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Wisconsin Department Of Natural Resources

Glacial Heritage Area Watertrails

The Glacial Heritage Area (GHA) is a network of recreation and conservation lands centered primarily in western Jefferson County, Wisconsin. The project seeks to help meet the growing demand for a wide range of outdoor, nature-based land and water recreation activities while protecting natural habitats. Watertrails are recreational waterways on a lake, river or creek, between specific points, allowing access for the boating public. Watertrails emphasize low-impact use and promote stewardship of natural resources. Enjoy the many paddling trips that await you by either canoe or kayak in the Glacial Heritage Area!

Scuppernong River
The Scuppernong River (15 miles long) is a tributary of the Bark River. It rises in Waukesha County and flows past the village of Palmyra, then joins the Bark River four miles north of Whitewater. It is surrounded by agricultural fields before entering Prince's Point Wildlife Area.

Crawfish River
The Crawfish River (50 miles long) begins in Columbia County, collects the North Fork Crawfish River, the Maunesha River and the Beaver Dam River, before entering the Rock River in Jefferson. The river averages 90 feet wide as it passes through agricultural and wooded lands. It is an excellent river for beginners as it has large, gentle bends and is relatively free of deadfalls.

Bark River
The Bark River (55 miles long) rises in southern Washington County and flows through Waukesha and Jefferson Counties. It joins the Rock River at Fort Atkinson and collects the Scuppernong River. It has also been known historically as the "Peelbark River." The river passes through farmland, marshes, and hardwood forests. The river is isolated from development which leads to a scenic trip down river.

Rock River
The Rock River (285 miles long) begins in the Horicon Marsh in Dodge County where the East and West Branches meet. It flows through Watertown, collects the Crawfish River in Jefferson, and receives the Bark River at Fort Atkinson. It receives the Yahara River and the Pecatonica River before joining the Mississippi River at Rock Island in Illinois. The stretch of river from Kaul Park to Pipersville has little current, few obstructions and infrequent shoreline development which makes for a great scenic trip. Look for the mouth of the Oconomowoc River between Kanow Park and Pipersville. As the river approaches Watertown, use caution around the two dams. The river can be rocky in between the dams and as you make your way out of the city limits. Six miles south of Watertown you will encounter a widening in the river known as Hahn's Lake. The river bends that follow are narrow, densely wooded, wild and peaceful.

Rock River Trail
In 2012, the Rock River became the first river in Wisconsin and Illinois to be designated a National Water Trail by the US Department of the Interior. From its headwaters in the Horicon Marsh to its confluence with the Mississippi River in Rock Island Illinois the river stretches over 300 miles, through two states, 11 counties, and 37 communities. The River has always played an important role in shaping local history and offers many opportunities to explore the recreational and cultural resources. For more information on the Rock River Trail go to www.rockrivertrail.com

Maunesha River
The Maunesha River is a short tributary of the Crawfish River. The Maunesha is formed in the town of Bristol in Dane County and flows into Jefferson County through Waterloo and into Dodge County where it joins the Crawfish River in the town of Portland.

Beaver Dam River
The Beaver Dam River is a tributary of the Crawfish River. The river's entire length remains in Dodge County as it flows from Beaver Dam Lake near the city of Beaver Dam and passes through the Village of Lowell before joining the Crawfish River at Mud Lake.

Koshkonong Creek
Koshkonong Creek (35 miles long) lies mainly in Dane county, with its source about eight miles northeast of Madison. It runs parallel with the Yahara River before entering Lake Koshkonong. Koshkonong Creek once supported grist mills in both Cambridge and Rockdale for grain production. The site of the old mill in Cambridge is currently housing a restaurant. The Rockdale Mill Pond dam and related structures were removed in 2000 & 2001. The watertrail is mostly bordered by Cam-Rock Park which is part of the Dane County Park system.

