



Tuscarawas River Water Trail

What is a designated water trail?

It is a mapped river or waterway with clearly marked public access points and hazards for non-motorized boaters. The water trail serves to promote outdoor recreation and increase awareness for safe paddling and healthy environments.

Partnerships:

Rural Action is assisting Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District in partnering with stakeholders already involved in promoting public access, including park districts, local government, and private landowners.

Expected application: Spring 2017

About the Tuscarawas River

The Tuscarawas River is approximately 130 miles long and runs through Summit, Stark, Tuscarawas, and Coshocton Counties. The Tuscarawas River ends when it merges with the Walhonding River to form the Muskingum River.

The Tuscarawas River has several tributaries that have been polluted, including impacts by acid mine drainage, nutrient enrichment, habitat alteration, sediment, reduced organic enrichment/DO, and pathogens. These impairments result from urbanization, poor waste treatment, agriculture, channelization, and reduced riparian cover (OEPA 2009). Some of these issues have already been addressed by government agencies and local watershed groups. The river is recovering and is now an excellent recreational opportunity for the region!

According to the 2009 EPA river study (TMDL), most of the river meets either Warmwater Habitat or Modified Warmwater Habitat use designation, meaning it is healthy enough for public recreation. And, 32 miles of the river (from Stillwater Creek to Evans Creek) meets Exceptional Warmwater Habitat, the highest rating possible!

Why do we want the Tuscarawas River to be a state-designated Water Trail?

- Increases education and outreach opportunities about our watershed and local wildlife
- Opportunity to highlight and share local history
- Creates more recreational opportunities for families, visitors, and paddling enthusiasts
- Promotes stewardship for natural environment and provides safer river access
- Integrating water trail recreation with existing land trails can spur economic growth in our region

Studies of communities with water trails have shown:

- Economic growth through increases in jobs, incomes, and businesses related to paddling and tourism.
- Population growth in some communities along water trails.
- Lower poverty rates, higher education, and health levels than communities without recreational opportunities.
- Increased awareness leads to greater restoration efforts to address watershed issues.
- Increased signage and information keeps recreationalists on public access areas and reduces trespassing onto private property. The designation also educates public on Leave-No-Trace ethics.

We need your support!

Take our survey & leave comments:

<http://www.mwcd.org/surveys/tuscarawas-river-water-trail>

-OR-

Send a letter of support to: P.O. Box 55, Mineral City, OH 44656

