



July 21, 2014

RE: Arkansas River Water Trail

Dear National Park Service:

The Park and Recreation Department of the City of Wichita, Kansas is pleased to offer support for the Arkansas River Water Trail (ARWT) application to the National Water Trails System.

In the past 20 years, The City has partnered with the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) on several recreational trail and trail-related projects. In 2007 a steering committee, brought together by the City and KDWPT, produced a comprehensive access study of a central portion of the Arkansas River from the Rice/Reno Co. line to the City of Oxford, Kansas, resulting in the creation of the Arkansas River Corridor Access Plan (ARCAP). The ARCAP project was a multi-jurisdictional plan that included project partners from a three county area, including the Arkansas River Coalition, Reno County, Sedgwick County, Sumner County, Hutchinson, South Hutchinson, Wichita, Derby, Oxford, and the KDWPT. The ARCAP has provided guidance for promoting and developing access to and enjoyment of the Arkansas River, one of only three rivers in Kansas listed as navigable or open for public use and paddling.

As identified in the ARCAP, the City recently constructed a safe boat passage at Lincoln Street to allow canoes, kayaks and rafts access around the dam, leaving only one location in the City where users need to portage watercraft. The Lincoln Street dam and bridge project includes an access point to the Arkansas River. Other access points in Wichita can be found at 21st Street North, Gander Mountain Ramp, Garvey Park and 71st Street South.

We support the National Water Trail designation for the Arkansas River Water Trail, and understand that such designation does not require extra regulations or compromise the ability for the City to manage our lands in any manner. We also understand that receiving this designation will increase awareness of and visitors to the ARWT, the public lands along the river corridor, and the trail communities (Trail Towns). The ARWT and its access points can benefit from technical assistance and any future funding available from the National Water Trails System. If you have any questions or concerns I may be reached at (316) 268-4179 or by e-mail at lhoetmer@wichita.gov.

Sincerely,

Larry D. Hoetmer, ASLA
Principal Planner

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