Lake Koshkonong
Lake Koshkonong shares its name with Fort Koshkonong, a fort commanded by General Henry Atkinson during the Black Hawk War. It is a man-made lake and before the Rock River was dammed in 1846, the area was a marsh that supported wild rice and celery beds. The Rock River ran through the middle. The Indianford Dam, built in 1850, makes it one of the larger lakes in the state of Wisconsin (10,500 acres). However, it remains very shallow with an average depth of six feet. Koshkonong comes from the Winnebago Indians meaning "lake we live on". Archeological evidence shows that people have lived in the Lake Koshkonong area for almost 12,000 years. Several Ho-Chunk villages dotted the landscape in the 1700's and 1800's. Use caution when boating on the lake. When the wind is up, dangerous waves are often generated.

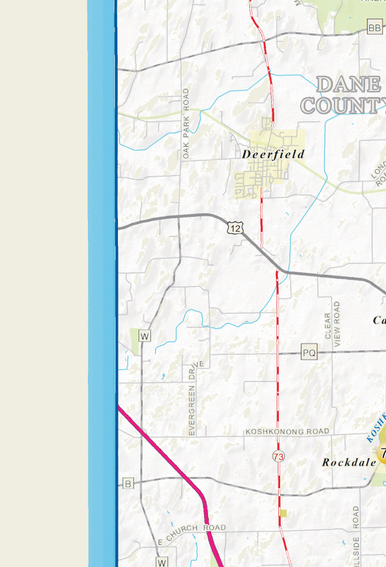
Rock Lake, Marsh Lake, Mud Lake and the Rock Creek
Rock Lake lies on the western edge of the City of Lake Mills and is 60 feet at its deepest point. Rock Lake is most famous for its underwater "pyramids" believed to be built by the Aztalan natives when water levels were much lower. Marsh Lake is south of the Glacial Drumlin State Trail and is connected by a narrow channel and trestle to Rock Lake. The marshy Rock Creek also connects Mud Lake to Marsh Lake.

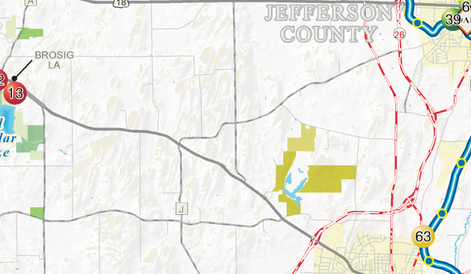
Lake Ripley
Lake Ripley is a small kettle lake with good water quality and a very good sport fishery. Much of the lake's shoreline is developed with summer cottages and year-round homes on the north and south shores. The village of Cambridge is on the lake's western shore. About 3,500 feet of the shoreline in the southeast corner of the lake is wetland and undeveloped.

Red Cedar Lake
Red Cedar Lake is a 370-acre hard water seepage lake that is relatively undisturbed. The lake's maximum depth is six feet although most of the lake is less than three feet deep. The area was designated a State Natural Area in 1984. It provides an excellent habitat for many species of waterfowl.

Lower Spring Lake
Lower Spring Lake is an impoundment of the Scuppernong River with numerous natural springs. Fishing opportunities abound for both game fish and pan fish. A sandy beach is located on the lake's western shore in the Village of Palmyra.

Blue Spring Lake
Fed by a natural Aurelian Spring, Blue Spring Lake is prized for its crystal clear water. Fish are abundant and include bass, pan fish, northern pike, crappies and yellow bullheads.





Legend

Put In - Take Out
- Fully Developed
- Semi Improved
- Rustic
- Active Dam Hazard
- Removed Dam Hazard
- Mile Marker
- Lakes
- Rivers

Populated Areas
- City or Village
- Rural Hamlet

Public Land
- Federal
- State
- County
- Muni or Other

Transportation
- Interstate
- US Highway
- State Highway
- County Road
- Local Road
- Railways

