


2 STATE DESIGNATION OF WATER TRAILS

Experiencing and getting to know a stream often fosters a sense of attachment to the stream as a familiar place. In this way, a new water trail can act as a springboard to motivate residents and landowners to care for and seek enhancements that benefit the stream. Stable, functional watersheds and streams add value to water trail experiences, as well as benefit wildlife and environmental conditions in general. In addition to creating opportunities for recreation, each new water trail allows more sets of eyes on wildlife and stream conditions and can bring public attention to opportunities for local stream and watershed restoration.

2 LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

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INTRODUCTION

All water trail projects, whether they seek state designation or not, are encouraged to apply the elements included in this manual. Water trails that become state designated are able to utilize state resources such as technical assistance and review, prioritized DNR-managed funding assistance, listing on the DNR Web site, promotion at various events including the Iowa State Fair, possible future maintenance or enhancement assistance and informational updates. Some developers or managers, however, prefer their water trails not become state-designated for various reasons.

Iowa water trails are developed in ways that match their settings and produce low or no impact on the stream and riparian, or stream-edge, ecosystems. While wildlife viewing is a popular activity from streams in Iowa, some species are sensitive to human presence. Water trail designation includes a review of existing environmental and cultural information to steer launch construction away from locations that may have negative impacts. Launches, new parking areas, and portage trails are designed and built to repair existing damaged landscapes and minimize new impact. Trail developers are encouraged to enhance in-stream habitat and streambank conditions while they are constructing launch sites.

The vision for Iowa's statewide water trail program was developed using the input of nearly 1,000 Iowans from a variety of roles — paddlers, wildlife managers, conservationists, farmers, and environmental educators, to name a few. Trails selected for state designation represent those that provide safe opportunities in a variety of locations, types of landscapes, and stream conditions. Preference is also given to trails able to develop and operate in ways that minimize user impact to the state's sensitive natural resources. Finally, the program strives to present a variety of experience types, responding to diverse boat-handling skills and physical abilities.

State-designated trails are held to a small but consistent set of standards for organization and construction. State designation of water trails does more than point out that recreational opportunities exist. For users, the designation signals that planning has been done to connect experiences users seek (introductory to expert, urban to wilderness) to those they are interested in, and it generates expectations for a certain level of service for a given experience type. That could mean a high degree of infrastructure geared for ease of use and accessibility, or it might mean water experiences in which difficulties and unpredictable conditions (waves for sea

kayakers on a large body of water, rapids, or long stretches of stream with few visual interruptions) may be considered half the fun. Water trail users, especially new paddlers, benefit from positive experiences on streams.

A large part of creating that positive experience at that level is being properly prepared and choosing the right first place to enjoy a river, lake, or wetland. Predictability is more likely on some streams than others. Iowa's program for state-designated trails attempts to provide predictability through consistent signage, launch, and portage trail design, as well as a classification system to help users self-select appropriate water trail segments. Communication via online mapping tools and water trail brochures or web sites will be as important as actual infrastructure improvements. A consistent wayfinding signage system is used to locate access points and also navigate on the river, maintaining consistency when management of accesses changes from one county the next. A system of warning signs directs river users to safely avoid low-head dams and other in-stream hazards.

Each local water trail effort brings a somewhat different mix of goals and existing conditions. For some, the goal is primarily marketing a local resource as part of the mix of local tourism offerings. For others, moving toward solutions to watershed problems or a body of water's health may be a primary motivator. In other cases, local recreational enthusiasts are interested in sharing their activities with a broader audience. For all, benefits of state water trail designation include enhancement funding via the Iowa DNR, marketing assistance from the DNR water trails program, water trail crew assistance, and consistency with neighboring water trails.

The water quality condition or the use classification of a stream or lake can be an important element in determining the quality of recreation. However, water quality condition alone is usually not a factor in determining whether a stream or lake is suitable for state water trail designation. Stream segments or lakes with known long-term impairments affecting human health, such as high bacteria levels, are probably not appropriate for state designation. Temporary impairments can sometimes occur as a result of flooding, drought, or when conditions are right for toxic algae blooms. Warning signage posted at affected access points are used to inform the public of these temporary hazards. These sign designs are included in Chapter 6 of the Iowa Water Trails Development Manual.

A water trail typically begins when an idea catches on among a group of people. Such ideas are shared among local agencies, organizations, and near-stream landowners to develop partnerships. Eventually, one overall sponsoring agency takes leadership and responsibility for the water trail development and future management. Many decisions and plans are required for functional, resilient water trails. The designation process guides each development project through various reviews and design considerations.

