



TOURISM, ARTS AND HERITAGE CABINET

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Dear Adventure Project Seekers,

The Office for Adventure Tourism is seeking to assist local communities interested in developing Blue Water Trails on rivers and lakes throughout Kentucky. Kentucky has more miles of rivers, streams, and lake shoreline than any state but Alaska.

Our water ways (Blue Water Trails) are resources that can not be outsourced. It is an economic opportunity for communities and businesses to consider investing in. Look into developing a trail town atmosphere where paddlers can come eat, shop, and rest during trips.

A complete packet is enclosed to provide guidance and suggest funding sources.

If this is something that interests your community, please feel free to call or email me for assistance.

Sincerely,

Elaine H. Wilson
Executive Director
Office for Adventure Tourism
Tourism, Arts, and Heritage Cabinet

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Developing Paddling Adventures in Kentucky



Where we are today:

Businesses to grow the paddling sports:

- There are approximately 12 retailers for paddling sports in Kentucky
- There are 14 outfitters on or near Kentucky Rivers
- There are 97 marinas servicing Kentucky waters.

Statewide Projects:

- FINS – Fishing In Neighborhoods – A Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources (F&W) project to grow water recreation such as fishing and boating. 36 Lakes participate in KY. <http://fw.ky.gov/Fish/Pages/Fishing-In-Neighborhoods.aspx>
- Blue Water Trails – A project of Adventure Tourism (AT) and F&W to map blue water trails – showing access points, rapids, pools for certain type fishing, and river and land features. 16 trails are currently mapped and available at <http://fw.ky.gov/Education/Pages/Blue-Water-Trails.aspx>
- Boater Safety – F&W. Adding a component of Leave No Trace Outdoor Ethics training.
- All water trail outfitters, currently operating, are on the AT website, www.getoutky.gov
- There are USDA Public Access Funds available through F&W to landowners who allow public access to their waterways. This can be instrumental in allowing rest stops for paddlers, access points for paddlers and camping.

Growing the Paddling Community State Wide:

Organize a State Association: Completed, contact Ed Council at the Adventure Paddling Association of Kentucky (502) 395-1513.

- Make sure businesses, outfitters, paddlers, F&W, AT, Kentucky Sports Authority (KSA), River Authorities, and Tourism Commissions (CVB s) are all represented.
- Become an active tourism industry organization - join KTIA and lobby to gain legislative awareness/support

Tourism, Arts, & Heritage Cabinet leadership:

- Encourage the Department for Local Government (DLG) to give priority to water trail development that involves more than one county for Recreational Trails Grants (RTP) and Land and Water grants
- Continue to map Blue Water Trails through F&W and AT.
- Meet with the state paddling association to determine what rivers to prioritize for development.
- Assist the state paddling association in encouraging a Downstream Recreation Priority Purpose for the US Army Corp of Engineers Districts governing Kentucky waterways to allow for water levels suitable for whitewater parks / recreation operation, and construction.
- Market through PR and advertise paddling resources in Kentucky.
- Make the process known to local CVBs, marketing regions, and AD Districts.

Local Community Procedures for Developing Whitewater or Blue Water Recreation:

Resources:

- Office For Adventure Tourism – (502) 564-4270 – Executive Director – assist with the Planning and Development Process.
- National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservations Assistance Program – (270) 758-2191 Email: Russell_Clark@nps.gov RTCA website: www.nps.gov/rtca free service through a grant program.
- Kentucky Paddling Association – (502) 395-1513-- to coordinate plans

- KY Fish & Wildlife – (502)564-7109 – Keith Parker – for access ramps and USDA landowner Public Access funds.
- KY Fish & Wildlife – (502)564-7109 - Ryan Oster – USDA Public Access funds for landowners to allow for access , rest stops, camping... on route.
- KY State Parks – (502) 564-8110 – Diane Bonfert – assist in developing opportunities in areas that include the State Parks.
- Department for Local Government – (502) 573-2382- Jodie McDonald – for RTP and LW Grants
- Tourism Development Loan Program – (502) 564-4270 - Todd Cassidy
- Cultural & Recreational Signage Program - (502) 564-4270 - Todd Cassidy
- Kentucky Sports Authority – (502) 564-4270 – Matt Sawyers – assist with bringing sport events to utilize the water resource.