N W E S

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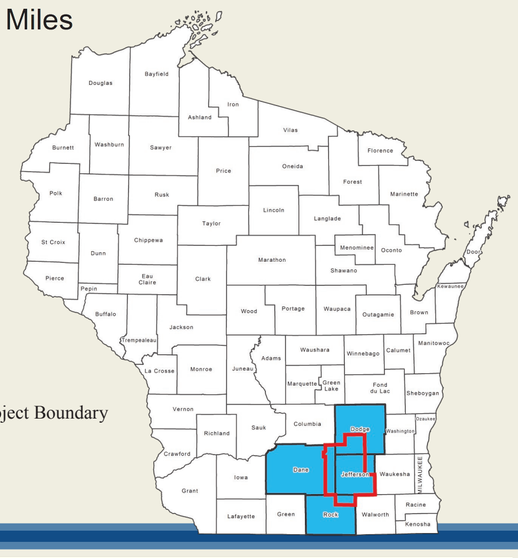
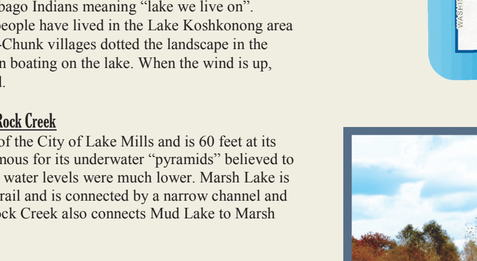
Miles



Formation of the Glacial Heritage Area Watertrails

The landscape of the Glacial Heritage Area originated through the impact of glaciation on underlying bedrock topography. Our streams originated as glacial meltwater was finding its way out of south-central Wisconsin, although each valley often has a complex history. In general, the stream network in south-central Wisconsin is described as having been "deranged" by glaciation which resulted in filling of former stream valleys. The new streams developed by connecting wetlands and low areas, often flowing over the top of former bedrock ridges and into former bedrock valleys. These areas became largely filled with sediment and are evident as broad lowlands.

Drainage of the region is through the Rock River, which below Lake Koshkonong is flowing through a narrow valley carved through bedrock ridges. (Paddlers should look for bedrock outcrops up and downstream of the Indianford Dam.) The former Bedrock valley of the Rock River was thoroughly filled with glacial sediment in the terminus region (moraines) between Milton and Janesville, so that meltwater began to cut a new valley through low topography west of the ancient valley, but encountered the bedrock, which slowed the rate of incision of the valley. The slow rate of incision caused meltwater to accumulate as lakes in low areas in Rock, Dane, Jefferson, and Dodge Counties. Eventually, the Rock River and its tributaries incised and allowed the lakes to drain, although many wetlands occupied the former lake beds at the time of European settlement. The modern stream network most typically flows across the floors of these now drained ancient lake beds. Paddlers should look for thinly stratified muddy sediment exposed in the eroded cutbanks of streams. The abandoned lake bottoms and former stream levels are called terraces, and were the location of many American Indian villages, such as Aztalan. The terraces and higher bluffs are also locations where effigy mounds were constructed, along with the panther intaglio along the Rock River in Fort Atkinson.



Other features paddlers should look for include bedrock outcrops, such as in Lake Koshkonong, which mark the tops of the former bluffs overlooking the filled bedrock valley – over 200 feet of glacial sediment is filling the bedrock valley beneath the lake! In some places, boulders are common in the bed of streams, such as in the Crawfish River near Aztalan State Park or in the Rock River below Jefferson. In these instances, the streams have cut down through moraines (ridges constructed along the glacier margin during melting) and the large boulders that were part of the moraines have accumulated in the channel as the finer sediment particles were transported away. A good example of the effects of derangement on stream channel characteristics is the Bark River. Below Rome Mill Pond, the stream is flowing through a post-glacial channel, and the stream does not appear to have a well-expressed valley as it meanders between drumlins (hills aligned in a north to south fashion). However, below Hebron, the stream encounters a filled pre-glacial valley and the Bark River follows a highly meandering path across the broad and flat-floored valley to its confluence with the Rock River at Fort Atkinson.

