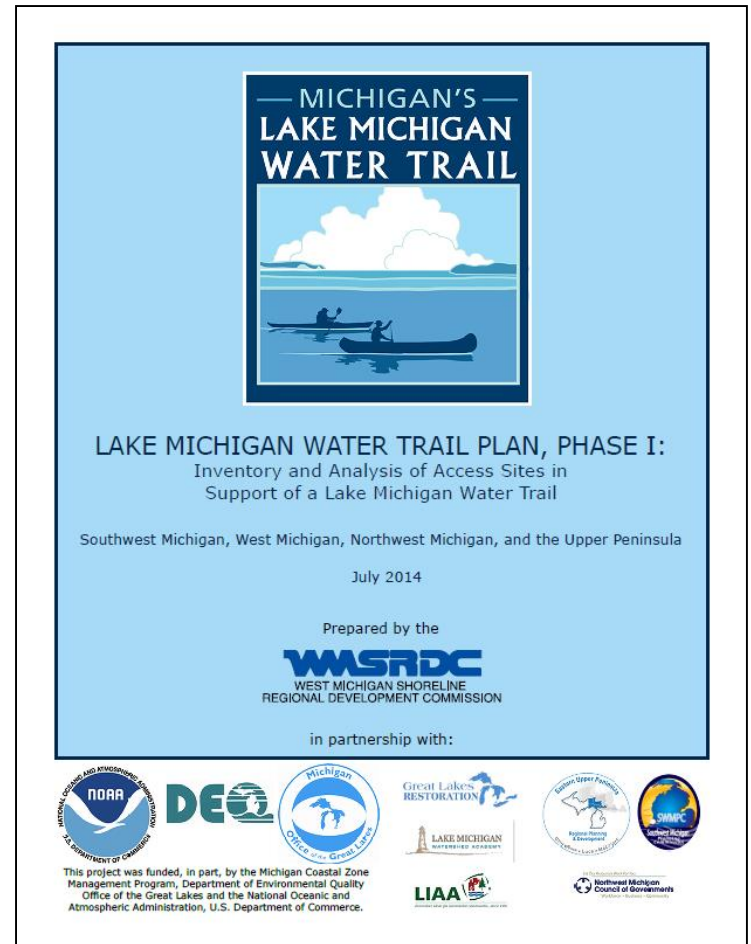


Lake Michigan Water Trail Plan

1. Vision, Goals & Objectives
2. Water Trail Segments – Access Site Inventory and Classification
3. Action Plan & Enhancement Zones
4. Public Website for Trip Planning & Information Updates
5. Local Government Recreation Plan Model Language
6. Best Management Practices



Vision, Goals & Objectives

Vision

The Lake Michigan Water Trail system reflects the abundance of water that defines Lake Michigan watershed communities throughout the Great Lakes Region. Citizens and visitors are able to explore coastlines and navigable waters through geographically dispersed water trails that offer a diversity of experiences including lengths, scenery, challenges, amenities and attractions.

- Provide users access every five miles
- Provide restroom every five miles
- Establish universal access in every harbor
- Ensure camping every ten miles
- Install signage and amenities at access sites
- Acquire land for additional access and for water trail frontage to experience wetlands, natural areas
- Embrace National Park Service National Water Trail Best Management Practices



Lake Michigan Water Trail Segments

Access Inventory and Classification

Lake Michigan Water Trail – West:

