

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources



Minnesota's Water Trail Program

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NTS - Water Trails

What is the Water Trails Program?

History

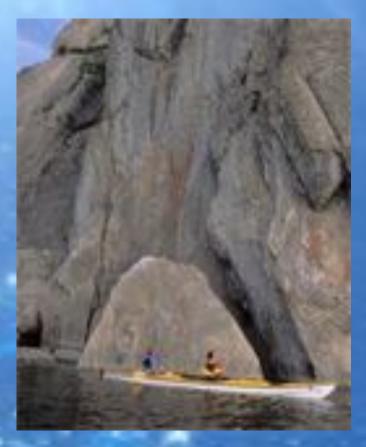
Creation of a Water Trail

Benefits to the Public

User Research

Management Issues

Future Plans







- Program administered by the MN DNR Division of Trails and Waterways
- 31 water trails state wide
 - Over 4,000 river miles
 - 155 miles on Lake Superior's North Shore
- Find a water trail within an hour or two of almost anywhere in MN!















Fees - Canoe/Kayak

\$10.50 Registration Fee

\$5.00 Exotic Species Surcharge

\$1.50 ELS Fee Per Transaction

\$8.50 Filing Fee (\$6.00 renewal)

\$25.50 Total Cost for 3 Year



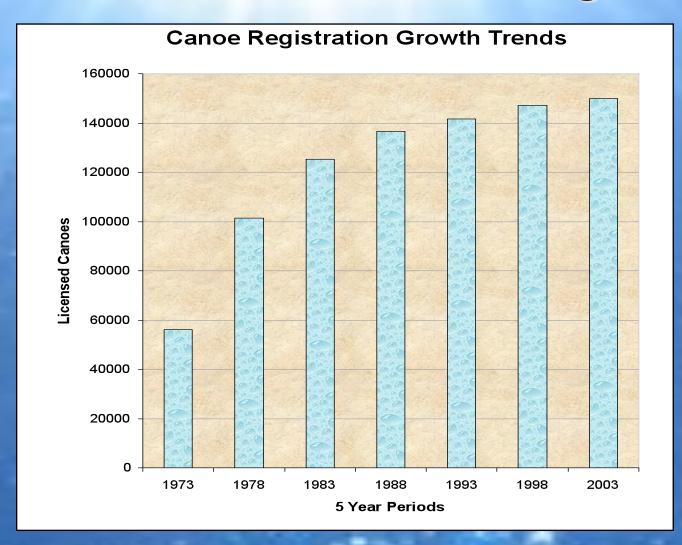




- 146,000 Registered canoes & 34,000 kayaks
 - Overall 5.5% growth from 2003-2007
 - Kayaking is one of the fastest growing recreational sports in MN.
 - Grew 68% from 2003-2007
- Approximately \$500,000/year total revenue contributed to the Water Recreation Account.















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"Rivers are roads which move, and which carry us whither we desire to go."

Blaise Pascal

17th-century French Philosopher



Photos from Minnesota Historical Society Collection







- Canoe and Boating Route Program (M.S. 85.32):
 - To mark canoe and boating routes and provide recreational facilities on legislatively designated rivers (1963).







Program Highlights

<u>1963</u>-Legislation creates Canoe & Boating Route Program

2005 -150-mile Lake Superior Water Trail completed.

<u>1968</u>-Federal Wild and Scenic Act

Automated river level 2006 -

reporting gauges

installed.

1972 - Registration/License Fees

1973 - Minnesota Wild & Scenic Rivers (6 designated)

1993 – Legislation creates Lake **Superior Water Trail**

Largest state land <u> 1997</u> acquisition - 22,500 along St. Louis acres 150 miles. River:



Bridge over Minnesota River 1978 Minnesota Historical Society Collection







Designation

1963

- Big Fork
- Little Fork
- Minnesota
- St. Croix

1967

- Cannon
- Cloquet
- N. Fork Crow
- Crow Wing
- Des Moines
- Kettle
- Mississippi
- Red Lake
- Root
- Rum
- Snake
- St. Louis

1976

- Straight
- Zumbro

1983

Pine

1993

Lake Superior

1995

- Pomme De Terre

1996

- Wantowan
- Whitewater
- Cottonwood

2000

Chippewa

2001

- Long Prairie
- Red River of the North

2006

- Otter Tail
- Sauk

2007

- South Fork Crow
- Redwood River







Federal Wild & Scenic Rivers

- Est. 1968
- Managed by the National Park Service
- The St. Croix River is Minnesota's only Federal Wild & Scenic River.



