<u>Pennsylvania Water Trail Program's Template/Guide for a Water Trail Management Plan</u>

Section 1: Basic Trail Information

Water Trail Name

Water Trail Manager(s)

Trail Location Description from where to where, incl. counties Major cities, townships, passed

General description of the trail including history of designation, length, start/end point, general paddling and recreation experience expectations, cultural/historical significance, major land trail connections, etc.

Main trail highlights, points of interest, history of designation, etc.

Section 2: Best/Existing Management Practices and Management Priorities

• Recreational Opportunities

➤ Describe existing infrastructure: access points; what types of activities and watercraft are supported; types of paddling experiences can one expect; outfitters; connections with land or other trails;

➤ Identify priority recreation improvements: new access; improved access; need for landowner agreements; improved camping sites; bikeshare opportunities; transit or "getting to town" opportunities; parking, restrooms, picnic areas; dam removals; fishing; etc.

➤ If camping is available along the water trail what are the priority needs; what are strategies for improving sites, access, use, etc.?

➤ What are additional recreation opportunities along or near the trail? Are there opportunities for enhancing linkages between paddling and other recreation?

➤ If the water trail manager hosts Sojourns, what are the goals and objectives of such events? To what extent have the events advanced those goals? Is the manager considering new approaches to sojourns to better meet goals and objectives? Is the manager considering changes to those goals and objectives in light of new and changing demographics, social priorities, new priorities of funding/sponsor entities, etc.

• Existing Education Programs and Priority New Programming

➤ Describe existing education programming facilitated by the Water Trail Manager or key partners/collaborating organizations

➤ What are your education priorities: Consider audience (youth, family, new paddlers, novice, etc.); type (in-person/remote/kiosks); topic(s); topics (safety, basic river ecology/science, paddling techniques, preparing for a multi-day trip, culture and history, wellness and well-being, etc.)

➤ Outreach: How do you engage with existing and potential new users and what are new ways you can consider: radio, festivals and events, museums and visitor centers; websites and social media

• Conservation and Stewardship

  ➢ Describe existing conservation efforts hosted, coordinated, or facilitated by the WT Manager or your strategic partners, main collaborators, etc. Examples- trash clean up, invasive species removals, tree plantings, Green Stormwater Infrastructure, habitat restoration, WQ monitoring.
  ➢ Have priority future river conservation areas or other conservation practices been identified?
  ➢ Is there a strategy for protecting priority conservation areas along the river or implementing new conservation initiatives?
  ➢ Does local zoning promote protection of natural areas where resources are sensitive and concentrate development in less sensitive or already-developed areas? Are there strategies for enhancing protections if not?
  ➢ Any strategies for partnering or engaging new collaborators/partners to further conservation goals?
  ➢ How are "Leave No Trace" type principles encouraged while still allowing for diverse and inclusive users and activities on and along the trail? (Consider this article, perhaps.)
  ➢ Is there a strategy for enhancing or making stewardship efforts available to volunteers, ambassadors, paddlers?

• Community Support, Partnerships, Development

  ➢ What is the nature of the current support base- individuals/adjacent land owners and organizations, including local business and industry (eg. outfitters and water supply companies), state, federal, and local government, landowners, and conservation, recreation, and tourism advocates?
  ➢ Does the water trail have strategic partner organizations with a shared vision, who have committed to a long term joint arrangement with a written agreement (e.g. MOU) that lays out clear roles, expectations, and responsibilities; promotes shared decisions-making, collaboration, and accountability?
  ➢ Does the water trail manager work with collaborating organizations who promote one another's, efforts, support programming and outreach, advance one or more objectives of the water trails, etc.?
  ➢ How many volunteers have been involved in the water trail? How are they involved?
  ➢ Do you have goals for increasing community support/volunteer engagement? What are your strategies for reaching those goals?
  ➢ In what ways do you as WT Manager "give back" to the community? What are some ways in which you can increase the support for those organizations that support your efforts?
  ➢ planning to use partnerships, outreach, education, public information, to further DEI goals?

• Public Information

  ➢ How do you promote paddling, conservation, education activities to your constituents?
  ➢ What is your current PR plan?
  ➢ What are your PR priorities? Strategies for implementing them?
  ➢ What is your current relationship with local media? What are your plans for strengthening that relationship? Do you have multi-lingual media sites in your area?
  ➢ What are the main user conflicts on your trail? What is you plan for addressing them?

➢ How does "the public" get in touch with you; are the pathways to information clear and adequate? Plans to improve upon them?

• Trail Maintenance

➢ What are the current strategies for trail and access maintenance? Who is responsible for maintaining each access point on the trail? Are water body, flow, currents, flood potential, shoreline, riparian vegetation, and types of users accessing the launch considered?

➢ What design standards, guidelines, are used when creating new access or improving existing access? Do launch design standards minimize riverbank and vegetation disturbance during construction and over time? Are launches designed with maximum user accessibility in mind?

➢ What signage currently exists?

➢ Identify priority signage needs and locations. Should new standards or criteria be considered for signage?

➢ Are there consistent standards for signs along the water trail? What information do signs provide (for example, safety, navigation, stewardship, interpretation)? Is there opportunity for improvement?

➢ Are hazards adequately and consistently signed? What are priority safety hazards that need to be better signed?

➢ Is there a process or procedure for reporting trail maintenance needs (either immediate or longer term) to the WT manager or a responsible party?

• Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

➢ In what ways is the water trail promoted to all who may wish to use it?

➢ How does the WT manager and any collaborators/partners support access to and use by all (example considering and minimizing financial obstacles; consider this article.)

➢ What are the goals for DEI within the water trail managing organization and with respect to use and enjoyment? What are the strategies for advancing those goals?

Section 3: Contact information

Section 4: Photos, Maps, Logo