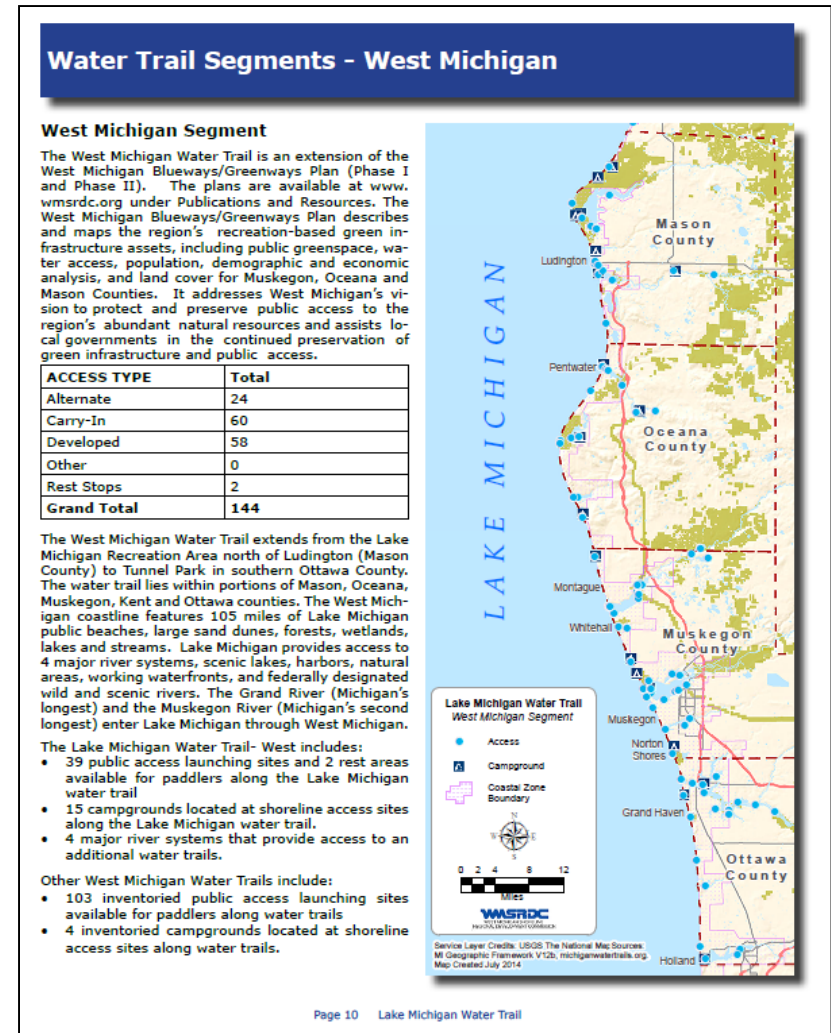
- 39 public access launching sites
- 15 campgrounds on shoreline

West Michigan Coastal Water Trails:

- 103 inventoried public access launching sites in connecting waters
- 4 inventoried campgrounds along Connecting/coastal water trails

Classification of 144 Access Types:

Alternate – 24, Carry-In – 60, Developed – 58, Rest Stops - 2



Lake Michigan Water Trail Segments

Access Inventory and Classification

Access Classification

The compiled inventory of public access points and trail segments for the four trail segments details their current characteristics. The dataset details the presence or absence of parking, public camping land, restrooms, power outlets, lighting, signage, boat launches, and launching fee requirements. Based on these attributes, each site was then classified as offering developed access, carry-in access, alternate access, or emergency access.



Access Type Descriptions	
Access Type	Description
Developed Access	A site that provides water access via a public boat ramp or dock.
Carry-In Access	A site with a beach that provides easy kayak access to the water with little user conflict from adjacent landowners.
Alternate Access	Non-ideal carry-in access site that may be only a road that ends at the water. Alternate access sites may have a bit of steep slope to the water, require wading or paddling through marsh, or present minimal potential for user conflict from adjacent landowners.
Rest Stops	Use of these sites (primarily road ends) is restricted by limited parking options, high user conflict potential, or agreements with site owners that only permit emergency egress. Primarily during inclement weather.

Local Government Recreation Plan

Model Language

Implementation - Appendix A

Lake Michigan Water Trail - Local Government Plan Model Language

This model language was developed by the Lake Michigan Water Trail Advisory Group with support from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality Office of the Great Lakes Coastal Zone Management Program.

The language may be considered for use in local recreation or master plans as a means to support local water trail planning and implementation efforts.

A standard definition of a water trail is provided along with brief summaries for the Lake Michigan Water Trail and for four Regional Water Trail systems in Michigan.

Also provided is a suite of language options that can be considered for adoption in local recreation plans under the categories of Resource Inventory, Vision, Goals and Objectives and Action Program.

Standard Water Trail Definition:

Water trails are recreational routes on waterways with a network of public access points supported by broad-based community partnerships. Water trails provide both conservation and recreational opportunities (NPS, MIDNR).

Lake Michigan Water Trail Definition and Description:

The Lake Michigan Water Trail spans more than 760 miles of Michigan's Lake Michigan shoreline. From its western-most access point in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, south along the Lake Michigan shoreline to Indiana, the trail includes:

- 287 public access sites available for paddlers
- 55 campgrounds located at shoreline access sites
- The Lake Michigan Watershed includes 32 major river systems that provide access to additional water trails in Michigan.

When completed, the Lake Michigan Water Trail will offer safe, legal and adequate access around the four Great Lakes States of Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois and Indiana. The 1,600 mile long Lake Michigan Water Trail will be the longest continuous- loop water trail in the world. Wisconsin completed detailed inventories for access to Lake Michigan in support of trail development. In 2011, 75 miles from Chicago to New Buffalo was designated as the Lake Michigan Water Trail National Recreation Trail by the National Parks Service. In 2014, Michigan's Regional Planning Councils completed inventories of access sites along the Lake Michigan shoreline from Wisconsin to Indiana. There are approximately 287 paddler-friendly, public access sites along the Lake Michigan shoreline and more than 215 within connecting harbors, lakes and rivers. More information can be found at www.michiganwatertrails.org.

