

Fox Water Trail Initiative Planning Archives – 2018 to 2019

Sept. 2019 On September 23rd the Core Development Team (CDT) bid a grateful and fond farewell to Angie Tornes from the National Park Service (NPS) who has been guiding us through the process to create the Fabulous Fox! Water Trail. Amidst the expressions of appreciation, Angie presented Illinois co-chair Karen Miller and Kane County with a Partner Excellence Award on behalf of the NPS Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program. Angie's departure doesn't mean the Team has completed the tasks needed to submit an application to the NPS for consideration as part of the National Water Trail System. Angie has laid the groundwork for the CDT to move forward with developing a Management Plan, continue to request letters of support and resolutions and other tasks. So, if you have not submitted a letter of support or passed a resolution on behalf of your local government or organization in support of the Fabulous Fox! please contact Karen Miller who can send you templates. In the meantime, the CDT continues to process all the comments provided during the five open houses held in June. Appropriate suggestions will be added to the next version of the maps which can be found at fabulousfoxwatertrail.org.

Aug. 2019 The Core Development Team met at the Department of Public Works in Burlington, Wisconsin on August 7th. The Team reviewed the written and map comments received at the five open houses held in June. Members from Wisconsin and Illinois discussed the comments and will investigate their feasibility and edit the map and website where appropriate. The team also performed a gap analysis along the Fox River. This analysis included identifying areas along the River where distances between existing access sites exceeds five miles. Five miles is the maximum distance recommended by the National Park Service. The Team will look for public lands where needed access sites may be recommended.

June 2019 The Core Development Team (CDT) has been hosting a series of Open Houses to encourage public input on the draft series of maps illustrating the data collected on the access sites, dams and portages along the Fox River. Recent Open Houses were held in Geneva and Yorkville, Illinois, and Waukesha and Burlington, Wisconsin, where the Team received many substantial comments including those drawn on the maps provided.

May 2019 The Core Development Team unveiled the Fabulous Fox! Water Trail website! Please check it out for access sites, online and printable maps, itineraries and information on safety. We are constantly adding and updating information. For instance, Illinois itineraries will be added soon. Please send comments or suggestions for additional information to Karen Ann Miller. The printable brochure has recently become available. The Team contracted to distribute 40,000 copies to hotels, attractions and transportation hubs in the Milwaukee and Chicago regions. Also, Team members have been distributing brochures to organizations, local governments and anyone interested! Please contact Karen Ann Miller if you'd like one or more copies. The Team is also scheduling Public Workshops along the Fox, encouraging the public to learn more about the Fabulous Fox! Water Trail, draw on maps and provide comments! The following workshops have been scheduled from 4:00 to 6:00 PM and hope to schedule a workshop in LaSalle County soon:

- Mon. June 17th, Kane County Government Center, 719 S. Batavia Ave., Geneva, IL
- Wed. June 19th, Department of Public Works, 2200 S. Pine St., Burlington, WI
- Mon. June 24th, Hampton Inn Yorkville, 310 E. Countryside Parkway, Yorkville, IL
- Tue. June 25th, Waukesha County Park & Land Use, 515 W. Moreland Blvd., Room 255, Waukesha, WI
- Fri. June 28th, City of McHenry Rec Center, 333 S. Green St., McHenry, IL

Please join us at one or more workshops. We value your knowledge and experience and want to share our information with you!