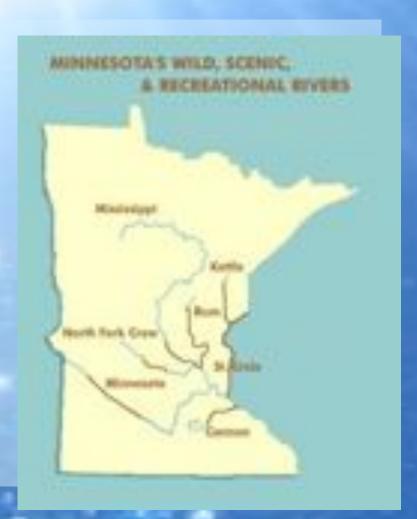
St. Croix River





Minnesota Wild & Scenic Rivers

- Est. 1973
- 6 Rivers designated in 1973
- Requires a management plan
- Easement
 - Establishment
 - Monitoring
 - Enforcement







1993 Lake Superior Water Trail

- Volunteer driven initiative
- 155 Miles
- Completed in 2005







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Criteria

Water Trail Designation Criteria (DNR Policy)

- Potentially free of numerous snags & manmade obstacles
- River shore lands are suitable for campsite and rest area development
- Water quality is high enough to allow for body contact, etc.
- Minimum 5-mile reach
- Navigable at least 3 months of the year





Process

- Local interest in increased recreation management
- Legislative action resulting in water trail designation
- DNR performs or contracts for map survey work









Process

- DNR seeks public input on recreation management opportunities
- DNR works with local units of government and private landowners to identify:
 - Access sites
 - Campsites
 - Portages
 - Safety concerns







Process

- DNR performs or contracts for development and maintenance work
- DNR manages river level reporting system
- DNR develops or contracts for map development
- Maps are published



Lake Superior Access Development



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Acquisition, development and maintenance of:

