



Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Water Trails Program
Water Trail Planning Assistance
Selection Application



INTRODUCTION

(PLEASE DELETE THIS SECTION FROM YOUR APPLICATION)

Navigable waterways are held in the public trust by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (Iowa DNR). Iowa Code section 464A.11 directs the Department to establish and maintain plans for the water trails program, and subsequent appropriations provide resources to conduct program activities. Local planning is important for water trail development, as navigable waters are used by many Iowans for various activities (boating, fishing, innertubing, paddling, wildlife viewing, etc.) while often flowing between private lands. Rivers and large lakes are often a defining community attraction, but sometimes misuse or poor planning results in safety, inappropriate infrastructure, or law enforcement problems. Iowa DNR partners with local communities and directs resources to community planning, engineered site designs, interpretive products, etc. This application form provides a means for local partners to apply for planning assistance and understand how selections will be made.

Prequalification Documents:

To qualify for selection, the following items must be completed and emailed to the water trails coordinator, John.wenck@dnr.iowa.gov by **October 2, 2020** for this fiscal year:

1. A water trail sponsor must be identified in Section D below. This must be a government entity, and typically is the county conservation board.
2. Letters of support or meeting minutes approving the proposed water trail project from both the county board of supervisors and the county conservation board within the project area.
3. Completion of Section D that identifies the prospective water trail sponsor and all land managers who will manage and maintain public lands, accesses, water trail signage, or other infrastructure along the water trail.

Upon receipt of the support documents indicated above, a **landowner mail survey** will be completed (at DNR expense) and the results and analysis will be emailed to the prospective sponsor to be reviewed and shared with local key partners.

Applicants who fail to submit the prequalification documents above by the time and date indicated will be ineligible.

Other important information:

1. The intent of this application is to offer planning services for prospective state water trails, state designated water trails without plans, or state designated water trails that require major updates.
2. The planning process offers opportunities for community input from landowners and user groups to local managers and law enforcement--community input is highly valued.
3. The DNR may deem it necessary to disengage from the project at any time if local support for the project is lacking.
4. Water trail planning can take 18 to 24 months to complete, but water trail designation (if a new water trail) comes soon after the plan is approved and key items are completed including executed agreements, signage installation, and printed brochures. Not all projects identified in the plan need to be constructed prior to designation.
5. While engineered access/parking designs are outcomes of the plan, it can take two years or more before projects get built due to funding constraints, permitting, weather, and/or project complexity. If the primary goal is simply to improve or build accesses, see the Department's [Water Recreation Access Cost-Share Program](#).
6. Once a project is selected, the prospective water trail sponsor will enter into a cooperative agreement with the Iowa DNR. The Iowa DNR will invest the time and funds to complete the following:

- Develop the water trail plan
- Develop signage plan
- Contract for engineered site designs w/cost estimates for new or improved water accesses and parking
- Provide supplementary reports
- Purchase initial and replacement water trail signs
- Develop an interpretive brochure with map of project area
- Assist with water trail dedication
- Offer annual project grant opportunities (dependent on funding)
- Provide ongoing support and technical assistance.

Timeline

1. Application deadline for FY2021 is December 4, 2020, and any announcements are on the [Canoeing & Kayaking](#) page of our website.
2. Applications will be scored within 45 days from application deadline.
3. You will be notified within 10 days after the applications have been scored.
4. It may take two or more months to secure a planning contract after the selection process has been completed.

How will selection be determined?

Applications will be scored by three Iowa DNR staff members and two appointed citizen water trail advocates. After scoring the applications, the committee will determine where the most impact can be made in a given area with resources available.

Application instructions

Prior to applying, Prequalification documents must be received by email no later than October 2, 2020 (see section above). Applications for selection must be completed and received by November 29, 2019 in order to be eligible for review. Any announcements related to the grant can be found on the [Canoeing & Kayaking](#) page of our website. Please review the application checklist. Email your application to john.wenck@dnr.iowa.gov.

If you have questions regarding this application or state water trails development, please contact:

John Wenck
Iowa DNR, River Programs at
515-725-8465 or
john.wenck@dnr.iowa.gov

Applicant eligibility

Local divisions of Iowa government are eligible applicants/prospective water trail sponsors. The Iowa DNR does not make or imply any guarantees from the information found in this application.

Project Name: _____

Application checklist:

- A. COVER PAGE with full contact information should be the first page of all applications.
- B. NARRATIVE assessing existing conditions. Describe how water trails planning/development might solve problems or lead to safer and/or improved user experiences (Please include photos showing existing conditions). Identify the local support and enthusiasm for the proposed water trail project. Narrative should be no more than two typed pages.
- C. MAPS. Please provide a detailed map showing the project area with water trail start and stop points, public lands, accesses, amenities, other nearby trails, nearby cities/towns, etc. within approximately 20 miles of the project.
- D. PROJECT COMMITMENT PAGE
- E. LANDOWNER SURVEY/ RESULTS AND ANALYSIS
- F. APPLICATION RANKING CRITERIA. This section contains your responses to application ranking criteria questions. Please keep the question and number of points eligible for each question in this section.

A. Water Trail Planning/Project Selection Application - Cover Page

Deadline: December 4, 2020.

Project Name: _____

Applicant Name: _____ Contact Person: _____

Address (street address required): _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone (day): _____ Phone (evening): _____

E-mail: _____

Is this water trail project already state designated? _____

*Identify any funding partners/grants and amounts secured for this project:

Funding Partner: _____ Amount: _____

Funding Partner: _____ Amount: _____

Funding Partner: _____ Amount: _____

Total Amount: _____

* A cooperative agreement between the Iowa DNR and the governmental entity acting as water trail sponsor will be developed before any work begins, even if no funding is being contributed.