Process:

- Notify the Office for Adventure Tourism of your interest in developing water trails.
- Apply for assistance from the NPS River, Trails, & Conservations Assistance Program. See above.
- Identify Partnerships - local county, multi-county paddling enthusiast, landowners along the route, emergency rescue personnel, scout groups, 4-H groups, local agencies – Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Commissions, paddling outfitters & businessmen and local officials.
- Develop a Plan – Establish a plan to achieve your goal. Identify those it affects and benefits. Meet with those who you have identified as stakeholders. Include funding plan, grants, donations, and investors.
- Present plan - to local authorities, fiscal courts, city councils, and organizations for letters of support , resolutions, and grant matches. (this will be needed if you plan to seek any grant funding)
- Submit plan - to all relevant State/Federal Authorities, including: F&W, & the Tourism Arts & Heritage Cabinet, for letters of support. (additional support for your Grant Request)
- Studies may be required - Depending on the Project, you may be required by F&W or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to determine the environmental or biological effects of the project.
- Submit Project - along with letters of support to the corresponding US Army Corp of Engineers District for approval.
- Submit Approved Project -to potential investors, apply for grants and pursue other funding avenues. Copy the Office of Adventure Tourism to log your project into our state inventory of planned projects.

Outcome:

1. State log and inclusion in web site listing all water way projects.
2. A guide for water recreation – Blue Water Trails and White Water Parks.
3. Market Kentucky as a Water Way Playground.
4. Seek Adventure and Sports Events to utilize our water resources giving us national recognition.

Kentucky Tourism, Arts, and Heritage Cabinet
Goals
for Blue Water Trails, Whitewater Parks, and other
river/lake projects



Agencies that can provide resources to assist in Water Way Development:

- Office of Adventure Tourism
- River, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program, NPS
- Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife
- Kentucky Department of Travel and Tourism
- Kentucky Sports Authority
- Kentucky Department of Parks
- Kentucky Division of Water
- Kentucky Department of Local Government

Working with the all U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Districts, TVA, U.S. Forestry, and National Recreation Areas and Parks in Kentucky.

Current status to promote water trails in Kentucky:

- KY Department of Fish & Wildlife (F&W) is mapping blue water trails in Kentucky at the rate of 6 per year. <http://fw.ky.gov/navigation.aspx?cid=854&navpath=C117>
- Over a dozen outfitters serving Kentucky's waterways
- Outfitters are listed in the KY Visitor Guide and on the state tourism web site under adventure tourism. www.getoutKY.com or www.kyunbridledadventure.com
- Promotional events and PR is sent to our adventure participants' database monthly.
- The Office for Adventure Tourism and the KY Sports Authority are trying to assist the paddling community in the formation of a state association that can plan, prioritize and lobby for legislation that will allow waterway projects.

Goals:

- Work with a state association having various representation of the paddling community, APAK-Adventure Paddling Association of Kentucky.
- Work with outfitters to establish needed river / lake access ramps and to develop relationships with land owners for route rest stops, camping, or emergency take out points.
- Work with all agencies interested in water ways in Kentucky and the paddling association to gain downstream recreation as a criterion for Corps Districts in KY.
- Certify and train state park employees (naturalist/recreationalist) as paddlesports instructors through the grant program that the American Canoe Association provides funded by the US Coast Guard.
- Provide communities interested in specific water park development a procedural plan for implementation.
- Develop long distance routes such as around the LBL, Green River, Kentucky River, Licking River ... for multi-day trips, working with the goals of the state paddling association.
- Develop a guidebook for Blue Water Trails and Water Park Projects in KY.
- Promote these activities throughout KY in all retail businesses that carry the recreational supplies for river and lake recreation.
- Provide Department of Local Government (DLG) with goals for the paddling development for the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).

Increasing Awareness of Kentucky's Rivers, Lakes, and Streams for the Paddling Community



Organization:

- Become a member of the Adventure Paddling Association of Kentucky – APAK.
- Various associations exist on the national level that can work with a state organization to address legislative issues regarding our water ways.
- Prioritize your goals – which rivers, lakes, or projects do you intend to develop first
- Schedule your meetings during a float when you break for lunch or dinner. Invite key partnership reps in as advisors. Focus on one or two things.
- Build up membership and a participant database.
- Communicate the decisions to all members.

