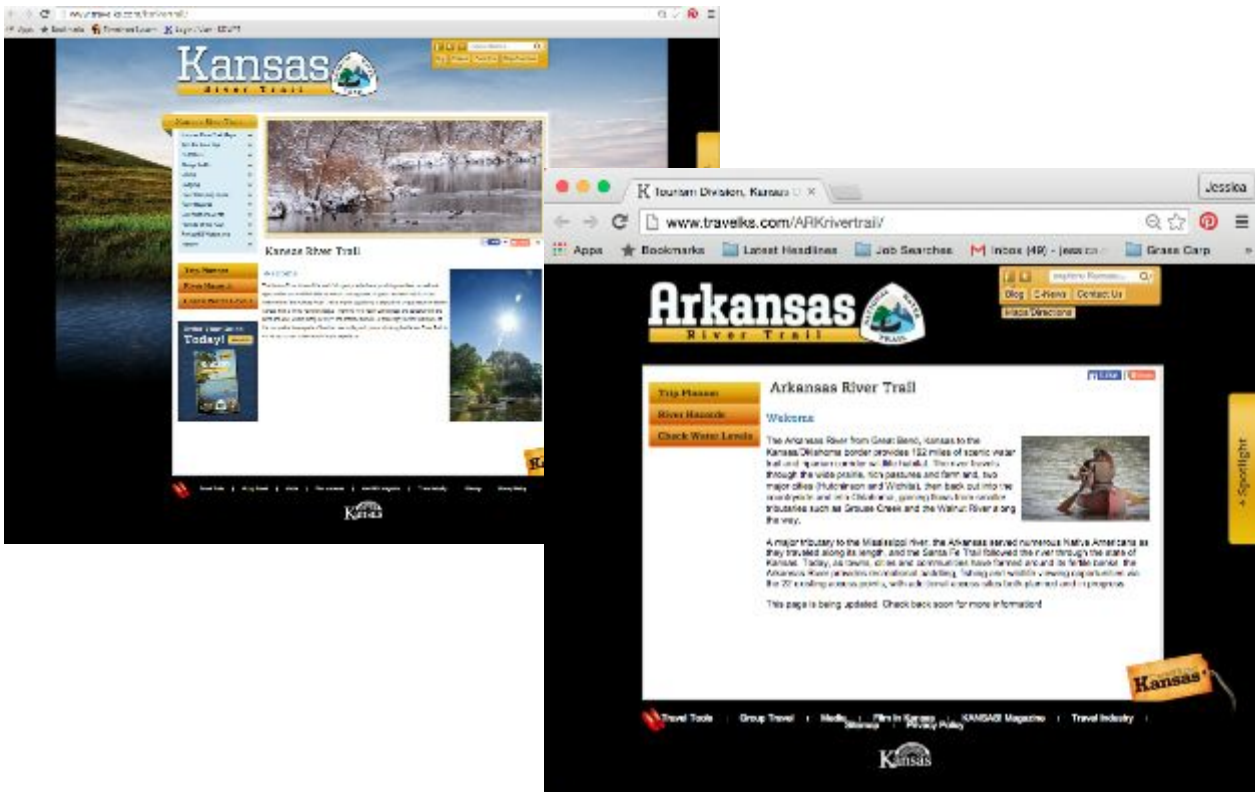


BMP: Public Information, Website

A website for the Arkansas River Water Trail is under construction, and provides basic trail information at the time of this application. The web address for the site is www.travelks.com/arkrivertrail.

Layout

The website layout will be visually similar to the Kansas River Trail website and provide similar information specific to the Arkansas River Water Trail.



Welcome

The Arkansas River from Great Bend, Kansas to the Kansas/Oklahoma border provides 192 miles of scenic water trail and riparian corridor wildlife habitat. The river travels through the wide prairie, rich pastures and farmland, two major cities (Hutchinson and Wichita), then back out into the countryside and into Oklahoma, gaining flows from smaller tributaries such as Grouse Creek and the Walnut River along the way.