A water trail project is eligible for state designation after DNR approval of final design plans and the construction or implementation of amenities included in it, including the installation of all wayfinding and hazard warning signs. Note that continued state designation is subject to maintenance of amenities and trail features, such as signage.

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SELECTING A WATER TRAIL EXPERIENCE

Water trail experiences are linked with individual stream settings. Streams typically change as they increase in size, impacting the paddling experience. Narrow, winding stream segments may be challenging in terms of water currents and logjams. Wider, slower-moving streams are often less challenging physically, especially for less-experienced users. Dams may require hazard-avoidance maneuvers in an otherwise easy river. A set of experience types applied to water trail segments between given access points allows users to select stream segment routes meeting their abilities and expectations. The typing system also allows developers to match trail construction and maintenance capabilities with particular stream settings.

Segment length in a water trail refers to the distance between planned access points. Paddlers are looking for segments matching both their ability and the amount of time they have available. Shorter segments are typically paddled more quickly and are considered float trips, while longer segments are considered day or multi-day trips (Table 2-2, see page 2-11). While the Trails Plan 2000 recommended water trail accesses to be spaced every five miles apart, this is no longer encouraged. Frequent access points may seem desirable at first blush, but close access spacing, particularly seven miles or less between access points, is found to often encourage undesirable outcomes such as littering and alcohol consumption.

As mentioned previously in this manual, Iowa's program organizes water trail experiences into four types. Table 2-1 characterizes the experience types. Several examples describe stream segments and locations appropriate for each classification.

Gateway experience example

The Wapsipinicon River from Troy Mills to Pinicon Ridge Park offers a mix of bluff scenery, expansive floodplain woods, wildlife viewing, and several launch options for various lengths of canoe trips, plus a canoe-rental operation run by Linn County Conservation. It is within a 20-minute drive of urban Cedar Rapids. The base of operations is Pinicon Ridge Park at the end of the trip, with landings well upstream of a dam that creates an impoundment. Pinicon Ridge is a full-service tent and RV campground with electricity, drinking water, sanitary pumping, shower houses, playground equipment, and nature trails. Both the river and the park are patrolled by Linn County Conservation rangers. A river segment with a level of management such as this would make an excellent candidate for a Gateway experience water trail for almost any user.

Recreational experience example

The Little Sioux River from Sioux Rapids to the Bluebird Access is an 8.2-mile segment with a pair of access points with adequate parking. Although not required for recreational designation, both also happen to have hard-surface boat ramps that are maintained regularly. The river offers a wooded corridor, wooded hillsides, a rural setting, excellent wildlife viewing, and reasonable fishing opportunities. The Linn Grove Dam is about 400 feet downstream of the Bluebird access, so planned and maintained dam signage would be important for water trail designation. There is no established portage at the Linn Grove Dam, so the water trail would need to end at the access (with signage indicating so) and, if a portage were established, the section downstream of the Bluebird access would be labeled "Challenge," as recreational canoeists or kayakers would not expect to portage.

Challenge experience example

One section of the South Skunk River, from the Anderson Access to Sopers Mill, contains a significant logjam that has caused channel changes, leading in turn to a long set of river-wide obstructions. River users would be required to portage 400 yards around it, through underbrush, with no designated portage trail. Although walking around an obstruction while navigating a stream is not legally considered criminal trespass, practice should not be to encourage a high volume of people to walk on private property. Before an eventual, planned water trail designation, inner-tubers and others have come upon the obstructions unexpectedly. Had they known, most would have chosen a different route. Because of the persistent logjam, an otherwise easy segment should be designated and communicated as a "Challenge" experience trail. Signage at the site may be the most effective way to communicate such a challenge, but DNR data can also be updated to include it.

Wilderness experience example

From Eagle City Access to Pine Ridge Park (near Steamboat Rock) on the Iowa River, Hardin County residents established a greenbelt plan designating the area's overall goal to eventually be a wilderness setting to the greatest degree possible. The plan dates to the 1950s. Over the years, parcels of public land along the river have been accumulated, and significant public ownership of the narrow valley allows a different management approach to the area, focusing on solitude. As the water trail plan was developed with input from the Iowa River Greenbelt Resource Trust, this section was targeted for less amenity development. Overall, the area is managed for wildlife values, a healthy riparian corridor, and low-impact/low-volume recreation. It should be mentioned that "wilderness" in this sense is more of an eventual goal than an existing, pristine pre-condition. That said, the area has the appropriate building blocks, and the goal of the water trail for this segment would reinforce the greenbelt management goals with recommendations to minimize additional development – in particular, construction of new launches where they don't currently exist. Extremely rustic camp sites accessible only by water are not considered detrimental impacts.

