



## Pennsylvania Water Trail Designation Criteria

Please review the checklist to see if your water trail is eligible to become a designated Pennsylvania Water Trail

### Physical attributes

- My water trail is navigable for the majority of the paddling season
- My water trail has sufficient public access points to enable varying lengths of paddle trips
- My water trail has connections to towns or other amenities such as campsites and land trails
- It is easy and feasible to portage around river hazards on my water trail

### Available Resources

- My organization can design, update, and produce free maps, and make them available to the public
- My organization is able to use cohesive PA Water Trails branding on maps and guides
- My organization can create and install adequate signage for public water trail use
- My water trail is connected to other designated Pennsylvania Water Trails

### Community Engagement

- There is ample community support for my water trail
- We have hosted several public meetings about becoming a designated water trail
- There is capacity among local organizations to maintain my water trail
- There are outfitters available on my water trail
- My organization has done outreach to adjoining designated water trails

# Becoming a designated Pennsylvania Water Trail

## Requirements of Water Trail Managers

### 1. Working towards Pennsylvania Water Trail Principles

Water trail managers work with partner organizations to accomplish the eight Water Trail principles on their waterways. The principles drive the creation of the water trail management structure. Please describe how you will work towards each principle and list individuals specialized in each principle who will join the water trail management structure. Individuals can represent multiple principles.

- Partnerships

- A water trail is the product of partnerships among an array of government and non-governmental entities. With volunteers as the key supporters and advocates of the trail, partnerships are developed among government land managing agencies, private property owners, government regulatory agencies, user groups, and local businesses. Together, these groups can create, maintain, and promote a successful water trail with broad-based and long-term support.

- Who will represent the partnership principle on your water trail management committee?

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- How will you create partnerships on your water trail?

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- Stewardship

- Water trails promote minimum-impact practices that ensure a sustainable future for waterways and adjacent lands. Water trails promote the responsible use and enjoyment of the outdoors. A trail user who understands their potential impact to water, soil, vegetation, wildlife, and other trail users will be a better caretaker. When users learn to protect and restore areas along the trail, they may be inclined to do likewise in their own communities and backyards.

- Who will represent the stewardship principle on your water trail management committee?

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- How will you encourage stewardship on your water trail?

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- Volunteerism

- Most water trails are created, promoted, and maintained through the energy and dedication of local citizens, working individually and through organizations to support the trail. Community involvement and volunteerism are the keys to developing a sense of trail stewardship, promoting the trail within the community, encouraging respect for the trail's natural and cultural heritage, and ensuring that local governments support the trail's existence. Through love of place – and of good times – volunteers bring hard work and celebration to the water trail community.

- Who will represent the volunteerism principle on your water trail management committee?

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- How will you create volunteerism on your water trail?

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- Education

- Through comprehensive trail guides, signage, public outreach, and informative programs, water trail organizations encourage awareness of the natural, cultural, and historical attributes of the trail. Serving as outdoor classrooms, water trails teach through seeing, listening, touching – experiencing.

- Who will represent the education principle on your water trail management committee?

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- How will you encourage education on your water trail?

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- **Conservation**

- Water trail activities support the conservation of the aquatic ecosystem, contiguous lands, and important cultural artifacts. Trail builders and activists are a respected constituency advocating for resource protection and participating in resource restoration. The water trail community is a watchdog in prevention of environmentally harmful acts, striving to sustain the natural integrity of the trail and preserve the quality of the trail experience.

- Who will represent the conservation principle on your water trail management committee?

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- How will you encourage conservation on your water trail?

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- **Community Development**

- A water trail is a network of recreation and educational opportunities. Hiking trails, bikeways, greenways, museums, historic sites, parks, and preserves are connected by water trails creating frontiers for exploration, discovery, and enrichment. The connections build a sense of place and bind citizens in a love for their community. When trail users take advantage of adjacent towns and amenities, they also create economic benefits for the communities.

- Who will represent the community development principle on your water trail management committee?

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- How will you create community development on your water trail?

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- Diversity

- Water trails are non-exclusive. They benefit the able-bodied and the disabled, the young and the old, the disadvantaged and the privileged. Water trails welcome all those that want to respectfully enjoy and appreciate the trail experience. Through shared work and play, tolerance and understanding are fostered. Broad-based participation in trail activities is achieved through affirmative outreach and recruitment.

- Who will represent the diversity principle on your water trail management committee?

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- How will you create diversity on your water trail?

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- Wellness and Well-being

- Water trails are wholesome; fresh air and exercise bring fitness and health to trail users. While actively promoting these benefits, water trail users need reliable and accurate safety information and training to responsibly enjoy and appreciate water trails. Safe use requires a commitment to safe design and sound management. Awareness, education, and safety skills training promote the wellness and well-being of all water trail users.

- Who will represent the wellness and well-being principle on your water trail management committee?

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- How will you create wellness and well-being on your water trail?

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2. Managing the different stages of your water trail  
As your water trail develops and is established as a recreational destination, its management needs will shift. Please detail below how you foresee meeting evolving needs of your water trail (250 words each):

- o Establishment: what specific capacity do you have to establish the water trail as a designated Pennsylvania Water Trail and a premier recreation destination?

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- o Programming and promotion: once your trail is established, what specific capacity do you have to continue bringing users to your trail and promoting your trail as a recreational destination?

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- o Maintenance: once your trail is established, what specific capacity do you have to manage ongoing maintenance of access points, signage and maps, invasive species, bank erosion, etc.?

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3. Involvement in statewide network of water trail managers

Managers of designated Pennsylvania Water Trails are expected to attend the annual statewide managers meeting in Central Pennsylvania, periodic regional meetings, and complete an annual survey of manager needs. Active participation in the Pennsylvania Water Trails network is key to the success of the Pennsylvania Water Trails Program.

Our organization is able to attend the annual managers meeting of the Water Trails Program

Our organization is able to attend regional meetings of water trail managers in our area

Our organization is willing to complete surveys for the Water Trails Program

## Feasibility Study

A water trail feasibility study must be completed before applying for designation and sent to the Pennsylvania Water Trails Program Designation Committee along with this application.

- The feasibility study must contain:
  - Description of physical attributes
    - Basement water levels, length of navigability, etc.
  - Description of public outreach through public meetings
  - Management, operation, maintenance, and fiscal feasibility
    - Identification of a water trail management structure
    - Identify public-private partnerships where applicable
  - Inventory of public access sites, signage, and recreational and cultural amenities along the waterway
  - Recommendations based on the inventory
    - i.e., need to develop additional boat access points
  - Qualification of water trail
    - Wild, river town, urban
    - Beginner paddle, experienced paddler

Please contact the Pennsylvania Water Trails Program for examples of successful feasibility studies or help finding consultants to make your feasibility study if necessary.

## Removal from Water Trail Program

- Grounds for removal
  - Lack of management structure
  - Lack of interaction/communication with PA Water Trails program
  - Change in public access status
- Process of removal
  - Notification of pending removal after one year of failure to communicate with PA Water Trails program
    - Including annual manager's survey and annual manager's meeting
  - Failure to respond to notification letter within 6 months triggers removal from PA Water Trail program
  - Re-designation is possible with proof of restructured/revived management structure