- Access sites
- Portages
- Campsites
- Rest Areas



St. Louis River

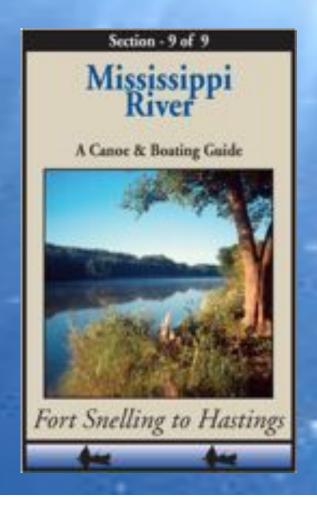


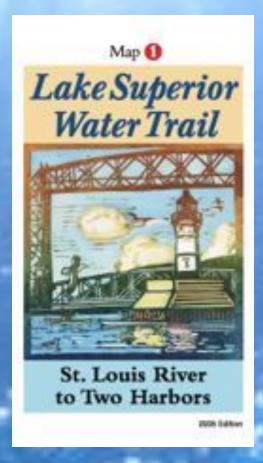


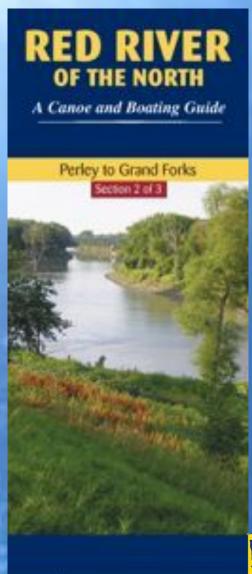




Free Maps













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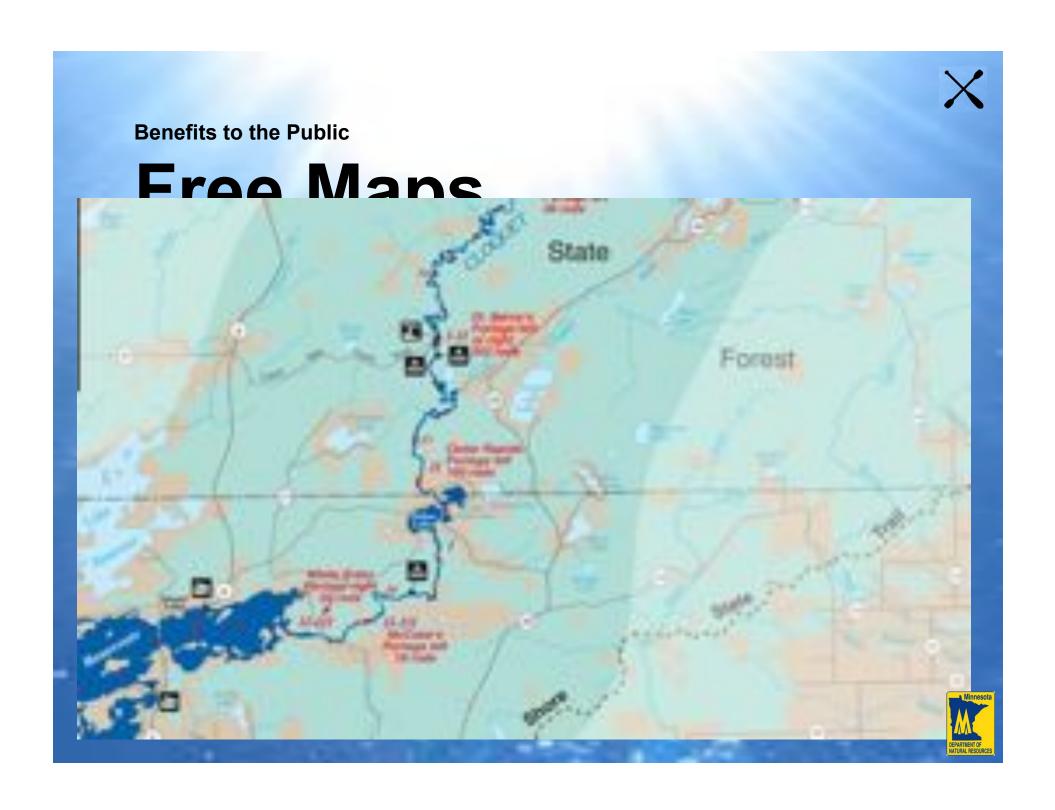
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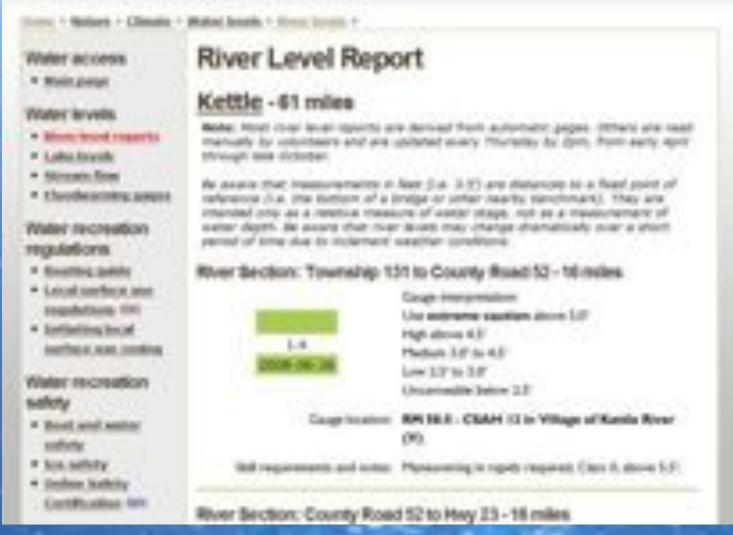








River Level Reports

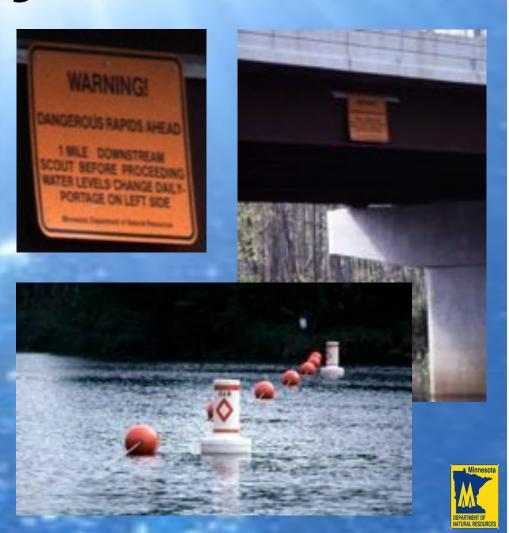






River Safety

- Safety signing
- Marking dams and other hazards
- Training for rescue and enforcement personnel on water rescue techniques.