Downstream of the Pine Ridge Park is a dam, and a newly established portage around it would make the next segment a "Challenge" experience. Below that, a 6.5-mile scenic segment of stream from Steamboat Rock to Pine Lake State Park with existing amenities could be considered "Gateway," with hard-surfaced/low-slope ramps, and it is already the focus of high-volume recreation with an inner-tubing outfitter available. Restroom facilities are provided at both Pine Lake State Park and the Steamboat Rock launch. Beyond that, the 8-mile segment from Eldora to Bates Park could be considered "Recreational," and the 2-mile segment from the Bates Park launch to the Daisy Long Park landing would currently be a "Challenge" because of a large and persistent logjam.

	Gateway Experience	Recreational Experience	Challenge Experience	Wilderness Experience
User Expectations	— Most predictable, particularly for those with less experience — A paired launch and landing with ramped, hard-surface or well-maintained compacted aggregate slopes generally at 12% or less grade and accommodating widths of 4' or greater — A readily enjoyable setting that will be attractive to new users — Exposure to few hazards relative to other segment types	— Requires some boat control — Intended for users with some experience — Low-head dam hazard signage present, as needed — Varied settings — Basic level of navigational aid (maps, signage)	— User expects to manage risk in hands-on ways — Good boat control necessary — Launch and/or parking may be slightly difficult to very difficult to use — Low-head dam hazard signage present, as needed	— Some degree of solitude, quiet, and viewing of wildlife — Paddling endurance and skill required — Launch and parking areas can be very undeveloped, should strive to be in context with the setting — Wayfinding signage not always present at accesses and on-river — Low-head dam hazard signage present, as needed
Typical Development Goals	— Exposing the greatest number of new users to water trails — Appropriate for extended families and groups of friends — Part-day to full-day trip opportunity — Strong emphasis on building user confidence through signage and ultra-easy launch and parking — Launches, parking, trails designed with Universal Design standards — High degree of environmental educational opportunity	— Offers a typical Iowa water trail experience — Day-trip opportunity — Family and group experiences — Access points may be less developed compared with Gateway experience — Access surfaces may not be stable	— Day- and multi-day-trip opportunity — Low-impact access development may result in more difficult movement from parking to launch: steep slopes, tight turns on trails, or long distances from parking to launch	— Day- and multi-day-trip opportunity — Less development, more restoration and protection of habitats — May include parking in already impacted areas, rustic launches, and rustic remote campsites — Low-impact practices required in all water trails-related construction
Stream Character	— Slow or moderately paced streams to streams with limited riffles — Under normal conditions will have very few, if any, obstacles (although users must still be aware they'll need to avoid common hazards such as snags along banks) — No portages — Often located in or near urban areas	— Vary from narrow and sinuous to wider channel stretches — Some sandbars, rocks, riffles, strainers, or mild rapids under normal conditions — May require short portages — Urban edge or rural setting is typical	— May include faster water and rapids, large lakes, expansive wetland areas — Includes larger lakes with long open-water crossings and power-craft avoidance, potential high waves coupled with areas where steep or rocky shores prevent landing — May include confusing routes that require map-reading skills — May require long or short portages — Moderate to high number of hazards, including logjams, rapids, strainers or others	— Any types of water conditions would be eligible — Setting is remote — Multiple long or short portagespossible — May be "Challenge" elements including unmarked hazards including logjams, rapids, strainers or others

