

BLUEWAYS: STAKEHOLDER OVERVIEW

STAKEHOLDER	ROLE	QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER
Land and Water Management & Local Government Organizations		
Watershed Council, Land Conservancy, and/or Conservation District	These groups often have a role in managing water bodies and associated natural resources. Natural resource managers often see the potential for stewardship and restoration that results from increased emphasis on waterways.	What are the ecologically vulnerable areas on the waterway? What actions should be taken to protect the biological integrity of these systems? Who manages the current paddling access points? Are there any water quality issues we should be aware of?
Department of Natural Resources (DNR) – Forest Resource Division	Manages forest lands along lakes and rivers.	If the water trail is on a designated river, what are the specifics of the zoning district regulations? Is the ordinance administered by the State or by local governments? What types of signage (wayfinding and interpretive) along the river would be appropriate?
DNR – Wildlife Division	Manages lands and access sites (including state game areas) along many water resources.	What is the formal process for getting DNR parcels approved for access-site development? Would the water trail conflict with other recreational uses like hunting, and when would those conflicts occur?
DNR – Parks and Recreation Division	Manages state park lands and state boating access sites.	Are there any scheduled improvements to your access site? Can your access site accommodate an accessible kayak launch? Can we include signage at the access site? Can we create paddle-in campsites? How many auxiliary campsites are in the state park?
DNR – Trails Section	Develops trails and is the liaison between trail groups and all other divisions.	Would you be willing to participate in our planning process, and can you help direct us to the appropriate contacts in other divisions? Can you tell us how the water trail may connect with other trails in the region?

National Forest Service	Manages forest lands and boating access sites within the national forest.	Are there any scheduled improvements to your access sites, and can they accommodate an accessible kayak launch? Can we include signage at the access site? Can we create paddle-in campsites?
National Park Service	Manages national parks and access sites within national parks and lakeshores.	Can we use an existing access site in the park as a stop for the water trail?
Dam Managers	If your waterway contains any dams, dam managers can provide valuable information on how water levels are managed, how water levels change throughout the year, and the preferred method for navigating around the dam(s).	How many dams are located on this waterway? What is the nature and history of the dam(s)? What is the best way to portage around the dam(s)? Do you have any recommendations for infrastructure improvements that would make the portage easier?
Local Units of Government	Early cooperation with local governments is important in ensuring the success of the water trail.	Would a water trail benefit your community? If so, how? Are you currently planning for paddlesports in your parks and recreation plan or municipal Master Plan? Does this water trail complement any of your existing planning efforts? Are there any paddling-related infrastructure improvements you are planning to make? Are there any water quality issues?
Tribes	Native Americans have a rich history of using waterways for transportation, trading, and sustenance. Tribal lands and Native American reservations are self-governed.	Can you share any history on how this river/ water body has been used and managed historically? Would a water trail benefit your community? If so, how? Does this water trail complement any of your existing planning or recreational efforts?
Regional Council of Governments and/ or County Governments	These regional public agencies often have expertise in Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and mapping services, land ownership and parcel delineation, and can provide other technical data sets.	What data is currently available for this waterway? What form is it in? Does any of the data need to be updated?
Water Resource Managers (e.g., Drain Commissioners)	County water resource managers have a handle on the system of human-made drains and creeks in the local watershed and can be a useful resource for informing new infrastructure decisions.	Do any county drains feed into this waterway? Would proposed access-site improvements impact the drainage system? Are there opportunities for improving water quality of the water trail through low-impact development (LID) or other green infrastructure techniques?

Public Safety and Law Enforcement	In coastal areas, the Coast Guard can provide information on water conditions, navigating harbors, and international waters. The Coast Guard is also a great resource for safety tips. Police and fire/rescue can provide information on local water rescue response protocols.	Are there segments of this water trail that are particularly dangerous? Are there certain times of the year when paddlers should be encouraged not to paddle? What is the best way for paddlers to get assistance in the event of an emergency? Are there paddling safety courses available that can be promoted? What types of safety signage should be added, and where should it be installed?
Community Groups		
Property Owners	Landowners are critical to trail development. Getting support and buy-in from adjacent properties early on in the process reduces conflict later on when the water trail is implemented.	Do you or your family members use the waterway for paddling? If so, how could your paddling experience be improved? What has your experience been with other paddlers? Do you have any concerns about paddlers not respecting your personal property? Do you have ideas for steps that could be taken to alleviate any impacts from paddlers using the waterway?
Historical Society, Library, Historical Museum, Native American Tribe	Institutions can help provide information about the cultural history and themes of the community. It can help in the development of promotional materials, interpretive signage, and programming.	What should the water trail celebrate? What will the water trail mean for the community? What makes this community or area unique? Are there any historical sites along the waterbody? What role did the waterbody play in the history of the community?
Accessibility and Disability Advocates	Advocates can help evaluate the accessibility of existing access sites and provide suggestions for improvements and modifications.	What are the obstacles to accessibility at the launch? What are the obstacles to accessibility for the entire site (bathrooms, parking, routes, etc.)?
Environmental Educators	Environmental educators can provide information on existing educational programming offered on the waterway and identify opportunities for new educational programs. They can also identify opportunities for interpretive signage on the water trail.	What types of environmental education are you currently doing on the waterway? Who are you currently collaborating with? Do you bring culture and history into your activities? Are there opportunities for expanding environmental education on this waterway?
Trail Users		
Outfitters and Liveries	Existing outfitters and liveries can provide a wealth of information on waterway conditions, recreational paddling trends, and other factors impacting the water trail.	How long have you operated as a livery? What segments of the waterway do you use? What trends have you noticed in paddlers using your livery services? Would an increase in liveries on the waterway negatively or positively impact your business? Do you have any recommendations for access-site improvements?

Anglers	Engaging anglers in the planning process can help alleviate conflicts between paddlers and anglers. Additionally, many anglers are also avid paddlers, so they can help bridge any divides between the two user groups.	How often and at what time of year do you fish this waterway? Are there segments of this waterway that would be negatively impacted by an increase in paddlers? What strategies should paddlers use to share the waterway with anglers? Are there times during the day when paddlers should be discouraged from paddling? Are there times during the day and/or season that angler activity is low?
Paddling Clubs	Local paddling groups often have an intimate knowledge of the waterways and how the conditions change throughout the year. Paddlers can also play an important role in promoting the water trail and raising funds for access site improvements.	How large is your paddling club? What types of activities and paddle events do you organize? Do you hold an annual river or beach cleanup? What opportunities do you see for improving paddling access and the overall paddling experience? Are there opportunities to market this water trail to new user groups and bring in more paddlers to the community?
Economic Development Organizations		
Economic Development and Tourism Professionals	The regional economic development corporation, Convention and Visitor Bureau, or Chamber of Commerce can provide information on any branding or promotion efforts currently underway in the area, help inform a marketing strategy for the water trail, and could be potential funding partners.	Have you measured the economic impact that paddling has on the local economy? Do you see opportunities for partnering with other groups in the community to promote paddling and use of this water trail?