Implementation - Appendix A Continued

Goal: Follow guidelines and enhancement recommendations contained in the Lake Michigan Water Trail Plan

Objectives

1. Provide Lake Michigan Water Trail users access to the shoreline every five miles along the Lake Michigan shoreline and/or in connecting rivers, lakes and harbors
2. Provide Lake Michigan Water Trail users access to restroom facilities every five miles
3. Establish universal access for Lake Michigan Water Trail users in every harbor and at sites where installation of universal access is feasible
4. Ensure camping or paddler-friendly lodging a minimum of every ten miles along the Lake Michigan Water Trail.

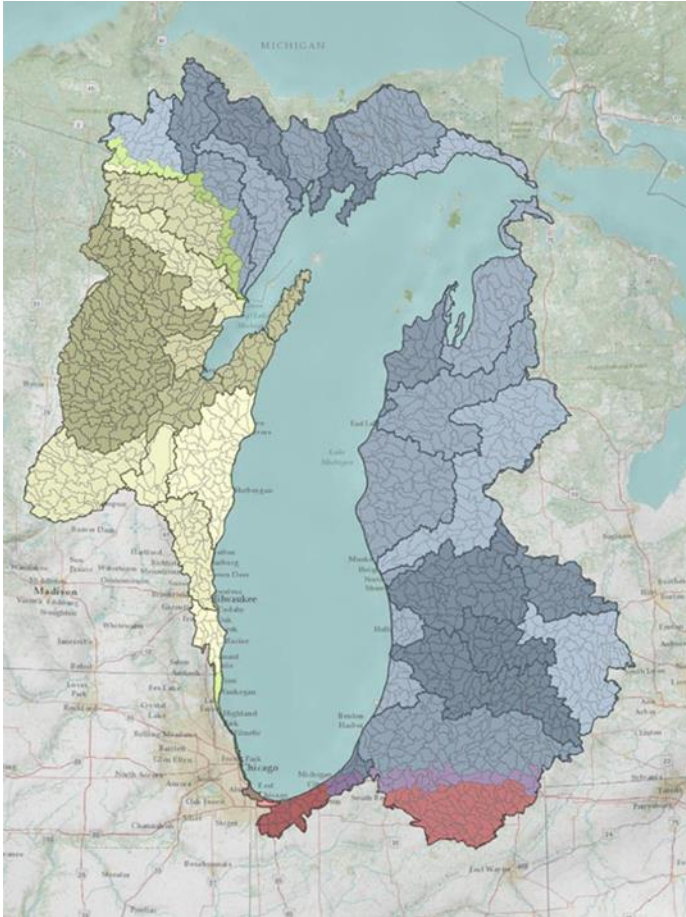
Action Program

Water Trail Development and Enhancements

1. Install signage or other amenities for canoe and kayak users for the West Michigan Water Trail (West Michigan Segment of the Lake Michigan Water Trail)
2. Install signage and amenities at access sites for kayakers for the West Michigan Water Trail/Lake Michigan Water Trail
3. Acquire land to provide additional access to the West Michigan Water Trail / Lake Michigan Water Trail for water trail use
4. Acquire land for additional parks with a special interest in Lake Michigan and the West Michigan Water Trail, river frontage, wetlands and other natural areas.

Local Government Recreation Plan

Model Language



Vision

The Lake Michigan Water Trail system reflects the abundance of water that defines Lake Michigan watershed communities throughout the Great Lakes Region. Citizens and visitors are able to explore coastlines and navigable waters through geographically dispersed water trails that offer a diversity of experiences including lengths, scenery, challenges, amenities and attractions.

Goals and Objectives

Goal: Embrace National Park Service National Water Trail Best Management Practice (BMP) criteria

Objectives

1. Establish public access points that provide recreational opportunities that accommodate a diversity of trip lengths and provide access to a variety of opportunities for recreation and education.
2. Provide trail users with opportunities to learn about the value of water resources, cultural heritage, boating skills, and outdoor ethics
3. Provide opportunities for communities to develop and implement strategies that enhance and restore the health of local waterways and surrounding lands
4. Encourage community support and advocacy for maintenance and stewardship of the water trail
5. Provide the public with accessible and understandable water trail information, including details for identifying access and trail routes; cultural, historic, and natural features; hazards; and water quality. Promote the water trail to the community and broad national audience.
6. Demonstrate ability to support routine and long-term maintenance investments on the water trail and construct, design, and maintain facilities incorporating sustainability principles.
7. Maintain a water trail plan that describes a vision, desired future conditions, and strategies to strengthen best management practices.