Table 2-1.
Water Trail Experience Classifications

	Gateway Experience	Recreational Experience	Challenge Experience	Wilderness Experience
Access Spacing	≤ 6 miles	≤ 9 miles on average	varies by conditions and development goals	> 9 miles
Maintenance Required	— High level, continual cleanup and repair at launches — Debris removal on stream possible but not likely — Mowing, trash collection, etc. — Regular signage maintenance	— Moderate level of cleanup and repair at launches — Debris removal on stream not likely — Mowing, trash removal possible — Regular signage maintenance	— Low to moderate level of cleanup and repair — Mowing, trash removal possible, but unlikely	— Annual or semi-annual cleanup or repair — Activities geared toward maintaining health riparian corridors, streambanks, and water-quality improvements
Amenities such as restrooms, running water, picnic areas, camping	— Often available at access points — Liveries, shuttle often operating — Wayfinding signage on roadways is more extensive to clearly identify driving route, such as by branching out further to intersections on busier roadways, etc.	— May be available but usually not — Liveries, shuttle desirable	— May be available but usually not — Guided experiences may be encouraged	— Any facilities present, such as remote campsites, are minimal, primitive, and without signage — Guided experiences may be encouraged in place of typical rental businesses
Planning and Management	— Proposed launch sites reviewed for sensitive species by Iowa DNR staff before design or funding request. — A regular maintenance checklist is developed for each segment based on experience classification and adhered to to maintain designation — Law enforcement and emergency response is part of planning process — Possible water-quality monitoring for human threats and water trail posting if threats are present			
	— Launch and landing area designed by engineer or landscape architect according to Universal Design principles included in this manual — Consideration of additional programming for beginners, wildlife watchers, adaptive paddling activities for people with disabilities, etc. — Commitment to conduct regular safety patrols	— A mix of professionally designed projects and staff- or volunteer-constructed projects using design principles included in this manual — Approaches to communicate hazards to users determined before funding requests — Adherence to fairly regular maintenance plan — Commitment to conduct safety patrols as problems arise	— Approaches to communicate hazards to users determined before funding requests — No regular safety patrols but development of a risk-management plan, including maps, rescue plans for higher hazard areas, etc.	— Management targeted to conservation efforts, recreational management and impact mitigation — Requires demonstrated, significant buy-in from owners of the stream bed and banks — Law enforcement and emergency rescue planning focusing on extracting injured people from relatively remote areas with minimum site disturbance

Table 2-1. (Continued)
Water Trail Experience Classifications

WATER TRAIL DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Water trails developed using a thorough planning process and with the commitment of multiple partners are likely to be successful for many years. The following planning process is adaptable to development of any water trail in Iowa, regardless of whether state designation is a goal. This process is intended to help nonprofit organizations and agencies organize projects and overcome barriers to developing water trails. Note that planning and developing a water trail is not necessarily a linear process. In some instances, planning steps may need to be repeated as funding sources or site conditions change.

Water trail development is better known for thoughtful planning than for speed of the process (Figure 2-1). The first phase, Pre-planning, generally requires six to 12 months to complete. After Early Review approval from DNR, the development of final plans and final approval from DNR generally requires six to 18 months. Construction implementation, including fundraising, often requires two or more years.