Snag/Obstruction Removal



MCC Water Trail Crew removing snags on Minnesota River

Photos courtesy MCC







NTS - Water Trails

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Management Issues

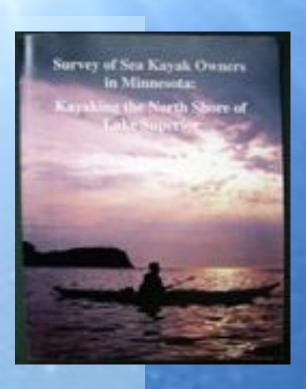
Future Plans







- Survey of Sea
 Kayak Owners in
 Minnesota:
 Kayaking the North
 Shore of Lake
 Superior 2001
- Outdoor Recreation Participation Survey 2004
- Canoe/Kayak
 Survey 2005







What people want:

- Positive experience
- Accesses
- Maps
- River Level Reporting
- More trail opportunities!

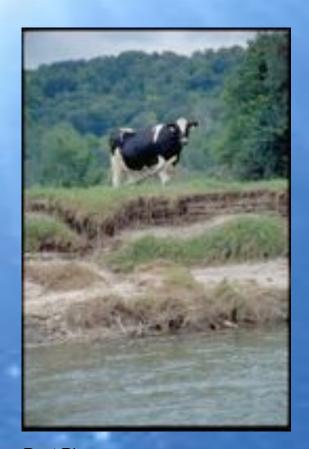
Barriers to use:

- Time
- Shuttling
- Water Levels
- Fear of motorized craft
- Lack of knowledge regarding existing water trails





- Low satisfaction with number and maintenance of campsites
- Desire to keep shoreline undeveloped

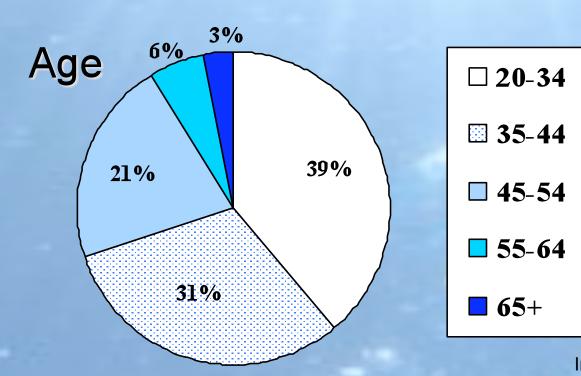


Root River





Demographics Non-motorized boating



Gender
47% Female
53% Male

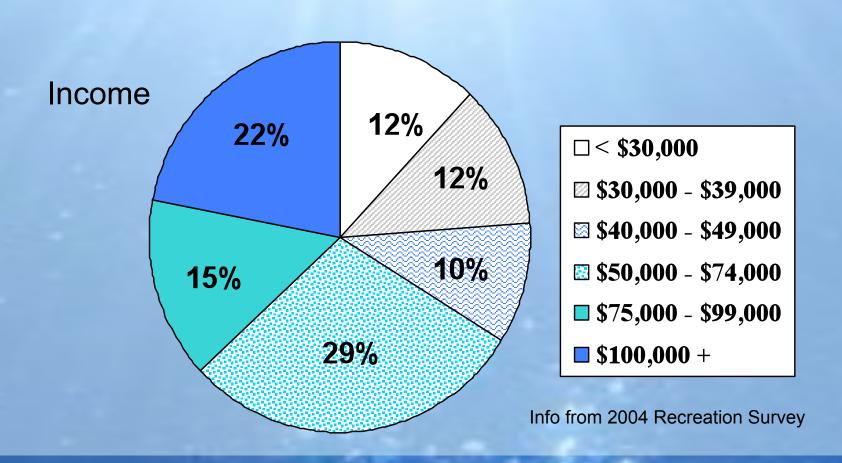
Info from 2004 Recreation Survey





User Research

Demographics Non-motorized boating





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- New program / project management
- Community technical assistance







DNR Policy Development

Obstruction/Snag Relocation Policy

- Researched similar policies.
- Developed based on experience and available examples.
- Policy Content:
 - Purpose/goals of relocation
 (Ecological and user safety considerations)
 - Mandatory safety equipment and use
 - Training staff and volunteers





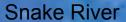


Hydropower

- Re-licensing
- Recreation
- Review











Partnerships

Adopt-a-River

- Encourages
 stewardship by
 having volunteers
 adopt waterways
 and clean up litter
 and dump sites
- Majority of cleanup activity is on existing water trails





Partnerships

National Wild & Scenic Rivers

National Park Service

St. Croix National Scenic Riverway
From the headwaters to Taylors Falls:
Managed by the National Park Service.

