

Why Water Trails Need You

For all that water trails offer, they don't just happen.

They must be nurtured and sustained by their users, or risk falling into disrepair or disappearing. Join NAWT now and be part of the only organization exclusively dedicated to the creation and stewardship of recreational water trails in North America.

As a Charter Member of NAWT, you will contribute to the construction of a dynamic network of water trails across the continent, and a movement of advocates who are committed to protect these cherished places, now and for future generations.

Your membership will include:

- Our electronic newsletter, NAWT News
- Member e-mail discussion forum and website
- Biennial water trails conferences & regional workshops
- Discounts on publications and merchandise

 **Yes!** I WANT TO JOIN THE EFFORT TO BUILD AND PROTECT WATER TRAILS ACROSS NORTH AMERICA.

Individuals (Your donation is fully tax deductible in the U.S.):

- Charter Member \$ ~~30~~ **Special Introductory Offer \$20**
 Charter Donor \$ 50
 Charter Sponsor \$100

Water Trail Organizations, Companies, Agencies

- Charter Member \$ 50
 Charter Donor \$100
 Charter Sponsor \$250

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ E-Mail Address _____

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____ payable in US\$ to: NAWT

Please charge my credit card: VISA MC AMEX

Card # _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

Mail to:
North American Water Trails, Inc.
PO Box 53329
Washington, DC 20009-9329



You may fax credit card orders to: (202) 667-0153
or call (202) 232-8354 or e-mail us at staff@watertrails.org.



Because They Revitalize Our Communities

We are proud of our communities. As residents and citizens, we are making them "better places." We are happy to tell our friends about our neighborhoods and we like to show off to visitors—to introduce them to our history and to show them the pleasures of our town. Economic vitality is essential to our quality of life. We work hard to nurture business. We welcome investors and we welcome visitors. But we don't want them to change our world or harm the things that we value. Water trails help us to accomplish that.

Paddlers bring life and wealth to the communities that they visit. They are special. Because they travel in small craft, they carry very little with them. They must buy the things they need along the way. Things like:

- Overnight lodgings at hotels, motels, inns, B&Bs
- Food at restaurants, coffee shops, lunchrooms
- Fellowship at lounges, cafes, bars, supper clubs
- Groceries, produce, medicine and drugs
- Camping equipment and supplies, outdoor clothing
- Rental equipment, canoes, kayaks, outfitting services.
- Photographic and fishing supplies
- Crafts, gifts, antiques and souvenirs
- Travel/tourist services

Travelers increasingly search for destinations that provide adventure while protecting the places they visit. Water trails can make your community such a destination.

Because They Serve the Public Interest

Public officials find that water trails help them achieve program goals.

A water trail is an encompassing concept. It integrates many values and many purposes. Water trails are ribbons of energy—progressions of sites that can focus activities on public purposes. Water trail projects can unify and energize communities.

Are you a public official? Does your program include:

- Parks and Recreation?
- Economic revitalization?
- Natural Resource Management?
- Environmental Protection?
- Community Development?
- Education in History and Science?

You will find water trails to be a flexible and responsive tool for accomplishing your agency's mission.

People who use the water learn to love and protect it. Water trails thus become the source of advocates who want to make the water and the shore a better, safer and more accessible place for themselves and future generations. Paddlers are ecologically conscious citizens who support public and private programs that clean up the water, protect watersheds and promote the ethics and the practice of stewardship and conservation. Paddlers are effective partners of agencies, foundations, alliances, conservancies and greenways around the country.



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helping foster the development, enjoyment and stewardship of recreational water trails

Our Mission & Background

Founded in 1993, the mission of **North American Water Trails** is to foster the development, enjoyment and stewardship of recreational water trails. As an organization, **NAWT** is a coalition of groups and individuals committed to supporting recreational access to North America's wealth of waters, especially to what we call water trails—small boat and paddling routes that combine recreation and conservation. Our membership includes volunteer groups, public interest organizations, government agencies, private companies and dedicated individuals. Above all, **NAWT** strives to be an active voice for water trail organizations as we work to set a precedent for wise trail development and use across North America.