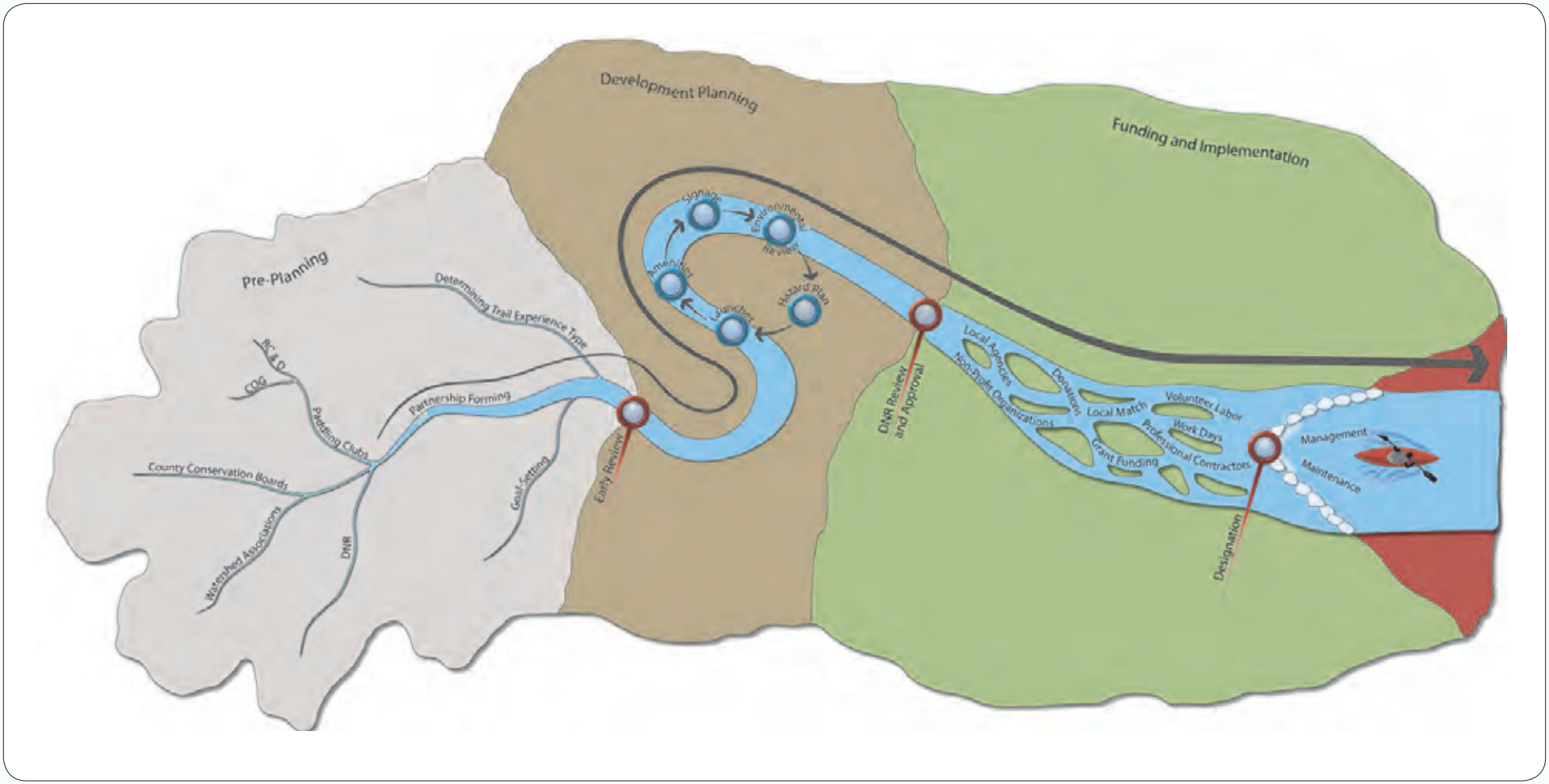


Figure 2-1.
Water Trail Development Process

PRE-PLANNING

This phase of water trail development allows your project the time and space to develop the basics needed for a successful trail. The phase is completed when your pre-planning application is ready for review by Iowa DNR Rivers Section. Refer to Iowa DNR's publication, Getting Started: Launching Water Trails in Iowa, for more detail in the below pre-planning activities. Time spent on these activities is a sound investment in the future water trail. Applications submitted with thoughtful considerations and complete information are likely to progress through Early Review much more quickly than those without.

1. **Express initial interest** to DNR Rivers Programs staff and request an existing access and stream segment inventory form to complete.
2. Form **partnerships** with local agencies, landowners, paddling organizations, community groups, and interested residents. Reaching out to neighboring landowners at this early phase will result in improved relations later. Engage a planner to facilitate the effort using DNR materials. Planners and/or GIS mapping services may be available from a variety of resources; including RC&Ds; regional councils of governments; metropolitan or regional planning authorities; or the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program.

3. Establish **overall goals for the body of water and each segment of the water trail.** Typical goals include consideration of the trail experience appropriate for the setting:
   a. Amount and type of maintenance available, including equipment,
   b. Volume of use expected or desired and the viability for universal access,
   c. Long-term desired outcomes of water trail establishment, including local economic development, education, water-quality enhancement,
   d. Appropriateness of state designation for your stream reach. Some stream reaches, such as those with sensitive species or conditions or where potential parking and access locations are limited, may be better served as water trails without state designation
4. **Consider physical conditions** of the stream stretch and estimate the typical experience it would offer paddlers. Is the stream prone to log and debris dams? Is the current swift or slow? Are portages required to avoid obstacles? Are potential access points readily accessible by vehicles? These and other site inventory questions included in the pre-planning worksheet help focus on reaching your project's goals.
5. Consider a diversity of lengths between launches and landings (Table 2-2) to accommodate different types of activities and abilities — including angling from watercraft and inner-tubing on the shorter end to wilderness adventures on the longer end. Determine whether **special designations** already apply to the stream reach included in the project. Is it included in an Iowa Protected Water Area? Is the segment included on the latest EPA 303d List for Impaired Waters? If so, are there limiting conditions identified in the impairment classification?
6. Complete a pre-planning worksheet and sketch map and submit to IDNR (Figure 2-2). Note the river-mile labeling system used for all water trail projects in Iowa. All communications with DNR during water trail development, as well as on water trail maps for paddlers, use this river-mile labeling system. Stream mile numbers are established for each stream beginning at the mouth of the stream and moving upstream to the state boundary (Figure 2-3).

