



OHIO RIVER WATER TRAIL

map and information

Safety

THE HAZARDS OF PADDLING THE OHIO RIVER

The Ohio is a magnificent river. For water enthusiasts, nothing beats floating down the Ohio River in a kayak; nevertheless, many hazards exist on the Ohio River such as river crossings, commercial traffic, wind, waves, swift-river current, high water levels, low water temperatures, and strainers. The Ohio River provides a wide range of experiences, therefore we suggest that you complete a safety class and professional instruction before paddling the mighty Ohio River. No one should attempt kayaking without proper training.

RIVER CURRENT & WATER LEVELS

Avoid kayaking at high water conditions which cause strong currents and force debris from the banks into the river. Rainfall also increases the risk of treacherous currents and submerged debris that can cause accidents and injuries. Real-time stream flow info is available at the USGS Water Watch website at waterwatch.usgs.gov.

WIND, WAVES, & RIVER CROSSINGS

The Ohio River is very wide and it takes a considerable amount of time and effort to cross via a canoe or kayak. Once out into the river, you may experience waves and choppy conditions, especially if it is windy. Due to the winding nature of the river, wind direction changes often. You can minimize the wind's influence on your boat by kayaking directly into the wind.

COMMERCIAL TRAFFIC

The Ohio River is classified as federal waters, and all boaters must comply with the U.S. Coast Guard requirements. Recreational boaters must yield the right of way to commercial vessels. An important constraint is the pilot's blind spot. The blind spot extends for hundreds of feet in front of the barge. Therefore, do not canoe or kayak in the path of barges. Barges also have limited navigation due to their size and weight and therefore cannot turn or stop quickly. It can take up to three miles for a towboat to stop a string of full barges. In addition, wheel wash is a strong underwater current caused by a towboat's engines that can result in severe turbulence. Hundreds of yards behind a large vessel, consequently, recreational watercraft must maintain at least 1,000 feet in clearance behind the rear of towboats.

RESTRICTED AREA

The section immediately above and below each lock and dam is designated as a Restricted Area. Waters in these areas are turbulent, unpredictable, and deceptively dangerous. Strong currents can easily trap and drown a potential victim without warning. Signs and/or flashing red lights mark the limits of the regulated sectors at each lock and dam. No person, vessel, or other floating craft shall enter any such guarded zone at any time and are subject to a summary offense and penalties. Lockmasters enforce the adherence to these laws and, if required, solicit aid from local police. In the interest of public safety, please articulate to other boaters or anglers about the hazards of lock and dam structures.

GREATER PARKERSBURG

Escape, discover & play.
www.greaterparkersburg.com



Designed by Melissa Brown

Scenic Beauty

As Thomas Jefferson once stated, "the Ohio is the most beautiful river on earth." Paddlers can feel a sense of remoteness and natural beauty here. Although highways and railroads follow the river, they are generally not visible from the river below. Trees along the river bank often block out views of homes, farm fields, and industrial sites.

The island chutes and the narrow, not commercially navigable, sections between an island and the shore—so offer remote natural settings.

The Ohio River offers abundant wildlife enjoyment. The water trail meanders through several habitat types, resulting in high species diversity along the river. More than 200 species of birds visit the river each year, including osprey and bald eagle.

There are more than 100 species of fish in the Ohio River, including spotted bass, sauger, freshwater drum, white crappie, and flathead catfish.

Both West Virginia and residential Ohio fishing licenses are honored on the Ohio River and the various backwaters (up to the first riffle), and on the Little Kanawha west of the Leachtown Lane access site.

There are more than 25 mammal species along the Ohio River and Little Kanawha River, including white-tailed deer, raccoons, muskrats, mink, cottontail rabbit, and red fox. Frogs, toads, turtles, dragonflies, damselflies, butterflies, and 40 species of freshwater mussels add to the astonishing biodiversity of these rivers.

Three of the islands on the trail are part of the Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge. Visitors are welcome to pull their canoes and kayaks up onto the shore and explore these islands on foot during the day. The Ohio River Islands NWR is working to protect, conserve, and restore the riparian forest habitat on these islands; visitors who explore these islands will find them in various stages of transition from agricultural use to restored forest.

Water trail users can get more involved in conserving and restoring natural habitats along the trail by contacting the Friends of the Ohio River Island National Wildlife Refuge.

Learn more: www.greaterparkersburg.com/ohio-river-watertrail/
Ohio River Water Trail - Parkersburg, WV

Trip Mileage

Mileage is round trip.

GPS Coordinates

1. OLD LOCK 20
39.137733, -81.740594

DUCK CREEK
13 MILES | 6-7 HOURS | PUT-IN: WILLIAMSTOWN BOAT RAMP

2. LEE CREEK
39.149061, -81.715324

WORTHINGTON CREEK AND THE LITTLE KANAWHA
5.3 MILES | 2.5 HOURS | PUT-IN: CORNING PARK

3. LOCK 19
39.255252, -81.691949

LEE CREEK
8.6 MILES | 5 HOURS | PUT-IN: LEE CREEK

4. BELPRE ACCESS PARK
39.275047, -81.597497

NEAL RUN
3.5 MILES | 2 HOURS | PUT-IN: POINT PARK

6. MARIETTA LEVEE
39.410371, -81.451265

AROUND BUCKLEY ISLAND
6.2 MILES | 3 HOURS | PUT-IN: WILLIAMSTOWN BOAT RAMP

7. WILLIAMSTOWN BOAT RAMP
39.406995, -81.450081

TO BENNERHASSETT ISLAND
3.5 MILES | 2 HOURS | PUT-IN: POINT PARK

8. ORINWR HEADQUARTERS
39.390565, -81.417646

AROUND BENNERHASSETT ISLAND
10.2 MILES | 5 HOURS | PUT-IN: POINT PARK

9. CORNING PARK
39.258694, -81.535552

AROUND NEAL ISLAND
7.1 MILES | 3 HOURS | PUT-IN: POINT PARK

10. LEACHTOWN LANE
39.140011, -81.447744

AROUND VIENNA ISLAND
14 MILES | 7 HOURS | PUT-IN: POINT PARK

11. SPRING VALLEY
39.139834, -81.395563

AROUND MUSKINGUM ISLAND RAMP
11 MILES | 5.5 HOURS | PUT-IN: WILLIAMSTOWN BOAT RAMP

WILLIAMSTOWN TO DEVOLA RAMP
12 MILES | 6 HOURS | PUT-IN: WILLIAMSTOWN BOAT RAMP



OHIO RIVER WATER TRAIL



- 1 Old Lock 20
- 2 Lee Creek
- 3 Lock 19
- 4 Belpre Access Park
- 5 Point Park
- 6 Marietta Levee
- 7 Williamstown Boat Ramp
- 8 ORINWR Headquarters
- 9 Corning Park
- 10 Leachtown Lane
- 11 Spring Valley/ Mouth of Hughes