WHY WATER TRAILS? Because They Foster Self-Discovery

Most of us occasionally need peace and quiet. We need to get away—to free our spirits and relax—to take a break. Some of us go for a walk, some go backpacking. Many of us go hunting or fishing. But as our lives become more hectic, and our communities larger and more congested, it becomes more costly and time-consuming to find our space. It's tough to get away. And when we get there we don't find the wilderness we seek—just more people.

Water trails are one answer. On the open water we can find space—along the edges we can lose ourselves. Most waterways are not crowded; even those close to our cities have surprisingly wild and undiscovered sections.

Water trails make it easy for us to get out on the water and to find refuge. We can touch the water, watch the birds, experience the weather—or just drift with our thoughts.

Do you need that break? Do you look for seclusion, for quiet, for retreat? If you are looking for that "any place wild" then a water trail can get you there.



Because They Build Skills

Water trails excite and challenge—they bring out your best. Basic paddling skills are essential. Navigating the waterways safely comes next. Overnight camping adds excitement. Once on the water, observing nature becomes irresistible. And if you build a trail, a whole new set of challenges is faced. With water trails come learning and growth.

Water trails require knowledge and skills. How to scull and brace, what to wear? Which boat, what style—canoe or kayak, glass or wood? Which paddle, life vest, roof rack? Will you build your own boat—traditional or current model? Paddling skills and proper small boat handling are essential to safety and comfort. The reading of maps, charts and the compass make even the longest trips possible. Knowledge of the weather, of currents and tides can be a matter of life and death. If you know them and their habits, trailside plants, animals, fish and birds add greatly to your paddling experience. Photography, drawing and painting will help you record and recall your paddling experiences. And if you build and manage a trail, be ready to command a whole other set of abilities.

The quality of life of any community depends on opportunities for personal growth, and opportunities to gain new skills and knowledge. If you are inquisitive and adventuresome, try a water trail. A water trail invites you to challenge yourself. Through a water trail, you gain competence and self-sufficiency and build those same virtues in others.

Because They Teach Nature

Every teacher knows the value of outdoor laboratories, the value of learning from real life. Students have great experiences along pathways in the forest or in the fields. But what about marine and riverine environments? Not every community can build an aquarium. Water trails connect the teacher and the student with these ecosystems and their living populations.

The seaweed, reeds and algae bend in the current. Seed pods and water lilies entice the birds and attract dragonflies and butterflies. Crabs, lobsters and shrimp grow up in the shallows. Mussels, clams and oysters filter the water, and fish are there to be studied (or tasted). Osprey, eagles and herons guard their nests and feed their hatchlings. Ducks and shore birds scoop and probe for nourishment; loons and kingfishers dive for theirs. Moose, deer and bears eat and drink along the shore. And seals, dolphins, whales and sea lions surface off the shore.

The water trail is a perfect classroom for the teaching biologist, botanist, and ecologist, both amateur and professional. Educators, naturalists, rangers, and scoutmasters—all can demonstrate and illustrate their lessons along the water trail.

Because They Teach History

Chances are your community started at the water's edge. Prior to the railroad, virtually all of civilization was found along North America's waterways. Water was the primary means of transportation. Even as the railroads crisscrossed the continent, they stopped at the water's edge. Communities great and small trace their beginnings to waterside commerce, industry or transportation. Whether they were Native American or First Nation settlements, military encampments, colonial villages, trading posts, outposts on the trails west, or fishing communities or seaports, North America grew up along the water. Thus, water trails touch North America's being like no other concept.

So as a water trail proceeds, it touches and laces together sites through which your heritage can be experienced and understood. Seen from a small boat, our communities' roots are manifest. Water trails become linear classrooms for your children. And visitors will come to share your history with you.

On the water and along its shore are numerous man-made places. Waterfront estates and plantations, water powered mills and factories, waterborne transportation facilities, historical as well as contemporary, can best be understood and appreciated from the water. The water trail experience binds them all together in time and place giving context.

North America grew up along the water. Water trails help the community tap into this past in real and exciting ways.