Short Segments Float Trips	Mid-Length Segments Typical Day Trips	Longer Segments Expedition Trips
Generally 2 to 6 miles, sometimes up to 7 miles depending on river character	Paddling excursions generally 5 to 9 miles, depending upon river character	Paddling excursions greater than 9 miles in length can be either long day trip or include overnight camping
Ideal for angling float trips, if crowding is unlikely to "ruin" fishing	Reduced angling opportunities, as more time is spent paddling	Angling can take a different character, particularly when based from remote camping areas
Potential for high-density use increased by: — Close proximity to urban area or university — Highly scenic setting — Livery with shuttle service	Mid-range use levels reduced by: — A highly visible setting (directly in an urban park, for example) — Challenging river conditions — Challenging access — Unreliable water levels	Longer segments encourage passive users to select other segments. Active users become primary users as additional challenges such as rapids, logjams, and challenging access increase
Focus can become lighthearted social experience, higher potential for alcohol consumption, poor judgment, incidents, and conflicts, with increased law-enforcement or emergency responses	Experiences will range broadly depending upon goals, occasional law-enforcement and emergency response issues should be expected	Solitude, wildlife viewing, and building wilderness skills are focus of experience. Infrequent emergency response focuses on remote rescue situations or difficulties in locating a victim
Fewer health benefits, except in urban setting where before-work and after-work paddling opportunities may be enhanced	More time spent physically paddling can increase health benefits	Maximum health benefits from most time spent physically paddling
Focus on natural resource issues can be incorporated, but other management issues must not be ignored	Focus on natural resources ranges depending on setting, design of infrastructure, and other issues	Experience type is compatible with intensive focus on natural resource management, including protection of wild and rural settings, habitat and species restorations, and public education

Table 2-2.
Management Considerations by Paddling Trip Length

Water Trail Name					
	UTM X	UTM Y	ACCESS NAME	ACCESS # (river mile #)	ACCESS OWNED BY:
Example	436785.79	4598540.84	Commerce Ledges	13b	
Upstream-Most Access					

Figure 2-2.
Preview of Pre-Planning Worksheet.
Full worksheet available at from Iowa DNR

