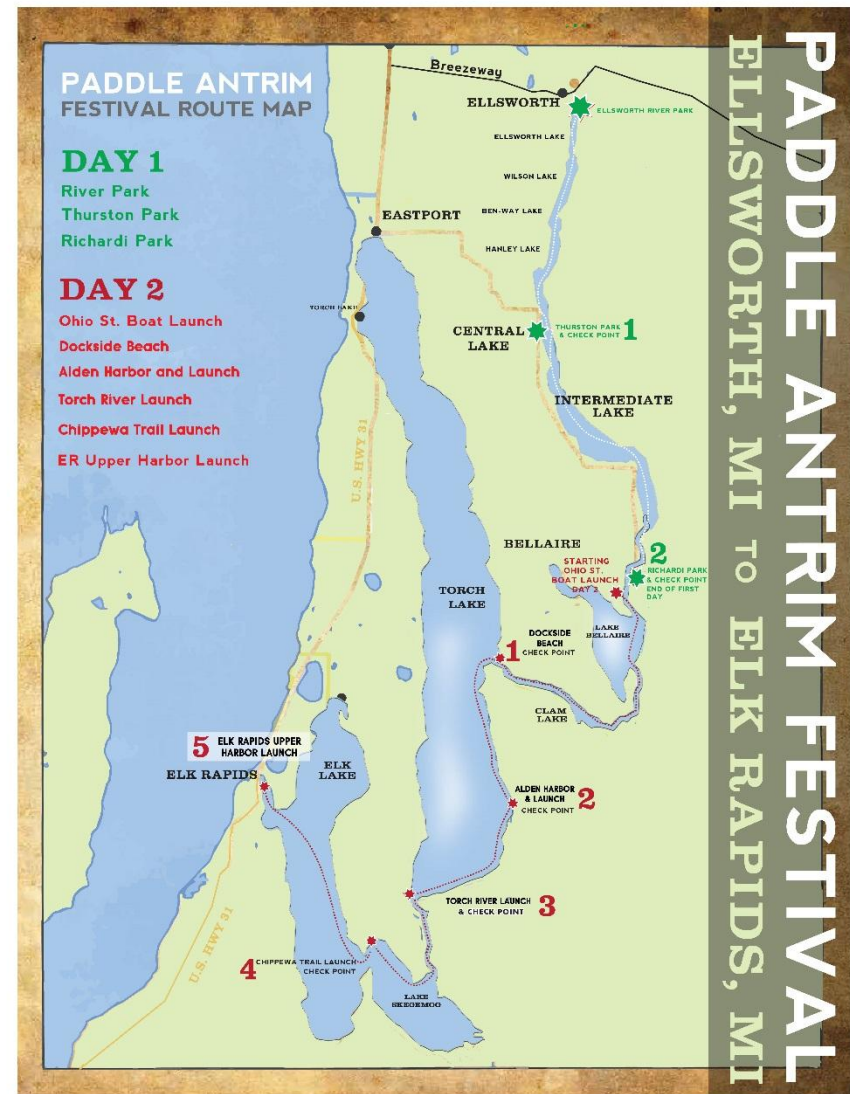
Free Shuttle back to your  
vehicle from 10:00am to 1:30pm

For more information:

PH: 920-387-7893

or [www.horiconmarsh.org](http://www.horiconmarsh.org)

Sponsors: Friends of Horicon Marsh Education & Visitor Center, Wisconsin DNR, Horicon, Beaver Dam Community Hospital, Johnson Bros. Marshland Pharmacy



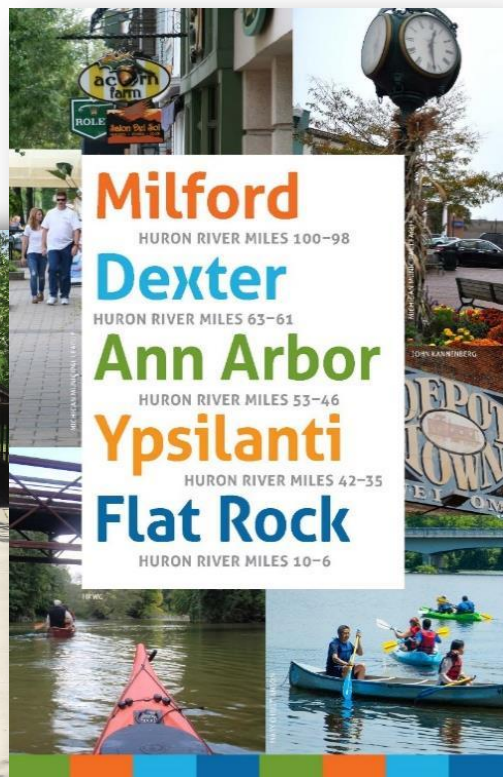
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# Trail Towns



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# Sustainability

Resources available for renewal and sustainability of water trails and connection of communities to rivers



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# Sustainability

New ways of safely storing and staging equipment can help others address their needs with a fresh perspective



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# Revitalization Strategy



Invest in River  
Recreation



Improve River  
Health



Transform the River  
Corridor



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# Sustainability

Long-term planning to engage with and serve community diversity



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## Session Outline

1. Introductions
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Credit: Bunny Sterin

## D. Q & A, Discussion

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## Contacts

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Risa Shimoda, River Management Society

*[executivedirector@river-management.org](mailto:executivedirector@river-management.org)*

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# Moving Forward

- Get creative
- Share the vision again and again and again
- Achieve short-term successes and be persistent
- Plan for trail maintenance
- Program to reach the future majority
- Placemaking via trails & economic development = nonpartisan



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## E. Evaluation

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THANK YOU!

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