April 2019 The Core Development Team met in Waterford, Wisconsin on Monday April 8, 2019. Colleen Schauer, Utilities Clerk with the Village of Waterford, joined the Team. Tom Slawski summarized the March 22nd Fox River Summit. There were 162 attendees. The FF!WT unveiled the brochure, web portal and downloadable map series. In the future, Tom will provide a summary of the Working Groups (Water Quality, Agriculture, FF!WT, Education/Outreach, and Love Our Water Day!) that met at the end of the day. Tom is collecting suggestions for the 8th Annual Fox River Summit scheduled for Thursday March 26, 2020. Regarding the brochures, the Team is tweaking the final version to include logos from the National Park Service, Illinois Tourism and Travel Wisconsin who, along with the Kane County Development Dept. are funding the printing and distribution. Barb will write the segment descriptions to compliment the downloadable map series. The Burlington Water Treatment Plant announced the future development of a new access site. Discussed selling the FF!WT caps provided to attendees at the Summit. The CDT is scheduling several public workshops to receive comments and suggestions from the public. The next CDT meeting is scheduled for Wednesday June 5th at the Lost Valley Visitor Center in McHenry County from 1:00 to 3:00.

February 2019 On February 11 the Core Development Team (CDT) met at the beautiful and snowy Lost Valley Visitor Center in Ringwood, Illinois. The Team welcomed recently retired Barb Messick back as a consultant for the Village of Waterford, Wisconsin, remaining as Wisconsin co-chair of the CDT. The upcoming Fox River Summit on March 22nd in Burlington, Wisconsin was discussed. The organizers are hopeful some elected and appointed officials from within the Fox River Watershed will attend. The web portal and brochures for the Fabulous Fox! Water Trail will be unveiled at the Summit. Angie will investigate funding for a pop-up/pull-up banner of the Fox River Watershed. The Team discussed scheduling at least three open houses for the public to review and provide comment on the Fabulous Fox! Map. Barb will work with Charlie Zine, who paddled the entire length of the Fox River last year with Chuck Roberts, on segment descriptions to be included in the web portal. The CDT received Letters of Support and Resolutions from the McHenry County Conservation District and the Fox Valley Park District. Thank you! Local governments, organizations, park districts or other stakeholders along the Fox River who would like to support the Fabulous Fox! Water Trail in applying for designation to the National Park Service's National Water Trail System should contact Karen Ann Miller at millerkaren@co.kane.il.us.

January 2019 The Core Development Team's 1/28/19 meeting was postponed. There will be a Water Trail presentation at the Fox River Summit on March 22 in Burlington, WI.

December 2018 The Core Development Team met at the Village of Waterford Village Hall on December 20th. The Team discussed the upcoming Fox River Summit scheduled for Friday March 22nd in Burlington, Wisconsin. The agenda includes a diverse group of speakers. A coalition of Fox River stakeholders is working to invite the two Governors-elect from Wisconsin and Illinois as well as heads of the Departments of Natural Resources, Convention & Visitors Bureaus and elected officials along the Fox River. Members of the Team continue to work with Matt Kania of Map Hero to develop the interactive map and brochure. At our next meeting in January the Team will begin to plan public outreach meetings to be held in 2019. The Team continues to collect letters of support and resolutions from local governments, organizations and other stakeholders along the Fox River.

November 2018 On November 28th the Core Development Team met in Ringwood, Illinois. The CDT discussed the upcoming Fox River Summit on March 22, 2019 in Burlington, Wisconsin. Suggestions were made to send separate invitations to the head of the Department of Natural Resources, tourism secretaries, municipalities and board members in both states in addition to the new Governors and State Legislators. The CDT continues to work with Matt Kania from Map Hero on the brochure, mapping and website. Dave provided information on distribution of brochures from a company named CTM. The CDT also discussed other marketing strategies including ads on social media and the need to develop a Facebook page for the Fabulous Fox! The Team reviewed and made a couple of minor adjustments to the timeline. Barb announced the installation of a new access site for paddlers in Burlington, Wisconsin. The next CDT meeting is scheduled for December 20th in Waterford, WI.