B. Narrative

Assess the existing conditions. Describe how water trails planning/development might solve existing problems or lead to safer and/or improved user experiences (Please include photos of existing conditions). Identify the local support and enthusiasm behind the proposed project. Narrative should be no more than two typed pages, but include as many photos as necessary.

C. Project Location Map

Please provide a detailed map showing the project area with water trail start and stop points, public lands, accesses, amenities, other nearby trails, nearby cities/towns, etc. within approximately 20 miles of the project.

D. Project Commitment Section

State designated water trails require a water trail sponsor and a network of agreements among all land managers for maintenance and management of access areas and signage. This page shall be completed by each land manager who will have responsibilities along the water trail. A *Memorandum of Agreement* shall be signed toward the end of the planning process that identifies responsibilities in more detail before the DNR purchases signage and designates the water trail.

Minimum Responsibilities

Water Trail Sponsor:

1. Act as Iowa DNR and public’s direct point of contact for the water trail and respond to concerns and questions that arise in a timely manner.
2. Major river-wide obstructions in the channel shall be communicated to the Iowa DNR within 24 hours of known occurrence.
3. Alert Iowa DNR when problems arise; communicate and collaborate among all water trail land managers, key stakeholders, and user groups to solve problems that arise.
4. Ensure that law enforcement is briefed in dealing with problem users.
5. Review and provide timely feedback related to water trail plans, signage plans, infrastructure designs/projects, and the development of interpretive materials.
6. Inspects water trail signs twice annually to check for missing or damaged signs and send inspection reports to Iowa DNR.
7. Ensures brush, tree branches, or other obstructions do not impede visibility of water trail signs.
8. Participate and encourage participation in the following program and campaigns: litter control, river etiquette, safety education and enforcement.
9. Meet with water trail partners/land managers annually to discuss plan implementation and identify any issues that need addressed or changes that should be made. Identify what is or isn’t working, potential solutions, and how Iowa DNR can help. Submit meeting summary/progress report to the Iowa DNR water trails coordinator.

Public Land Managers:

1. Remove sediment from canoe/kayak launches or motorized boat ramps within one week of high water events at heavily used accesses, and within two weeks at other accesses.
2. Mow and remove trash weekly at heavily used public areas, and twice per month at other public areas.
3. Maintain restrooms weekly at heavily used accesses, and twice per month at other accesses.
4. Install initial and replacement water trail signs as needed.

I have read the minimum responsibilities above and, if this project is selected for water trail planning and development, I agree to maintain water trail access areas and signage as specified above.

Prospective Water Trail Sponsor (organization): _____

Name: _____ Position: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Land Manager (organization): _____

Name: _____ Position: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Land Manager (organization): _____

Name: _____ Position: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Land Manager (organization): _____
Name: _____ Position: _____
Signature: _____ Date: _____

Land Manager (organization): _____
Name: _____ Position: _____
Signature: _____ Date: _____

Land Manager (organization): _____
Name: _____ Position: _____
Signature: _____ Date: _____

Land Manager (organization): _____
Name: _____ Position: _____
Signature: _____ Date: _____

(Duplicate land manager section as needed)

E. Landowner Survey / Results and Analysis

F. Application Ranking Criteria

Applications will be reviewed on a 100-point scoring system. Point values have been assigned to the various questions in the application as indicated below. Beyond the points system below, scoring committee members will take into account overall benefit to the state's water trails system, qualifications of applicant, soundness of project, and perceived likelihood of success described in the narrative. Please be concise; limit responses to a maximum of 250 words per question.

1. Is the waterbody identified in "Section C" a state designated water trail without a plan? If not, has the project received Iowa DNR funding in the past, or completed initial Iowa DNR planning? (circle 1,2, or 3)
 1. Yes, all or most of the waterbody is a state designated water trail without a plan. (10 points)
 2. No, the waterbody is not state designated but has received some Iowa DNR funding or initial planning. (5 points)
 3. No, the waterbody is not state designated and has not received Iowa DNR funding or initial planning. (0 points)
2. Describe the water resource and how the proposed water trail will be attractive to people seeking recreational experiences on it. (5 points)
3. How would this project benefit local communities – economically, environmentally, quality of life, and otherwise? (5 points)
4. What is the distance (in miles) between your project area and the nearest state designated water trail? To view the active state designated water trails, go to www.iowadnr.gov/paddlingmap (10 points. Scoring guidance: project area farthest away from a state designated water trail receives 100% of possible points)
5. What is the average width of the waterbody and total length of the proposed water trail? Identify how these variables might affect users, adjacent landowners, and the resource itself if the waterbody becomes a water trail. What could be done to offset any negative impacts? (10 points)
6. Describe issues or problems that currently exist that this water trail project can help solve, such as user conflicts, landowner concerns, dam or hazard mitigation, lack of good public access, etc. (10 points)
7. Describe how your water trail project can benefit multiple user groups: paddlers, anglers, people with limited mobility, motor-boaters, snowmobilers, etc. (10 points)
8. What funds, if any, can local project partners commit to water trail planning and development? (10 points. Scoring guidance: highest amount receives 100% of total possible points; however, diversity of project partners providing funding is a priority, as well)
9. Describe outreach plans related to private landowners adjacent to the waterway. (10 points)
10. How might this water trail project correspond with conservation efforts, including but not limited to watershed improvements, trash clean-ups, river restoration, scenic view protection, water quality monitoring, or other conservation efforts? (10 points)
11. How does this project fit in the overall statewide water trail system? Does it connect to other types of existing trails (i.e. biking, hiking)? Describe benefits of linkages to other types of trails or existing water trails. What does your proposed project offer that's different or unique from other water trails, especially those nearby? (10 points)