

Fox Water Trail Initiative Planning Archives – 2017 to 2015 Beginning Stages

December 2017 On December 4th the Core Development Team met at the Lost Valley Visitors Center in McHenry County. Karen Miller reported the Illinois volunteers are almost done collecting access site, dam and segment data. Once the Team secures funding, we will look at the development of maps, website, brochures and rack cards promoting the Fabulous Fox Water Trail! The ten Convention & Visitors Bureaus along the Fox River have agreed to provide funding for marketing materials and possible website assistance. Tom Slawski will be submitting a grant proposal to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to fund development of the maps, brochures, and website. Karen is looking for comparable grant opportunities on the Illinois side. FREP received a \$1500 donation from an anonymous source. It is expected that at least part of the donation will be available to the Water Trail Initiative.

Barb Messick plans to attend an open house on Dec. 12th regarding updating Wisconsin's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan as required by the federal government. Angie Tornes and Karen have been accepted to speak at Canoecopia on March 9 – 11 in Madison, Wisconsin. The Team also expects to provide an update at the March 23rd Fox River Summit in Burlington, Wisconsin. As usual, Greg Farnham from the Rock River Water Trail Initiative provided valuable insights into developing a water trail.

The Team is next scheduled to meet on Monday January 8th from 1:00 to 3:00 in Waterford, Wisconsin.

October 2017 The Core Development Team (CDT) welcomed two new members, Dave Blank from Real Racine Convention & Visitors Bureau and Jaki Berggren from Visit McHenry Convention & Visitors Bureau at the October 23rd meeting in Waterford, Wisconsin. Dave and Jaki advised the CDT about developing rack cards vs tri-fold brochures and where to consider distribution. They also suggested creating a mobile friendly link to the FabulousFoxWaterTrail website instead of an app since apps are becoming less popular and when the time comes, consider looking for an intern who is tech savvy to help develop a social media presence. Karen Miller provided an update on data collection and the volunteers assisting with that part of the process. There are still a few sites where data needs to be collected so please contact Karen (millerkaren@co.kane.il.us) if you are interested in helping.

The Team also tweaked the list of anticipated expenses for the upcoming year. Tom Slawski reviewed the Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources grant application he is working on to pay for development of the website and educational materials. Karen is in search of a similar grant in Illinois as the WDNR grant can only be used in Wisconsin. Any suggestions are appreciated. The CDT received a letter of support from the Director of IDNR! The Team is looking for letters of support or resolutions from all local governments and organizations along the Fox. Please contact Karen for templates. Tom is beginning to work on the agenda for the 6th Annual Fox River Summit in Burlington, Wisconsin on Friday March 23rd. Please send your suggested topics for presentations to Tom (tslawski@sewrpc.org).

The next CDT meeting is scheduled for Monday December 4th at the Lost Valley Visitors Center in Ringwood, Illinois from 1:00 to 3:00. If you are interested in attending please contact Karen to confirm the location.

September 2017 The Core Development Team met at the Lost Valley Nature Center on Sept. 20. The Team invited the Convention & Visitors Bureaus (CVBs) along the Fox River. The following CVBs joined us for a very productive meeting about branding and marketing the Water Trail: Racine County, Wis., McHenry County, Elgin, St Charles, Geneva, Aurora and Ottawa. One CVB from each state will join the Core Development Team. In addition, the Team discussed the ongoing data collection along the Fox in Illinois and upcoming presentations at the Friends of the Fox River event on Sept. 23rd and the Illinois Paddling Council Annual Meeting on Oct. 21st. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday October 23rd at Waterford Village Hall in Waterford, Wis.

August 2017 The Core Development Team met on August 28 at the Village of Waterford, Wisconsin Village Hall. Angie Tornes and Karen Miller are scheduled to meet with owners of the Dayton Dam on September 14th to discuss public access to the Fox River. The Team discussed coordinating with Openlands to collect data for the Initiative. Additional estimates on producing brochures and rack cards was reviewed. The Team will pursue meetings with the Convention & Visitors Bureaus. Barb Messick will draft a community newsletter article for local governments and organizations to use. Burlington, Wisconsin has expressed interest in adding paddling access sites.

July 2017 The Core Development Team met on July 31st at the Lost Valley Visitor Center in Ringwood, Illinois. Many segments of the Fox River in Illinois were closed for the last 2-3 weeks due to flooding. As these areas are reopened and safe to navigate, volunteers will begin data collection. The Team discussed the islands in the Fox River managed by the Bureau of Land Management and how the Initiative should address this issue. Graphics needs and estimates were discussed. Barb Messick sent an email blast to Illinois and Wisconsin municipalities, districts, libraries, legislators, and conservation, paddling, and other interested groups in the last week. She has received several requests for sample Letters of Support and Resolutions.