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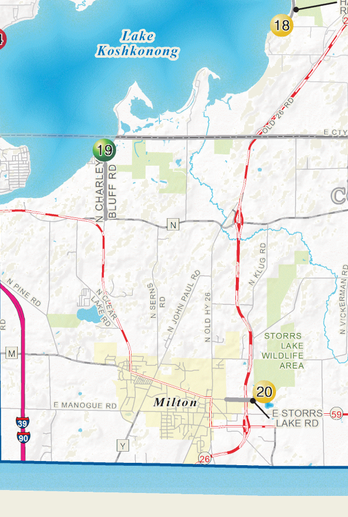
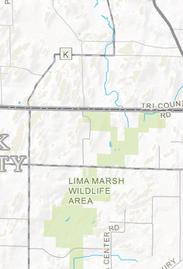
GLACIAL HERITAGE AREA

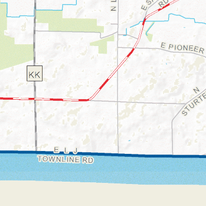
Watertrails Signage

When out paddling in the GHA, be sure to look for the Put-In/Take-Out signs. These signs will guide you and let you know when you are at a designated PITO site. Each sign lets the paddler know what specific PITO location they are approaching and what body of water they are traveling on.

Additionally, be aware of approaching dams. Make sure to take out at the designated location, never venture closer to dams than you must. Look for and follow the portage signs when you are at a site that requires you to portage.







JEFFERSON COUNTY PARKS

If you encounter problems with this information or with fallen trees blocking your paddle, please let us know so we can try to resolve them.

Contact: *Jefferson County Parks Department*
311 S. Center Ave., Jefferson, WI 53549 (920) 674-7260
www.jeffersoncountywi.gov/parks

Safety Tips

- Always wear a Personal Flotation Device (PFD). A PFD is legally required for every person on board. Some 80 percent of all recreational boating fatalities happen to people who are not wearing their life jacket.
- Expect to get wet. Bring extra clothing in a waterproof bag.
- If you capsize, hold onto your canoe or kayak, unless it presents a life-threatening situation. If floating in current, position yourself on the upstream side of the capsized canoe or kayak.
- Scout ahead whenever possible. Know the river, avoid surprises.
- Never take your canoe or kayak over a dam.
- If you collide with an obstruction, lean towards it. This will prevent capsizing.
- Portage your canoe or kayak around any section of water about which you feel uncertain.
- Dress appropriately for the weather and anticipate weather changes. Bring a hat, sunglasses, sunscreen and extra clothes.
- Wear brightly colored clothing to improve your visibility to other boaters.
- Review your exit points and portages before launching and be aware of hazards (i.e. dams).
- Bring drinking water and safety equipment such as a first aid kit, rain gear, a lashing line for docking. Bring along an extra paddle.
- Carry a map and trail guide, and a signaling device such as a whistle.
- Check the weather forecast before you head out. Review the weather and wind conditions.
- Stay nearer to shore. It is not advisable to paddle across the lakes. Always keep a watch on changing weather and water conditions. Wind conditions can suddenly change and waves on the large lakes can present a serious hazard. Heavy boat traffic can also make the crossing unsafe.
- Keep trip lengths reasonable for the weather conditions and type of craft you are in. Allow ***a maximum of two miles for each hour paddling time*** under normal conditions.
- Let someone know your plans, where you are going, who is with you and when you plan to be back. Never boat alone.
- In case of emergency, contact **911**.

Remember

RESPECT PRIVATE PROPERTY. Much of the land along the waterways is private. Enter only with permission of the owner.
BE SAFE. Always use a personal flotation device and avoid hazards. Canoeing and kayaking is a potentially dangerous sport, which changes according to water level. Logs, strainers, bridges and fences may be encountered on any of these rivers and paddlers should be advised to seek local council on changing water conditions. ***PADDLERS ASSUME ALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR ACTIONS.***
LIMIT ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION. Intoxication on waterways leads to increased risk of drowning.
NO LITTERING OR DUMPING. Leave only footprints, take only photos.

HAVE FUN!