October 2018 At the October 30, 2018 meeting held at the Village of Waterford, Wisconsin, the National Park Service Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance program approved Technical Assistance from Angie Tornes for the development of the Fabulous Fox! Water Trail for another year. The Core Development Team (CDT) continues to work with Matt Kania from Map Hero on the brochure, mapping and website. Charlie Zine, who paddled the entire length of the Fox River with Chuck Roberts earlier this year provided information on portages around each of the dams in Illinois. The CDT discussed possible funding sources for printing the brochure. Dave Blank will research distribution costs. Angie provided several examples of other water trails' gap analysis and management/action plans to guide the development of those for the Fabulous Fox! Angie introduced a draft timeline for the duration of the project. Angie & Karen presented at "A Fox River Testimony" hosted by The Conservation Foundation on November 8th highlighting paintings of the Fox River by artist Joel Sheesley. The CDT received a Letter of Support from the Illinois Paddling Council. The next CDT meeting is scheduled for November 28th at the Lost Valley Visitor Center in Ringwood, Illinois.

Sept 2018 On Wednesday September 26th the Core Development Team met at the Lost Valley Visitor Center in Ringwood, Illinois. The Team would like to welcome Alan Barrows from Waukesha County, Wisconsin! Since the last meeting on August 15th the Team approved a final version of the logo and continue to review and tweak the brochure. Illinois existing conditions access data was submitted to those on the Team working with Map Hero, our consultant. This data was collected with the much appreciated assistance of several volunteers who accessed the Fox River and completed surveys the Team provided. Charlie Zine and Chuck Roberts completed an adventurous trip along the entire length of the Fox River and are generously providing a narrative describing their experiences portaging the many dams along the Fox River in Illinois. This information will be a valuable part of the Fabulous Fox! Water Trail website. Charlie is also in the process of journaling his and Chuck's experiences. Please check it out on the "Tales from the Trail" FREP webpage.

During the September 26th Team meeting Angie reiterated her plan to submit a request from the Government Printing Office to help pay for printing the brochure. Dave Blank expects to be able to provide the costs of distributing the brochures. Karen will begin reviewing existing water trail plans to brainstorm ideas for the development of the Fabulous Fox! Water Trail Plan. The Team discussed reviewing gaps in existing access sites along the Fox River for possible future recommendations. The next Core Development Team meeting is scheduled for Tuesday October 30th from 2:00 to 4:00 at the Village of Waterford, Wisconsin Village Hall.

Aug 2018 The Core Development Team (CDT) met at the Village of Waterford, Wisconsin Village Hall on Wednesday August 15th. The Team members reviewed several logos and a second draft of a tri-fold brochure and rack card our consultant, Matt Kania, designed for the Water Trail and are looking forward to another draft. Discussed the mapping data which is due to Brian, Tom and Rick by the end of August and will then be forwarded to Matt Kania. Angie provided updated quotes from a couple of printers for the brochure and rack card and may be able to secure some funding through the National Park Service (NPS) Rivers, Trails & Conservation Program. Discussed possible means of distributing these items to make available to tourists in the Chicago region. Karen reported on a workshop hosted by the NPS focusing on Wilderness Inquiry and the opportunity to provide paddling access for children in lower income communities as well as individuals with disabilities. The CDT's next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday September 26th from 1:00 to 3:00 PM at the Lost Valley Visitor's Center in McHenry County.

July 2018 On July 12th the Core Development Team met at the City of McHenry Village Hall. Matt Kania from Map Hero, the project's consultant, provided several draft logos and a tri-fold brochure for the members to consider. Matt requested the Team provide him with high quality photos he can choose from for the brochure.

Tom Slawski led the discussion on the data needed for mapping which is due by the end of August. The Team plans to schedule public meetings after the 6th Annual Fox River Summit on March 22nd.

Charlie Zine and Chuck Roberts plan to paddle the entire length of the Fox River the following week and will provide photos and a journal of their adventure to be posted to the FREP Downstream newsletter.

The next Core Development Team meeting is scheduled for Wed. Aug. 15th from 1:00 to 3:00 in Waterford, Wisconsin.