June 2017 On June 28, 2017 the Core Development Team met at the Village of Waterford, Wisconsin Village Hall. The Team decided to ask if private access owners would like to be included on the Water Trail Map. If they do not reply then they will not be included. A letter requesting Angie's continued assistance for another year was reviewed and approved by the Team. Karen shared copies of the spreadsheet including access sites and dams currently known as a result of her research. Access sites and dams were divided into suggested segments that can be tweaked as the data is collected.

On June 22nd Karen Miller emailed a letter requesting volunteers collect data this paddling season as well as the Volunteer Instruction Guide to those on the spreadsheet. As individuals respond, Karen is sending them the spreadsheet of access sites, dams and segments and asking them to choose where they would like to collect data. The Team chose "FabulousFoxWaterTrail.org" as the Initiative's domain name to be used when a website is developed. Rebecca Ewald suggested the Team approach the Convention & Visitors Bureaus in Wisconsin for advice on funding for both Wisconsin and Illinois.

May 2017 The Core Development Team met on Wednesday May 17th at the Lost Valley Visitor Center in McHenry County. The Team discussed the pros and cons of including private access sites on the map. Joe Keller, Executive Director of the Fox Waterway Agency, will provide information about access points and advise about the safest route for paddlers through the Chain O' Lakes. Karen provided an update on mapping of existing access sites and databases of existing access sites and volunteers. Angie asked Karen to create a folder on Google Drive to list documents related to public outreach. Continued the discussion on developing a budget to pay for graphics needs and other items. Karen will discuss with FREP Exec. Comm. the appropriate amount to include for grant administration. The next CDT meeting is scheduled for Wed. June 28th at 1:00 at Waterford, WI Village Hall.

April 2017 On April 17th the Core Development Team met at the City of Burlington, Wisconsin Public Works Department. Our hosts, Mayor Jeannie Hefty, staff and members of organizations discussed the Village's interactions with the Fox River including support for the Water Trail Initiative and interest in developing a canoe/kayak access. The Team finalized the documents to be offered to volunteers in order to collect data on access sites and segments as well as an accompanying Volunteer Instruction Guide. An update on existing Illinois data was provided. The Team began a discussion on developing a budget and funding opportunities. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday May 17th at a location in Illinois to be determined.

March 2017 Waukesha County, Wisconsin hosted the Core Development Team (CDT) on February 21st. Guests included staff from Waukesha County, the City of Waukesha, Wisconsin, the Village of Mukwonago, Wisconsin and the Southeastern Wisconsin Fox River Commission. As a result of the Water Trail Initiative, the Village of

Waterford, Wisconsin developed a business incubation opportunity to help a paddle sport rental business establish itself in Village Hall Park alongside the village-owned canoe/kayak launch. Paper forms in addition to electronic forms will be available to volunteers when collecting access site, dam and segment data. Karen Miller continues to map existing but outdated access site data in Illinois which will be updated by volunteers. The CDT plans to continue meeting at different locations along the Fox River in order to meet and interact with stakeholders.

1-23-17 Joe Keller, Executive Director of the Fox Waterway Agency hosted the Core Development Team (CDT) on January 9, 2017 in Fox Lake. The Team discussed the map Karen Miller is creating illustrating access site, dam and segment data currently available from historical sources. Brian Daly confirmed CMAP is able to store data generated by the Water Trail Initiative.

Angie Tornes mentioned a graphic artist she knows and provided an estimate of the items he could produce (logo, brochure, composite map, interactive website, online map, etc.) Karen will request a similar estimate from a company she is aware of including the possibility of making a short video.

The Team discussed developing a budget over the next few months and possible sources of funding. The CDT will work with FREP to develop a new Fox River Watershed poster. Joe would like to add the water trail map when it is completed to the Fox Waterway Agency's app. Tom Slawski, Rick Kania and Brian will develop a large map of the work the CDT has done so far to be displayed at the Fox River Summit on March 10th.

The CDT agreed to begin holding interactive public meetings after Illinois completes data collection. Barb Messick will draft a letter updating the Initiative to be sent to those who expressed interest. Angie and Karen described the Kane County Planners Holiday Forum they spoke at in Montgomery, Illinois on December 2nd and presented the Village's artwork as part of their Initiative called "Montgomery in Motion" that was painted in the street in front of Village Hall. (see pdf) Joe described a project the Fox Waterway Agency is working on to restore an island in Fox Lake that has been eroded to only about a couple of acres.