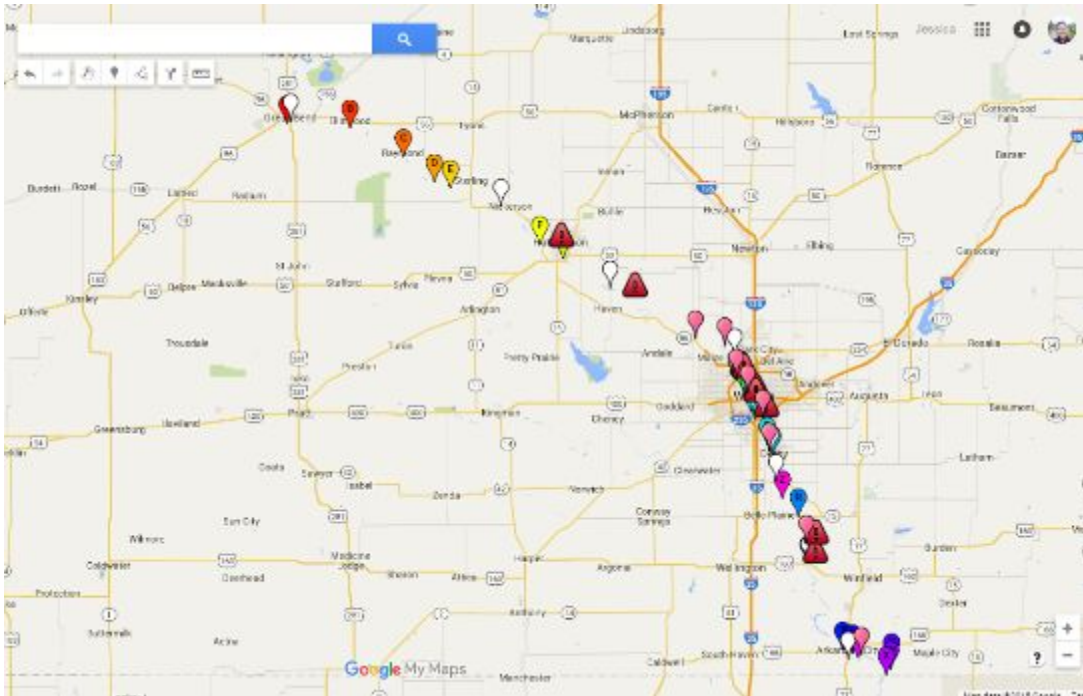
A major tributary to the Mississippi river, the Arkansas served numerous Native Americans as they traveled

along its length, and the Santa Fe Trail followed the river through the state of Kansas. Today, as towns, cities and communities have formed around its fertile banks, the Arkansas River provides recreational paddling, fishing and wildlife viewing opportunities via the 22 existing access points, with additional access sites both planned and in progress.

This page is being updated. Check back soon for more information!

Kansas River Trail Maps

Interactive map



Printable Maps - showing special features of the River Trail, including:

- river access points
- distance between access points
- dams & other hazards
- parks & camping areas
- restrooms

Select the portion of the River for which you want to print a map (.pdf):

Upper
Middle
Lower

Tips for Your Trip

Getting to the River

There are several public access boat ramps along the Kansas River. Look for signs along the road with the National Water Trail logo to find access points.

Before You Float

Check the [water levels](#) and weather before you reach the water. Beginning paddlers should not be on the river when the water flow is above 5,000 cubic feet per second. The weather in Kansas can change quickly. Be aware of forecasts calling for high winds or storms. It is also a good idea to let a family member or friend know about your trip – where you plan to float and when you plan to return home.

What to Bring:

- personal flotation devices (PFDs), or life vests, are a must, and each paddler (and their pets) should have one
- extra ropes or lines
- bail bucket
- whistle or air horn to signal distress (whistles should be attached to PFDs)
- first aid kit
- dry change of clothes in cooler weather
- plenty of water and food
- flashlight, lantern or other light if you'll be out in low-light conditions
- sun protection – hats, sunscreen, long sleeves and pants
- map
- cell phone in waterproof bag (be aware that some areas along the river may not have cell signal coverage)
- (optional) camera or binoculars (in waterproof bags), animal and plant identification guides

River Safety and Etiquette


The Kansas River is a very big river, and a lot of factors – [water Levels](#), [hazards](#), weather, paddler inexperience – can quickly turn an enjoyable float trip into an extremely dangerous situation. If you're new to paddling or have never floated on the Kansas River before, it is recommended that you travel with experienced paddlers or as part of an organized float trip. [Friends of the Kaw](#) plan group float trips from April through mid-October.

Don't plan to float more than you can handle; 10 miles makes for a good and relaxing all-day trip. Hazards such as dams and weirs are marked on the map with a red icon. Before your trip, examine the map (link to "Kansas River Trail Maps" page) to determine what portion of the river you'll be navigating and take these extreme hazards into account.

