



## PA Water Trails Partnership

Pennsylvania has a statewide program to support the development of water trails. The partners include: PA Department of Conservation & Natural Resources, PA Environmental Council, PA Fish & Boat Commission, National Park Service – Chesapeake Bay Gateways & Watertrails Network and National Park Service-Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program. The partners are available to assist with local water trail efforts and to advance projects at the statewide level.

According to our signed “Statement of Purpose”, the PA Water Trails Partnership established several goals for the PA Water Trails Program.

- To encourage and further the development of water trails in Pennsylvania,
- To strengthen the connections between and among existing water trails to promote a system of water trails,
- To better market and promote Pennsylvania’s water trails as a recreational resource to residents and visitors alike,
- To provide technical assistance to local project managers who are implementing water trail projects,
- To promote the national recognition of Pennsylvania’s water trails,
- To provide assistance to local project manager specifically with the long-term maintenance, stewardship and sustainability of water trails.
- To promote the development and management of water trails as a means to enhance citizen stewardship of local water resources

Accordingly, the PA Water Trails Executive Committee has renewed the water trail designation process for the PA Water Trails Program. Existing and active water trails will be “grandfathered” into the program if the established selection criteria are met through the benchmarking process that was undertaken by the Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC). If you are involved with an existing water trail that is no longer active please let us know.

New applicants to the PA Water Trails Program will complete an application process by answering the questions on the survey tool that is being used for benchmarking purposes. The survey tool is based on the principles and guidelines of the PA Water Trails Program.

### PA Water Trail Principles

1. Partnerships/Feasibility
2. Stewardship
3. Volunteerism
4. Education
5. Conservation
6. Community Vitality
7. Diversity
8. Wellness & Wellbeing





## PA Water Trails Partnership

The PA Water Trails Executive Committee will review and make decisions about the designation for each water trail. Once a decision is made PEC will notify the local water trail partner. Each partner will receive a letter of welcome into the PA Water Trails Program that may be helpful for funding applications and other applications for additional recognitions. Existing water trails will receive a letter acknowledging their participation in the program.

Generally groups that indicate an interest in undertaking the minimum requirements for water trail development will be included and welcomed into the program.

Every water trail must have...

- A **local managing organization** to care about and manage the trail.
- Public involvement** by the local community.
- A **map** providing information for using the trail.
- Information** provided to users on the internet and/or printed materials.
- Water trail **feasibility study or plan** to determine if your waterway can be a water trail.

The Partnership strongly advocates for the following early water trail activities...

- Active **volunteers** who will participate in the management of the trail.
- Signage** that can direct users, interpret the resource, provide safety and orientation information.
- Maintenance** of existing and new amenities (boat access points, signage, information provided, etc.).

Every water trail project should consider...

- Designation** by the CBGN (where relevant), National Recreation Trail, American Canoe Association or other nationally recognized organization.
- For-Sale** water trail map & guide.
- Volunteer** recruitment & development program.
- Conducting **outreach educational programs**.
- Trail amenities** & facilities including campsites, comfort stations, access points, a full range of signage, etc.
- There are a variety of additional **planning and implementation** efforts to consider:
  - Stewardship & conservation plan.
  - Interpretive Plan
  - Management Plan
  - Marketing & promotion plan.





## PA Water Trails Partnership

Letters will be reviewed periodically determine if water trail project managers continue to meet the goals of the agreement and if water trails should continue to be included in the PA Water Trails Program.

Your designation and continued participation in the program is dependent on maintaining the minimum level of criteria. If you are no longer able to maintain the criteria established as “Every water trail must have...” the Partnership reserves the right to remove the water trail from the PA Water Trails Program.

The goals of the PA Water Trails Partnership are concerned with enhancing the sustainability and long term management of PA’s water trails. Activities that meet these goals are included in the PA Water Trails Handbook and will be encouraged through a robust technical assistance program.

PA Water Trails will have access to:

1. Use of the PA Water Trails logo.
2. Letter of recognition.
3. Link on [www.fishandboat.com](http://www.fishandboat.com).
4. Enhanced web resources and marketing, which will be a repository for water trails related information.
5. Potential to participate in interactive online mapping that is being developed by the PFBC.
6. Periodic updating of the **PA Water Trails Handbook**.
7. Up to two **technical assistance workshops** or statewide water trail conferences to be held each year with content inspired by local project managers.
8. Management and promotion of the **PA Water Trails Yahoo Group** and other social media development.
9. Individual **technical assistance** provided to local groups on an as needed/requested basis (examples include assistance with managing public meetings, guidance on developing water trail map and guides, examples of water trail signage, etc) from statewide program partners.
10. Inclusion in any statewide marketing effort related to water trails.