The CDT will next meet on Tuesday February 21st at a location to be determined.

12-5-16 The Core Development Team met on Monday November 28th in Silver Lake, Wisconsin. Matthew Collins, Director of Kenosha County Parks and Recreation spoke to the Team about their water trail, access sites and signage. Matthew offered his support of the Wisconsin-Illinois Fox River Water Trail Initiative. The Team's newest member, Greg Taylor, attended the November meeting. Greg is an active member of the Illinois Paddling Council and has offered to be the coordinator of volunteers in Illinois. The Team continued to revise the data collection forms for segment data. Karen talked about Illinois dam data acquired from the Fox River Study Group. Angie confirmed with Brian that CMAP will be able to print maps of the water trail as they are created and provide an online portal. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday January 9th, location to be determined.

10-26-16 The Core Development Team (CDT) enjoyed the beautiful fall weather and colors at our monthly meeting at Lost Valley Visitor Center in Glacial Park on Monday October 17th. We are inching ever so closer to having the survey to collect access site, dam and segment data and including the ability to upload photos completed and available through Google Drive for volunteers to use on their smartphones or tablets. Barb Messick and Rebecca Ewald continue to collect data on the Wisconsin side of the Fox River.

Karen Miller is beginning to sort through data on the Illinois side collected by a variety of sources beginning in 1999. Once Karen has determined what needs to be updated and collected, the new volunteer coordinator for Illinois, Greg Taylor will work with volunteers to collect the data needed. Greg has eagerly offered to take on this

responsibility. He has experience organizing for the Boy Scouts and is active with the Illinois Paddling Council and Prairie Rivers Network.

The CDT is looking forward to working with Greg. Sigrid Pilgrim from the IPC sent Karen a DVD with information about the Fox River assembled by Ralph Frese, “canoe maker and conservationist and prominent figure in the North American canoeing circles lived from 1926 until December 10, 2012. Frese lived in the Chicago area. He is known for promoting conservation and canoeing, building historic replica canoes, and starting canoeing and conservation organizations and events” (Wikipedia). The CDT plans to continue discussion on budget, funding and the examples of logos Angie sent to the Team and the several logos Barb designed and offered as possibilities. Greg Farnham, Coordinator of the Rock River Trail Initiative, described the several trails affiliated with the original project including water, bike, walking, driving, air and chocolate. Greg reminded the Team of the need to eventually request local governments and organizations pass resolutions supporting the Fox River Water Trail. With the exception of the CDT’s first meeting at Wingspread in Racine, Wisconsin, the CDT has been alternating between Glacial Park in McHenry County and Waterford, Wisconsin. The Team discussed meeting at other locations along the Fox River.

9-21-16 The Core Development Team met in Waterford, Wisconsin on Sept. 15th. Thanks to Barb Messick from Waterford, we are nearing the final version of the online survey to collect data at each access site, dam and segment along the Fox River. Once it is finalized volunteers will be able to access the survey and complete it from their smartphones or tablets. Brian Daly at CMAP is working with data from the Northeastern Illinois Water Trails Map created by Openlands, the Illinois Paddling Council and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources created in 2007 so we can determine what data needs to be updated and added. Greg Farnham from the Rock River Trail Initiative brought several books that include information about the Fox River and examples of logos.

8-24-16 The Core Development Team met at Lost Valley Nature Center in McHenry County on August 15th. We continued to discuss the access and dam data available for the Wisconsin portion of the Fox River. The team also refined the survey that will be available to the public to help collect data in Illinois. That tool will be available soon and we are looking for volunteers to help collect that data. It’s a great opportunity to get out on the River! The Team is also looking for one or more persons to coordinate volunteers along the Fox River either for the state of Illinois or for each of the Counties in Illinois. [Click here for the job description.](#) If you are interested in volunteering to collect data and/or to coordinate volunteers please contact Karen Ann Miller.

7-26-16 On Monday July 18th the Core Development Team met in the Village of Waterford, Wisconsin. The Team congratulated Waterford on a successful ribbon cutting of two new canoe and kayak launches on the Fox River. Several dignitaries spoke including the National Park Service’s Angie Tornes who is providing technical assistance for the Fox River Water Trail Initiative. Work continues on developing an app-based survey that can be used to collect data on access sites, river segments and dams along the Fox River.

Anyone interested in collecting data please contact the Core Development Team at wi.frwt@gmail.com.

