LEWIS RIVER–VANCOUVER LAKE WATER TRAIL
PADDLING GUIDE
WWW.CLARK.WA.GOV/PARKS
The 32 river miles in this water trail include Vancouver Lake (more than 5 miles to circumnavigate), the full extent of Lake River (~11.5 miles), a section of the Columbia River along the west side of Bachelor Island (~4 miles), the Bachelor Island Slough and the confluences of the Lewis and Lake Rivers (2.6 miles), upriver on the East Fork of the Lewis River to La Center (~3.25 miles), and upriver on the North Fork of the Lewis River to Woodland (6.5 miles).
Lewis River to Vancouver Lake Water Trail

32+ miles of paddling in Clark County

Lower Columbia River Water Trail, 146 miles

LEGEND

- Shore Launch
- Boat Ramp
- Camping
- State/Federal Lands
- Public Parks
- City Limits
- USGS River Miles
- Bridge
- Power Lines
- Shore Access
- LRVL Water Trail
Welcome to your Lewis River-Vancouver Lake Water Trail! This guide provides information to make your paddling trip safer, more enjoyable and less harmful to our natural resources.

Located in southwest Washington, along the Columbia River, Clark County offers abundant ways to enjoy the great outdoors. The Lewis River-Vancouver Lake Water Trail features sites of historic significance, one National Wildlife Refuge (Ridgefield), two state wildlife areas (Shillapoo and Two Forks), a state park (Paradise Point) and hundreds of acres of other public and private conservation lands allowing ample opportunities for wildlife viewing.

Water trails help to identify appropriate routes along existing stretches of river and shorelines that allow small water craft such as canoes, kayaks, rafts and stand-up paddleboards access to recreational, scenic and cultural resources. This guide provides information about publicly-accessible areas and offers helpful hints about safety and river etiquette.

This water trail guide is intended to enhance recreational opportunities for paddlers of all abilities by providing river mileage, waterway conditions and trip planning details.

Maps are also available on the Clark County Parks website www.clark.wa.gov/parks and the guide is also available on the Lower Columbia Estuary partnership website: www.estuarppartnership.org.

Enjoy the view from the water!
The Lewis River-Vancouver Lake Water Trail covers much of the western boundaries of Clark County, Washington; touches the southern edge of Cowlitz County in Woodland, Washington; and reaches into the borders of La Center, Ridgefield and Vancouver.

This guide is oriented from north to south, traveling from the North Fork of the Lewis River in Woodland to the southern shore of Vancouver Lake in Vancouver, Washington. Be aware that river currents are strongly influenced by both wind and tidal conditions, and can combine to negate the strength of the river current.

Existing public boat ramps or shore launch sites are located in a number of places. This water trail extends along the North Fork of the Lewis River from the informal shore launch beside the bridge crossing at Hayes Road in Woodland and the East Fork Lewis River from launch sites at the City of La Center Bridge to the south end of Vancouver Lake where an unpaved boat launch allows access from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) lands at the end of La Frambois Road in Vancouver.

The maps are divided into eight sections containing over four river miles in each section and indicating river miles, paved boat ramps and shore launch sites. Shore launches have highly variable conditions in surfacing, distance to vehicle load/unload, parking, slopes and roughness, and amenities such as drinking water and restrooms, all of which may affect ease of accessibility and convenience.

Portions of the water trail are also available for boating and fishing. To avoid congestion at boat ramps, launch from the shore, when appropriate.

Before setting out, check tidal charts that influence direction of current on Lake River as this will affect paddling speed, effort needed and time to travel between launch sites.

www.tidespy.com
www.west-fly-fishing.com
While waterways provide a variety of recreational opportunities, water currents, debris, side channels, weather and other factors can present risks. Plan ahead and be prepared to safely enjoy your paddling experience.

