

WI-IL FOX RIVER WATER TRAIL

Core Development Team

<http://www.foxriverecosystem.org/trail.htm>

March 15, 2016

Dear Fox River affiliate,

We would like to introduce our team and share information about a multi-faceted, exciting project in your area. We are the Wisconsin -Illinois Fox River Water Trail Core Development Team, a group working to develop a water trail on the 223-mile Fox River, from Wisconsin through Illinois. A water trail is a series of sustainable, marked access sites along a waterway which connects communities and increases awareness about the waterway.

A bi-state group met in July of 2015 to discuss submitting an application for a grant of technical assistance from the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program; the technical assistance grant was received in October.

Since then we have had several meetings to develop vision and mission statements and establish goals (see below). The team will keep the mission and goals at the forefront of our planning as we combine our efforts with key stakeholders and communities along the river. We will share information about public workshops with opportunities for interested parties to share their enthusiasm, skills and expertise to bring the vision of the WI-IL Fox River Water Trail to reality.

We welcome your participation and look forward to collaborating with you. In the meantime, please visit our web page: <http://www.foxriverecosystem.org/trail.htm> and share this information with others.

Sincerely,

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WI-IL Fox River Water Trail Core Development Team

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Angie Tormes -- National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program

WI-IL Fox River Water Trail

Vision Statement: The Fox River Water Trail from Lisbon, Wisconsin, to the confluence with the Illinois River in Ottawa, Illinois provides suitable access to the public to enjoy the quiet and active recreation, scenic beauty, abundant wildlife, and historic and cultural features. Communities along the Fox River embrace stewardship and public engagement to create and maintain a sense of place.

Mission Statement: The mission of the WI-IL Fox River Water Trail Core Development Team is to develop and support a sustainable 223-mile water trail along the Fox River.

Goals:

1. Develop the WI-IL Fox River Water Trail Action Plan using the National Water Trail System's best management practices and guidance.
 - a. Conduct an evaluation of access sites and locations for existing conditions and go a gap analysis to identify where new access sites may be needed.
 - b. Develop the WI-IL Fox River Water Trail map, website, and signage with information on access points; dams and other hazards; trip times; points of interest; historical, cultural, and natural features; and resources.
 - c. Complete and submit an application for national designation in the National Water Trail System.
 - d. Support the enhancement and development of access sites for all abilities as needed.
2. Develop and promote an education component that recognizes the geologic and human history of the river and communities along the river, the cultural features, natural resources, and wildlife that visitors will encounter.
3. Protect and advocate for the environment and water quality of the Fox River and a program of promoting the Fox River environment and features.
4. Design a public planning process to engage communities and other stakeholders to develop and sustain the water trail.
5. Identify a sustainable oversight partnership to guide water trail implementation, including programming, maintenance, and promotion.