6-6-16 The Core Development Team met on June 6th at Lost Valley Nature Center in McHenry County. The members in attendance discussed currently existing access site data for Wisconsin and what is needed. The data will be given to the Counties to check for accuracy. A Google Doc of the draft spreadsheet containing categories of data to be collected at access sites in both Wisconsin and Illinois was created. Once that document is finalized the Team will look for individuals interested in collecting access site data. The Team is also looking for a regional agency to house the data, maps, etc. The Team will be submitting a letter to the National Park Service requesting another year of technical assistance from Angie Tornes.

5-25-16 The 4th Annual Fox River Summit held in Burlington, Wisconsin on March 18th provided an opportunity to network with fellow Fox River stakeholders and for co-chairs Rebecca Ewald and Karen Miller to provide an update on the Wisconsin-Illinois Fox River Water Trail Initiative.

4-4-16 The Core Development Team held their monthly meeting at the Lost Valley Visitor Center in McHenry County to begin discussion on the data to be collected on existing conditions at access points, dams and portages along the Fox River and agencies or organizations that may have that data or have volunteers willing to assist in the collection of that data. Greg Farnham, Coordinator of the Rock River Trail Initiative found that dividing the River into sections made data collection more manageable. Angie Tornes from the National Park Service began a discussion about defining "accessibility" and will provide more guidance. The Team also discussed existing maps and potential funding sources that may prove helpful in the process of developing the Water Trail.

The Core Development Team met in Waterford, Wisconsin on May 16th. The Team finalized the data to be collected about access sites, dams and portages and further discussed who may be interested in assisting. Rick Kania from SEWRPC proposed a map he designed that illustrated dividing the Fox River into segments by County for ease of data collection. The Team is also looking for a regional agency or organization willing and able to hold the data collected with access for future updates. Funding needs and possible sources was also discussed.

The Team anticipates that data collection and draft map production may occur this summer and fall with public outreach to identify additional partners and review the proposed map may happen in winter and spring of 2017. Angie requested Karen draft a letter to the National Park Service requesting her technical assistance for another year.

3-21-16 The Core Development Team of the WI-IL Fox River Water Trail Initiative met on March 7th in beautiful Waterford, Wisconsin next to the Fox River. We discussed a possible one-mile boundary from the bank of the Fox River for development of the Water Trail Map. Barb Messick wrote the letter introducing the Initiative which was sent to many stakeholders on March 15th. Additional stakeholders will be added to the database and will also receive the letter. The Team talked about collecting access site data. The next meeting is scheduled for April 4th at the Lost Valley Visitor Center in Glacial Park, McHenry County. Rebecca Ewald and Karen Miller, co-chairs of the Core Development Team presented on the Initiative at the Fox River Summit on March 18th in Burlington, Wisconsin. Announcement Letter

1-4-16 The third meeting was held on January 4, 2016. The next meeting is February 8, 2016.

12-7-15 Brian Daly from CMAP is the newest member of our Team but was unable to attend on the 7th. Brian will determine if CMAP can assist us with mapping. Tom Slawski is still waiting to hear back from the Southeast Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission about their interest/willingness in providing mapping assistance.

We decided upon a Mission Statement. We brainstormed a Vision Statement and Barb Messick will wordsmith a draft for the next meeting. Angie provided examples of vision, mission statements and goals developed for other water trails as well as resources available on water trail planning from the National Park Service. She also suggested we look at the Iowa DNR Water Trail website and the resources offered through American Trails.

Greg Farnham prepared a list of contacts for the municipalities along the Fox River. The Team discussed existing maps of the Fox River and how they may be a valuable resource as we develop the Water Trail.

After the meeting Karen forwarded information about the Northeastern IL Water Trails Map Summary and the Northeastern IL Regional Greenways and Trail Map. We discussed where the headwaters of the Fox River are located.

After the meeting, Tom Slawski checked the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' surface water data viewer website and was able to confirm that although a very small portion of the Upper Fox River Watershed is

located in Colgate, Washington County, the real stream of the Fox River actually begins in the Town of Lisbon, Waukesha County. So, it is much more accurate to say that the “Fabulous” Fox River begins in the Town of Lisbon. In addition, Lannon Creek, which is the first named creek that joins with the Fox River also originates in the Town of Lisbon.

2014-15 FREP first learned about the NPS Water Trails System at the 2014 Annual Fox River Summit and also at a FREP program where Angie Tornes from the NPS was invited to provide more details on the National Water Trails System. FREP formed a committee to pursue technical assistance to develop an application for National Water Trails System designation on one or more areas of the Fox River. On July 31, 2015, FREP submitted an application to the National Park Service for technical assistance. The Southeast Wisconsin Fox River Partnership and the town of Waterford, Wisconsin are partnering with FREP on this initiative.

On 10-6-15 FREP received notice of approval for the technical assistance.