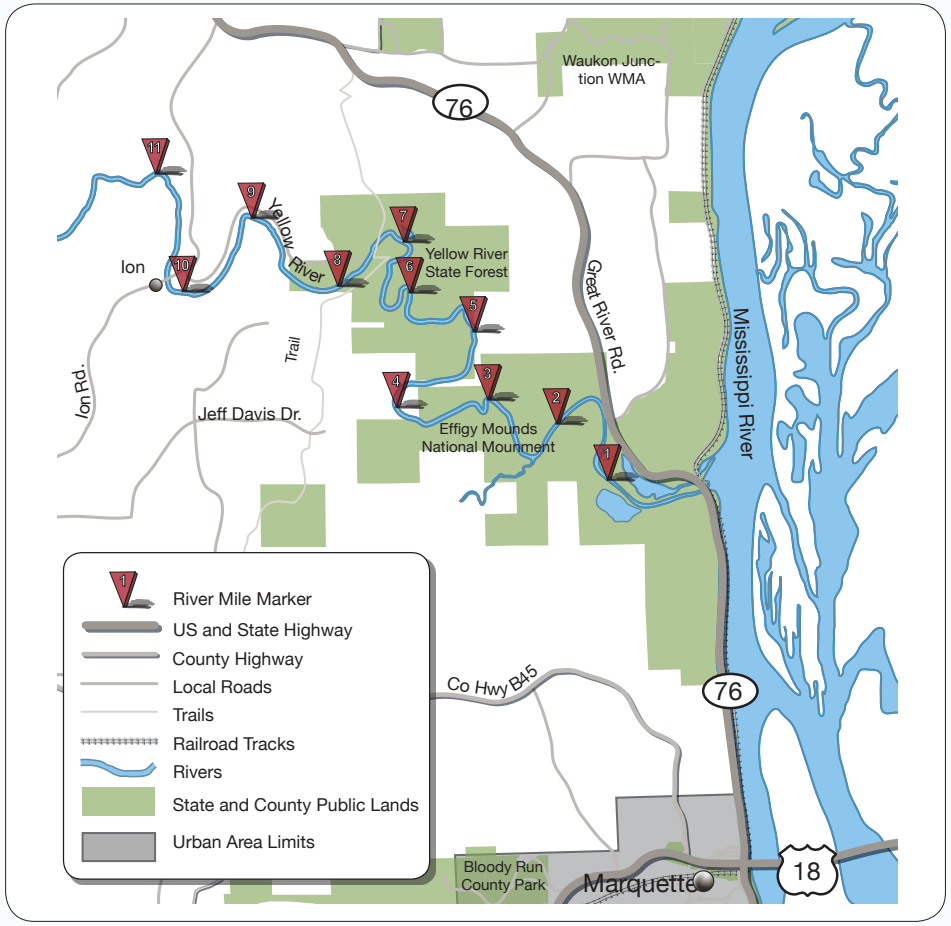


Figure 2-3.
River-Mile Marking

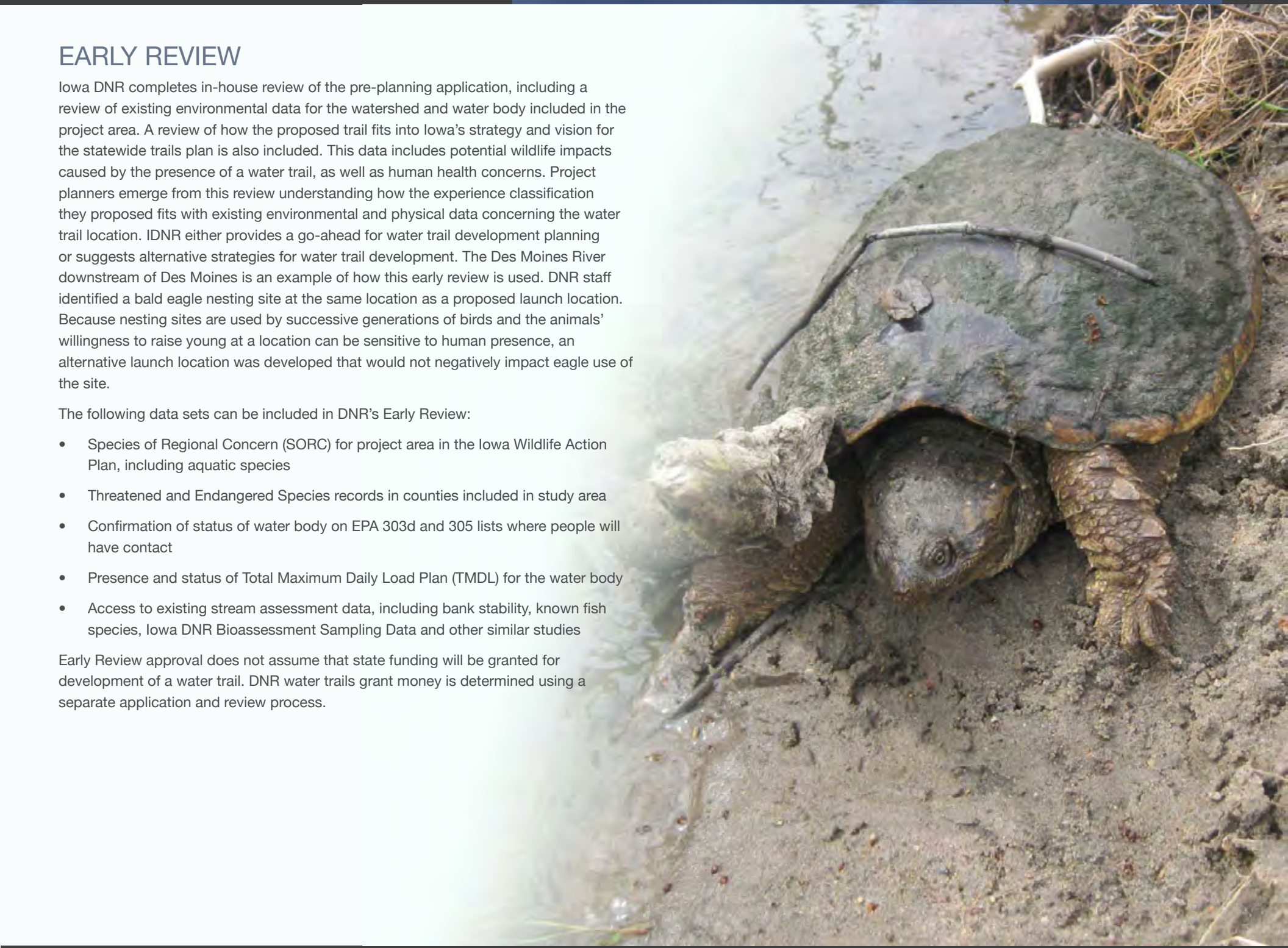
EARLY REVIEW

Iowa DNR completes in-house review of the pre-planning application, including a review of existing environmental data for the watershed and water body included in the project area. A review of how the proposed trail fits into Iowa's strategy and vision for the statewide trails plan is also included. This data includes potential wildlife impacts caused by the presence of a water trail, as well as human health concerns. Project planners emerge from this review understanding how the experience classification they proposed fits with existing environmental and physical data concerning the water trail location. IDNR either provides a go-ahead for water trail development planning or suggests alternative strategies for water trail development. The Des Moines River downstream of Des Moines is an example of how this early review is used. DNR staff identified a bald eagle nesting site at the same location as a proposed launch location. Because nesting sites are used by successive generations of birds and the animals' willingness to raise young at a location can be sensitive to human presence, an alternative launch location was developed that would not negatively impact eagle use of the site.