June 2018 The Core Development Team (CDT) welcomed Matt Kania from Map Hero at the meeting held in Waterford, Wisconsin on Tuesday, June 12th, 2018. Matt was chosen as our consultant to develop the Fabulous Fox! Water Trail logo, web portal, downloadable map series, rack card, tri-fold brochure and powerpoint presentation template. These products are being funded through a grant from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and an anonymous donor to FREP. The CDT is looking for photos of paddlers on the Fox River to be used on the website and in marketing materials. Please email photos to Karen Ann Miller at millerkaren@co.kane.il/.us.

Team members continue to speak to local governments, organizations, etc. to ask for resolutions and letters of support for the Fabulous Fox! The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 12th at the City of McHenry City Hall at 1:00 PM.

May 2018 The Core Development Team met on May 2nd at the City of McHenry. City Residents and staff have expressed an interest in paddling and the development of the Water Trail. A few individuals who attended Angie and Karen's presentation at Canoecopia on March 10th have expressed an interest in volunteering to collect data. Data in parts of the Wis. side of the Fox need to be verified. A meeting will be scheduled with consultant Map Hero to discuss proceeding with the creation of the map, logo and brochures. The CDT reviewed websites of other water trails developed by Map Hero and discussed the aspects the Team prefers. The Convention and Visitors Bureaus committed to assist with marketing the Water Trail. Barb requested and received a resolution of support from state of Wisconsin legislators whose districts touch the Fox River. She will share the letter with Jaki who will work on obtaining support from Illinois legislators. Karen discovered the Outdoor Industry Association website which includes outdoor recreation economy by legislative district. Tentative dates and locations for public outreach workshops are on consecutive Thursdays: Waterford, September 27; Geneva, October 4; Ottawa, October 11. Upcoming events include the Illinois Water Trail Congress in Channahon IL on Oct. 15 and the Fox River Symposium at Aurora University on November 8. The CDT's next regular meeting is scheduled for June 12th.

March 2018 On February 17th the Core Development Team (CDT) met at the Lost Valley Visitors Center in McHenry County. Karen reported that data still needs to be collected in the Elgin, Carpentersville and Batavia, Illinois areas. Those interested in collecting data in those areas should contact Karen. Brian is working with Rick and Tom to create another draft version of the water trail map for the 6th Annual Fox River Summit on March 23rd. Brian relayed information about the Fox River Corridor Plan in McHenry County he is working on. This process will integrate the water trail and provide information for the development of the water trail. The CDT discussed the importance of including information on paddling safety in the Plan. The Team celebrated the awarding of a Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources Grant which, in combination with a volunteer match from Waterford, Wis. will allow the CDT to hire a consultant to create a logo, brochures and maps. Greg Farnham from the Rock River Water Trail provided invaluable advice about the CDT's budget. Angie will provide the Team with a list of water trail websites as examples for the Fabulous Fox! Angie and Karen spoke at Canoecopia on March 10th in Madison, Wis. Barb and Karen provided an update at the Fox River Summit March 23 in Burlington, WI. The CDT will be planning public outreach meetings in both states for late summer and early fall.

January 2018 The Core Development Team met on January 8th at the Village of Waterford, Wisconsin Village Hall. Karen Miller continues to receive existing conditions data on the access sites, dams and segments from volunteers in Illinois. There are a few sites remaining where data needs to be collected. Tom Slawski expects to learn February 15th or later if the Water Trail's application for funding from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has been granted. Based on that announcement the Team will proceed to meet with Matt Kania, Map Hero, to discuss map and other graphic development. The Team continues to gather estimates on printing of brochures, etc. Dave Blank reported that this year's Real Racine Visitor's Guide features a two page article about the Water Trail Initiative. Angie Tornes attended the public meeting regarding the update to Wisconsin's SCORP (Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan). The Team discussed the importance of advocating for "silent sports." Angie and Karen are scheduled to speak at Canoecopia in Madison, Wisconsin on March 10th. The Team is encouraging all to register for the 6th Annual Fox River Summit in Burlington, Wisconsin. Barb Messick and Karen are scheduled to give an update on the Water Trail Initiative. The next Core Development Team meeting is scheduled for Tuesday February 27th in Illinois.