

Northwest Discovery Water Trail

The Water Trail

The designation of a Northwest Discovery Water Trail is an effort to celebrate an age-old waterway of magnificent landscapes, historic use, and unlimited opportunities for self-discovery. The proposed trail runs from Canoe Camp on the Clearwater River in Idaho, down the Snake and Columbia Rivers, to Bonneville Dam. This 367-mile river route traverses a region of the interior Pacific Northwest marked by deep canyons, ridges and snow-capped volcanoes, vast plateaus, plunging waterfalls, small riverside farming communities and bustling port cities. It is a land of ancient cultures, spanning thousands of years, who used these mighty Northwest rivers for trade and travel. Journeys on the same water route today can be considerably more tame, on a series of lake-like river reaches created by huge lock and dam complexes.

Water Trail Planning

The Army Corps of Engineers began hosting a series of water trail planning meetings in 2001 in Richland, WA and Portland, OR. A diverse group of organizations and trail interests attended these meetings, resulting in an ad-hoc steering committee that guides the planning process. The Northwest Discovery Water Trail, bolstered by the support of several key agencies, is on its way to becoming a reality. The Steering Committee was recently awarded technical assistance from the National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program to help move the water trail forward with extensive public outreach and development of a cooperative management plan.

Anticipated Results in 2005

The Northwest Discovery Water Trail Committee has set ambitious goals for 2005 based on planning and coordination with state, regional, and local trail partners:

- Continue regular Steering Committee meetings
- Convene regional and community meetings to share information about the trail and its resources
- Develop a cooperative water trail management plan focused on safety, facility development, trail education and promotion
- Publish a Northwest Discovery Water Trail Guide and Journal
- Officially launch the water trail in October 2005 to complement Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Commemoration activities

From forested hillsides on the Clearwater River, to quiet coves on the Snake, to busy port facilities along the Columbia, nothing compares with encountering this remarkably diverse region from the water—whether in paddle craft or powered vessel. The Northwest Discovery Water Trail will entice modern boaters to experience for themselves these rivers that have been used for thousands of years for travel, transportation, exploration, recreation, commerce, and livelihood.



Current Northwest Discovery Water Trail Partners

Benton County
Bureau of Land Management
Citizen Advocates
City of Umatilla
Clearwater County Sheriff's Department
Clearwater Economic Development Association
Clearwater Management Council
Columbia Gorge Windsurfing Association
Columbia Kayak Adventures
Columbia Riverkeeper
Columbia River Pilots
Desert Kayak and Canoe Club
Fort Vancouver Regional Library
Friends of the Columbia Gorge
Ice Age Floods Institute
Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation
Idaho Governor's Lewis and Clark Trail Committee
Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership
Mosier Alliance
National Park Service
Northern Wasco County Parks and Recreation District
Oregon Parks & Recreation Department
Oregon State Marine Board
Tapteal Greenway Association
Tidewater Barge Lines
Tri-Cities Visitor and Convention Bureau
Umatilla County Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Committee
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
U.S. Coast Guard
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Forest Service
Vancouver Lewis and Clark Committee
Walla Walla Yacht Club
Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission
Washington Water Trails Association

Goals of the Northwest Discovery Water Trail Partnership

- To promote the water trail as a valuable resource for recreation, water safety, education, and stewardship
- To identify and improve water trail facilities, including launches, landings, and camp sites
- To encourage communities, public agencies, businesses, organizations, and individuals to support, promote, and maintain the water trail
- To commemorate water trail heritage by promoting awareness of natural, historic, cultural, and recreational attributes along the three rivers
- To link water trail travelers with historic and modern land and water trails
- To form a sustainable partnership to support and guide management of the water trail

For further information, please contact:

Sarah Krueger
Water Trails Coordinator
Washington Water Trails Association
4649 Sunnyside Ave North, Room 305
Seattle, WA 98103
(206) 545-9161
sarah@wwta.org

Phil Benge
Natural Resources Specialist
201 N Third Avenue
Walla Walla, WA 99362
(509) 527-7133
phil.e.benge@usace.army.mil

Joe Sobinovskiy
Statewide Trails Coordinator
Washington State Parks and Recreation
Commission
2840 Riverwalk Drive SE
Auburn, WA 98002
(253) 288-2578
joe.sobinovskiy@parks.wa.gov