Lower St. Croix National Scenic Riverway

Lower 52 miles of the St. Croix River along the Minnesota/Wisconsin border:

Managed cooperatively by the National Park Service, Minnesota DNR, and Wisconsin DNR.











Partnerships



MCC is a youth and young adult natural resources stewardship training program.

- Crews state-wide work on a variety of natural resource projects including:
 - Build campsites, accesses, portage trails
 - Invasive species removal/management
 - Prescribed burning
- Water Trails Crew:
 - Collects GPS data
 - Removes snags and obstructions
- Adopt-a-River Assistant assists with DNR's Adopt-a-River Program.





Partnerships



Mississippi Headwaters Board

- Mission is to protect and preserve the first 400 miles of the Mississippi River
 - Created as an alternative to designation as a Wild and Scenic River
 - Joint powers board comprised of the first 8 counties on the Mississippi River
 - Achieves goals by cooperative land use planning





Partnerships

Minnesota Canoe Association

Lake Superior Water Trail Association

Inland Sea Kayakers

Minnesota Trails

Minnesota Waters

River Keepers

River Ramblers

River Management Society



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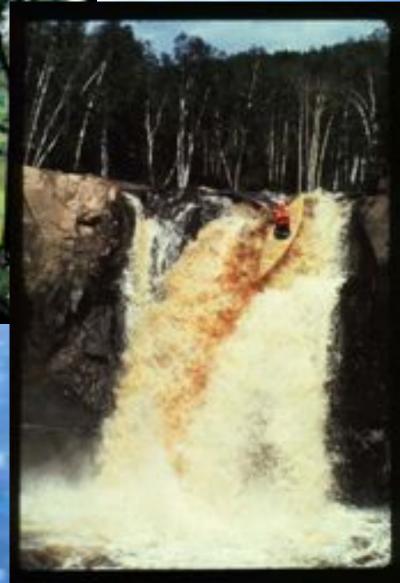
Future Plans

- Strengthen partnerships
- Increase public knowledge of program and resources Outreach
- Improve user resources online
 - Downloadable GPS points
 - River level gages interpreted from a paddler's perspective

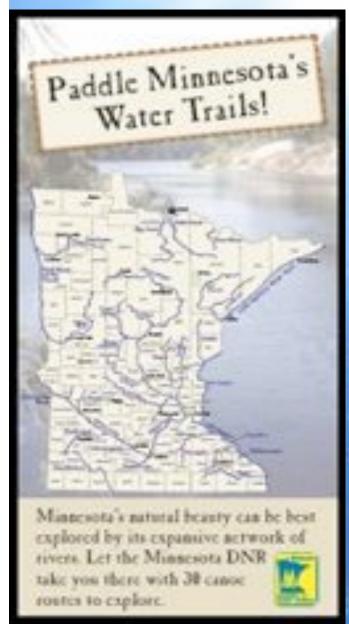


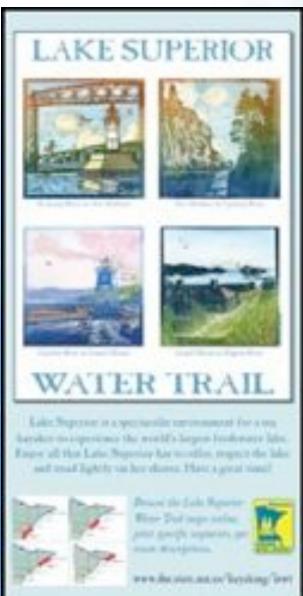


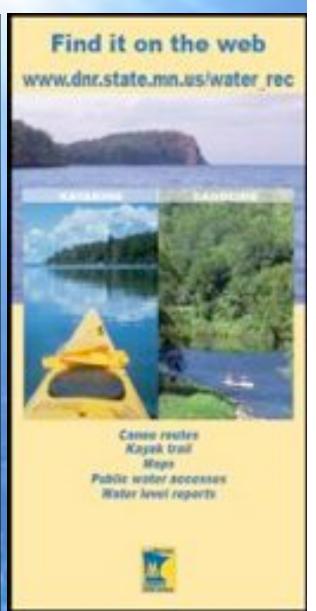
The End













Straight River - largest exposed rock in Rice County, Minnesota