Canoe and Kayak Safety

It is recommended that you always wear a life jacket and float with a minimum of two boats. Take at least one extra paddle in case you drop or break one. Put your equipment into a waterproof bag and tie it to one of the center beams in the canoe so you don't lose your gear if the canoe tips. Keep an eye out for other boat traffic and maintain an appropriate distance. Also try to keep your canoe at right angles to big waves. Look out for hazards such as low branches, fallen trees, rocks and debris. If your boat tips over, don't panic. It will float, even if it is full of water, and you can wait until you get to shore to empty it. Stay with your canoe and paddle or push it toward the shore. When you get to shallow water, flip the canoe with the help of your float partner and carefully climb back in.

River Navigational Signs

Along the river you'll see yellow signs like this one . These signs show the distance between access points. In the example shown here, it is 2 miles to the next access point at Manhattan. When you reach the Manhattan access point, you'll see a sign with just an "M."

Private Land Access

State law provides that the area between the high water marks on either side of the Kansas River is public property. Most of the land above the high water marks is privately owned, and public access is prohibited.

In an emergency, paddlers may cross through private land to seek medical or other emergency assistance. If you find yourself in this situation, please be responsible and respectful – close any gates you open and do not deface or destroy any property. If possible, leave a note with any equipment you have to leave behind. Be sure to include the date and your contact information.

Please Note: Enjoy your experience on Kansas waterways and stay healthy after touching the water by washing or disinfecting your hands, particularly before eating.

Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS)

Zebra mussels, Asian carp and other non-native species threaten the Kansas River and other waterways. Kansas has regulations in place to help slow the spread of these species. You can help by following these regulations and precautions:

- Use live bait only where you catch it.
- Do not transport live fish from the Kansas River or other ANS designated waters.
- Dispose of unused bait on land or in an approved bait receptacle.
- Clean your boat after removing it from the water, being sure to remove vegetation, mud and zebra mussels; wash with water that is 140°F or hotter.
- Livewells and bilges must be drained and drain plugs removed before transport.
- If you cannot properly clean your boat, allow it to dry for five days before moving it to another body of water.

Visit [ProtectKSWaters.org](https://www.protectkswaters.org) for the latest information on ANS and how you can prevent the spread of these species.

Outfitters

Things to Do

Many of the communities along the Kansas River Trail offer lodging, dining, shopping and other attractions. Visit a Kansas River Trail Community by clicking on one of the links below:

Great Bend
Ellinwood
Hutchinson

South Hutchinson
Wichita
Derby
Oxford
Arkansas City
Kaw Wildlife Area

Dining

A day of paddling is bound to leave you hungry. Whether you're hungry for diner fare, ethnic or gourmet, choose from these restaurants in communities along the river.

Lodging

After a day of paddling, sink into a comfy bed or re-energize with a hot shower in one of our River Trail communities, with rooms to fit every preference and budget.

River Camping Guide

Although most land adjacent to the river is privately owned and public access is prohibited, paddlers may set up camp on sandbars. There are also a few public camping areas near access points along the Kansas River Trail. Be aware that some of these sites are a bit of a hike from the river and may not have restrooms. Whether you're camping on a sandbar or in a camping area, the following tips will help you have a great night along the Kansas River:

If possible, pull your boat from the water. Tie your boat to a tree on shore or a large log. If you're camping on a sandbar, run your line (rope) through the handles of all of your gear. If water rises suddenly during the night, your only concern will be taking down your tent and getting into your boat – not tracking down your gear as it floats away.

If you're camping on a sandbar, set up well above the water line. Use long, metal tent stakes to pitch your tent. Shorter stakes may not hold in the sandy surface, and plastic stakes may break if you encounter rock.

Store your food properly to keep away raccoons and other unwanted visitors.

Take your waste with you and leave the campsite better than you found it.

Visit our [Lodging](#) page for more information on campsites, cabins and other accommodations.

River Hazards

River Hazards are dams, weirs and other potentially serious dangers for which paddlers must take special precautions. Review the [downloadable maps](#) for the precise locations of hazards of the hazards listed here. In some cases, you will need to portage, or remove your craft from the river and re-enter in another location.

Check Water Levels page:

Before you float, be sure to check the latest information on:

- [Water Levels](#) (U.S. Geological Survey realtime streamflow)
- [Reservoir Releases](#) (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers three-day release forecast)

Calendar of Events

Arkansas River Coalition

ProtectKSWaters.org

History

Trip Planner

Order Your Guide