Partnerships:

- Join the Kentucky Travel Industry Association (formerly the Kentucky Tourism Council)
- Work with Adventure Tourism, Dept. of Travel, KSA (paddle sports competitions), Kentucky Sports Authority, and KY State Parks
- Work with Fish & Wildlife and the Division of Water (Blue Water Trails, FINS program, river cleanups)
- Cultivate a relationship with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Develop events to raise awareness:

- River clean ups – the Division of Water is a great resource for this
- Partner with Fish & Wildlife for boater safety and Leave No Trace Training, event teaches public boating safety.
- Partner with the FINS Fish & Wildlife Program for Fishing in Neighborhoods
- Blue Water Week – May kick off encouraging paddlers to get out and enjoy the over 90,000 miles of navigable waterways in Kentucky. This event should follow any clean-up event held after the spring rains.
- Build a state-wide participants database for future e-blasts on water events

White Water parks or any other construction in the waterway:

- Once membership and a participants database is built up – get them to sign a petition or letter of support.
- Ask other associations to assist in your mission – KTIA, KY Marina Association, other outdoor user groups for letters of support
- Go to your congressman and request a change in all the US Army Corps of Engineers Districts in KY to Add Downstream Recreation as a Priority Purpose.
- No construction in the river beds or diversion of water can take place in KY rivers or streams without Corps approval. The Corp may not approve the construction because downstream recreation is not a KY Corps Priority Purpose.
- Downstream Recreation is a Priority Purpose in Maryland, West Virginia, and Colorado. Those states met with their congressmen and had that purpose added to the Corps districts that affected their states.

Water Trail Towns and/or Development of rest stop and camp areas along Water Ways:

- Work with landowners at key locations for agreements, permissions, or easements to allow for rest stops, lunches, and or overnight camping.
- Work with Fish & Wildlife and local governments to put in key boat ramps for access.

- The Office of Adventure Tourism can assist you with this process.
- Work with local communities along the waterway to have access points to towns for breaks, shopping, meals, camping, etc.

Legislation:

- Request local fiscal courts and communities pass a resolution supporting your work and designate June as Kentucky Paddling Week or Blue Water Week.
- Have members submit a state resolution for the Legislature to vote on designating the same.
- Have members submit a state resolution to encourage the US Army Corps of Engineers to add Downstream Recreation as a **Priority Purpose**.
- Submit the above to key US Congressmen and request the above be done.

When to Form a Local Committee

The ideal time to form a committee is when passion runs high concerning an idea that could prove to be beneficial to your city, county or region's tourism industry.

Typically you will begin forming your committee -- see steps 1 - 9 below. Ideally pick a season of the year that will allow for best participation. Have a meeting place, date, and times on hand to begin discussion.

Steps to Forming a Committee to complete a Project

1. It is your responsibility to choose a person to spearhead the efforts to assist in forming a committee, or it may be you. Meet with or visit those people who will benefit through participation or financially to best match your interests. Find someone who will agree to chair your committee. You might want to see what other communities have done something similar. Contact the Adventure Tourism Office to assist you.
2. Identify stakeholders for your project and potential committee members. Such as scout groups, sport teams, local organizations, businesses, chambers of commerce, tourism commissions, city or county local government representatives, activity participants, school officials....
3. Once your committee has a chair, prepare a plan that contains the following:
 - Determine Objective / Goal - provide a brief description
 - Provide / review examples of like projects from other communities or state
 - Breakdown the work using a Task Approach – tasked to be accomplished, who is responsible for completing it, agencies or groups to work with, target completion, completion date.
 - Schedule to complete the project- from inception to opening.

- Criteria for Success: describe what challenges must be overcome to succeed.
- The Plan must be typed, and should be free of spelling, grammatical, and typographical errors.

Use the plan to meet with local and state agencies to communicate your project and seek technical assistance. Such as the Office for Adventure Tourism, River, NPS Trails, & Conservation Assistance Program, Fish & Wildlife, DLG, ...

4. Obtain funding source grant applications and identify potential investors.
5. Use the media to communicate your proposal and assistance.
6. Address any challenges such as permits, studies, or permissions.
7. Approach local governmental bodies for a resolution and letter of support. This will be needed for any grant funding you intend to request. You will also need the governmental body to submit the grant on your behalf.
8. Submit the grant request. Once approved proceed with implementation of the project. Communicate your progress to the media and local governments on a scheduled basis.
9. Keep the process positive and interest level high.