



## Kankakee River Water Trail

Plan – 2015

### **Current Conditions:**

The current state of the Kankakee River Water Trail is that there are public access sites approximately every 5 to 8 miles apart throughout the entire Kankakee River in both Indiana and Illinois. These public access sites are owned and maintained by several different property managers that all have provided letters of support for the National Water Trail designation. The owners include local county parks - departments, the Indiana and Illinois DNR's, and local municipalities.

### **River Maintenance:**

In Indiana, the river is maintained through a cooperative partnership between the Kankakee River Basin Commission and the local county surveyors. In Illinois, where the river is much wider and less prone to - log jam issues, the river is maintained by the Kankakee River Conservancy. All of these organizations are partners in the National Water Trail project.

### **Future Public Access Site Plans:**

The Northwest Indiana Paddling Association is working with several organizations on increasing the number of public access sites along the Kankakee River and have identified parcels with willing sellers that are actively being pursued. These partners include the Kankakee River Basin Commission, the Porter Co. Parks Department, the Lake County Parks Department, and Shirley Heinze Land Trust. Sites include:

- Dunn's Bridge County Park
- US 49 Public Access Site
- Grand Kankakee Marsh County Park

In Illinois:

- State Line Access
- Momence Access
- Aroma Park
- Kankakee River Road Park
- Kankakee Cobb Park
- Kankakee Beckman Park
- Kankakee Jeffers Park
- Kankakee Bird Park
- Chippewa Access
- Area 9 Access

- Des Plaines Fish and Wildlife Area

\* Other sites are available for a fee

### **Signage:**

All current public access locations in Indiana have uniform signage for the Kankakee River water trail which touch on history, safety, location (including maps), river rules, and other pertinent information. In Illinois, there is some signage at public access locations, but our plan is to continue to add the uniform signage that is in place in Indiana at all public access locations. The goal is to have all signage in place in Illinois by service organizations over seen with the assistance of the Northwest Indiana Paddlers Association and the Illinois Kankakee River Coalition. It is the goal to keep all signage identical throughout the river trail.

### **Paddling Campsites:**

Over the past three years, there has been an effort underway to develop leave-no-trace paddling campsites along the Kankakee River approximately every twenty miles. In LaPorte Co., the first of these campsites is currently in operation and is being well used by paddlers. There are plans to develop over the next two years campsites in Porter County and Lake County at several of the parks.

In Illinois it is our plan to provide camping sites every 15 miles. These site will be designed around the National Leave No Trace program. Currently there are several public parks along the Kankakee River that currently provide space for camping.

### **Mapping:**

There currently is an Arc Gis Story Map of the Kankakee River Water Trail that has recently been developed for the entire water trail. Over the coming few months, the story map will be greatly enhanced and publicly available. In addition, the plan is to release a unified paper map of the entire Kankakee River Water Trail this year. We decided to put off printing until after the National Water Trail Application process has been completed so we hopefully can incorporate that the Kankakee River is a National Water Trail into the document.

### **Other Initiatives:**

There currently are discussions of developing a promotional poster similar to the Lake Michigan Water Trail South Shore poster to help market the water trail. This likely will happen after a decision is made on whether to designate the Kankakee River a National Water Trail.