The following data sets can be included in DNR's Early Review:

- Species of Regional Concern (SORC) for project area in the Iowa Wildlife Action Plan, including aquatic species
- Threatened and Endangered Species records in counties included in study area
- Confirmation of status of water body on EPA 303d and 305 lists where people will have contact
- Presence and status of Total Maximum Daily Load Plan (TMDL) for the water body
- Access to existing stream assessment data, including bank stability, known fish species, Iowa DNR Bioassessment Sampling Data and other similar studies

Early Review approval does not assume that state funding will be granted for development of a water trail. DNR water trails grant money is determined using a separate application and review process.



DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Development planning is the process of developing detailed plans for amenities associated with a water trail, such as the specific location of access points. This planning phase is complete when final design plans are complete and submitted to the DNR for review. Elements in this process include but are not limited to the following.

1. Site selection of access points based on land available for public use, stream conditions at these locations, and access spacing included in experience classification. Use the “existing access form” filled out previously to identify these. Consider also whether limited (or inappropriate) use, difficulty in maintaining certain facilities because of location, experience type goals, lack of appropriate parking, or other factors may warrant closure of some launches not worthy of sustaining. Refer to Chapter 3 of this manual for more guidance.
2. Designs of launches, parking areas, signage plans, and trails between parking and launch, as well as portage trails. How stormwater is managed at access points has direct impact on the stream and on water trail users’ experiences. Existing gullies and unstable streambanks at proposed launch sites should be mitigated as the sites are developed. Refer to Chapters 3 and 4 of this manual for more information and guidance. Drawings at this point need only be approximately 30 percent complete, realizing a number of elements may change from funding to permitting to final construction.
3. Incorporate Universal Design considerations where possible. Design amenities to accommodate a wide variety of users, including children, the elderly, and people with severe disabilities, without substantially altering the setting.
4. Include habitat-improvement practices in launch or water trail channel design. Partnerships with special-interest groups may lead to funding and volunteer efforts to design and install such enhancements. Examples include angler organizations and foundations or other nonprofit organizations interested in habitat enhancement.
5. Develop proactive strategies for dealing with potential law-enforcement issues (public intoxication, littering, belligerent behavior) with a priority focus on “Gateway” segments. Also, plan access to the water trail in the event of an emergency. This includes working with law enforcement agencies, emergency service providers, and adjacent private property owners to plan how emergency vehicles can reach the stream edge.
6. File any required environmental permits for construction at the completion of development planning.

DRAFT DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW AND SUBMISSION OF FINAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Iowa DNR staff reviews draft development plans for each project and may make recommendations based on safety, project stability, stream impacts, capacity for expected use, and/or broader strategies of the water trail system, such as diversity of experiences available statewide, potential access for people with disabilities, and other elements. Some recommendations may point toward legal requirements (these will be clearly stated as such), while others may be suggestions that can be taken into account and ultimately decided at the local level.

The final development plan should be submitted to Iowa DNR, and it will be filed for future use.

FUNDING FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Funds and in-kind donations to construct or enhance water trail components come from multiple sources, including volunteer labor, the Iowa DNR water trails program, the federal recreational trails program, community foundations, and individual donations. It is more common for implementation to occur in parts over two or more construction seasons rather than in one year. Funds for construction of some elements may be more readily available than for others. Developers are encouraged to include all potential funding organizations early in the planning to ensure the project is designed in ways that overlap with potential funders' goals.

At this point, ongoing management and maintenance commitments of various agencies will need to be formalized in agreements that may include memoranda of understanding between the sponsoring agency and other land and access managers or more formal 28E agreements.

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation includes launch and landing construction, portage trail construction, signage placements, mapping / brochure / web-site development, and execution of management and maintenance plans.

DESIGNATION

State designation of a water trail results in that trail being published as a water trail on the Iowa DNR web site, staff promotion at a variety of events throughout the year, access to water trail enhancement funding, and DNR water trail crew assistance (if available).

To apply for designation:

1. Complete all items on checklist that meets the goals and standards defined in the final development plan. Sign it, and send it to Iowa DNR rivers staff.
2. Schedule a dedication event, usually with some type of celebratory event that includes various projects partners, the main manager of the water trail, elected officials, and users. The designee will be presented with a certificate. More often than not, the event ends with a float down a segment of the stream.
3. Consider designation the beginning of a long-term effort. Developers and land managers are encouraged to develop programming that enhances experiences along the waterway. Maintenance of the water trail, including replacing signs, maintaining access points to the standards outlined by experience type goals, and updating maps in reasonable timeframes will be expected to maintain the state designation.

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