Paddle Checklist
- Prepare a float plan [www.floatplancentral.org](http://www.floatplancentral.org).
  Inform others of your trip and expected return time.
- Wear a properly-fitted personal flotation device (PFD) with a whistle. Youth 12 years or younger are required to wear a PFD by state statute.
- Do not paddle alone.
- Learn about your route in advance, especially potential hazards and emergency access.
- Know the weather forecast. If you experience sudden temperature drops, increasing and volatile winds or darkening clouds, get off the water.
- Review tidal charts ahead of time. High water conditions can leave launch sites underwater without access. Low water conditions during summer and low tide can require portaging (walking/carrying).
- Don’t depend on your cell phone. Long stretches of the water trail have no cell phone coverage.
- Dress for variable weather conditions, including air and water temperature.
- Examine launch/landing areas carefully to note water depths, uneven surfaces, currents and hazards.
- Carry food and water adequate for your trip length.
- Maintain distance between your boat and objects in the water, including motor boats, which may cause waves that could capsize a canoe or kayak.
- Position your boat perpendicular to an approaching wake.
- Be able to effectively steer and propel your boat.
- Never float or paddle over a fallen tree or other obstruction.
- Carry proper safety and first aid equipment.
- Learn how to self-rescue in the event of capsize.
- Research and plan ahead to be prepared.
Appropriate, low-impact use of the water trail is the responsibility of all who use this natural resource and will ensure these waterways stay beautiful and healthy.

On your travels, be considerate of others. Give space to those who are fishing or hunting and don’t use the boat ramp when launching or taking out during busy fishing seasons if other space is available.

**Leave No Trace**

When enjoying the Water Trail, respect sensitive habitats and do not alter your surroundings. Leave rocks, plants and other natural objects as you found them. Secure trash to your boat so it does not blow into the water. Reserve restroom breaks for designated sites. Campsites and public lands along the trail have a range of amenities - study your maps for these locations. Where campfires are permitted, use designated fire rings. Take out what you brought in, including trash, if proper receptacles are unavailable. Make your best effort to leave the area as if people had not been there at all. Learn more at Washington Water Trails [www.wwta.org/int/principles.asp](http://www.wwta.org/int/principles.asp).

**Encountering Wildlife**

Quietly view wildlife, giving a wide berth to the birds and animals you encounter. A small pair of binoculars can help you maintain a safe distance while viewing. Do not disturb stranded or wounded animals.

**Respect Private Property**

The river is open for recreation but lands along the shore may be private or restricted wildlife refuge lands. Respect private property and posted lands and do not trespass.
The North Fork Lewis River completes its final miles flowing south through Woodland before joining the East Fork to form the main stem of the river. Tidal influences from the Columbia River can extend upstream as far as mile 7 on the North Fork Lewis River. Paddlers should be cautious around the support structures of the Hayes Road and Interstate 5 bridges.

**A HAYES ROAD BRIDGE SHORE LAUNCH**
Ownership: Public road right-of-way
Signage: Not visible from road
Launch: Steep slope, eroded
Parking: Right-of-way, gravel, 12 spaces
Restroom: None
Fees: None

**B PEKIN FERRY INLAND NAVIGATION BOAT RAMP**
Ownership: Private
Signage: Visible from road
Launch: Boat ramp, no fee, paved
Parking: Paved, 10+ spaces
Restroom: Portable toilet
Fees: Parking $5/day or $125/annual
Amenities: Camping, playground, swim beach

**C MARTIN WDFW BOAT RAMP**
Ownership: Public, State
Signage: Not visible from road
Launch: Paved ramp
Parking: Gravel lot, 50+ spaces
Restroom: Vault toilet
Fees: Discover Pass required $10/daily, $30/annual

**D PARADISE POINT STATE PARK SHORE LAUNCH**
Ownership: Public, State
Signage: Not visible from road
Launch: Gravel
Parking: Gravel lot
Restroom: Vault toilet
Fees: Discover Pass required $10/daily or $30/annual
Amenities: Campground, picnicking, showers, disk golf
Tidal influences up to about mile 7

* Be cautious around pilings for I-5 bridges

North Fork Lewis River: Woodland Section
This stretch of the lower East Fork Lewis River flows through state and county conservation lands. From La Center, the natural shoreline dominates the landscape until the intrusion of the Interstate 5 bridge that looms above the Paradise Point State Park shore launch. Just beyond the bridge, the Two Forks Wildlife Area provides more wildlife watching opportunities before the East Fork joins with the North Fork to become the Lewis River for its last 3.5 miles to the Columbia River.

With numerous access sites, coordinating paddling trips as a one-way shuttle is relatively easy. A leisurely winter paddle trip from La Center to Pekin Ferry should take about 1.25 hours.

**LA CENTER SHORE LAUNCH**
Ownership: Public
Signage: Not visible from road
Launch: Gravel, shore access
Parking: Gravel, 4 spaces
Parking at La Center Bottoms
Restroom: At La Center Bottoms
Fees: None

**POLLOCK ROAD SHORE LAUNCH**
Ownership: Public
Signage: Not visible from road
Launch: Gravel, shore access
Parking: None, gravel
right-of-way
Restroom: None
Fees: None

**PEKIN FERRY INLAND NAVIGATION BOAT RAMP**
Ownership: Private
Signage: Visible from road
Launch: Boat ramp, paved
Parking: Paved, 10+ spaces
Restroom: Portable toilet
Fees: Parking $5/day or $125/annual
Amenities: Camping, playground, swim beach

**CD HALE ROAD SHORE LAUNCH**
Ownership: Public road right-of-way
Signage: Not visible from road
Launch: Gravel shoreline, rough surface
Parking: Gravel, limited space
Restroom: None
Fees: None
The confluences of the Lewis River and Lake River with the Columbia have strong currents and tidal changes that should keep paddlers alert and close to the shore. Watch for submerged pilings and sandbars. Since Morgan Landing shore launch has no parking, this unimproved access to the Lewis River should be used only as a drop-off or pick-up location.

Rich in wildlife and cultural history, osprey and bald eagles abound. Lewis and Clark campsite is about 1.9 miles downstream from Ridgefield Marina boat ramp on river right, directly across from entrance to Bachelor Slough. Due to heavy motorized boat traffic, paddlers should hug the shoreline and know how to handle boat wake and self-rescue in case of capsize.

Note: Do not enter Gee Creek (just outside the mouth of Lake River); this is a protected wildlife habitat and borders private property. For more details, go to Friends of Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge. www.ridgefieldfriends.org.

MORGAN LANDING
SHORE LAUNCH
Ownership: Public
Signage: Not visible from road
Launch: Primitive, abrupt edge at end of pavement; difficult
Parking: Prohibited
Restroom: None
Fees: None
Notes:
• Morgan Street right-of-way, private property on both sides

DIVISION STREET/RIDGEFIELD
SHORE LAUNCH
Ownership: Public
Signage: Visible from road
Launch: Gravel ramp
Parking: Gravel, road shoulder, 10 spaces
Restroom: Portable toilet
Fees: Launch $6/day or $20 season pass; obtain permit at Mill St. boat ramp site
Notes:
• Access along Lake River on alignment of Division Street, west of Railroad Avenue
• Waterfront redevelopment in process, changes to access may occur

MILL STREET/RIDGEFIELD
BOAT RAMP
Ownership: Public
Signage: Visible from road
Launch: Boat ramp, paved
Parking: Paved, 20 spaces
Restroom: Flush toilet
Fees: Launch $6/day or $20 season pass
LAKE RIVER: NORTH RIDGEFIELD SECTION

- Morgan Landing Shore Launch:
  - Public facility for non-motorized watercraft
  - Gravel launch
  - Launch fee: $6 per day & $20 season pass for canoes/kayaks
  - Portable rest room
  - Gravel parking, no fee; 10 spaces
  - Signage for launch is visible from road

- Mill St./Ridgefield Boat Ramp:
  - Public
  - Paved ramps (2)
  - Launch fee: $6 per day & $20 season pass for canoes/kayaks
  - Flush toilets
  - Paved parking, no fee; 20 spaces
  - Signage for launch is visible from road

- Division St./Ridgefield Shore Launch:
  - Public
  - Paved ramps (2)
  - Launch fee: $6 per day & $20 season pass for canoes/kayaks
  - Flush toilets
  - Paved parking, no fee; 20 spaces
  - Signage for launch is visible from road

- Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge

- Bachelor Island:
  - Private boat launch $5/day

- Strong tidal influences at confluence — watch for submerged pilings
- Sandbars exposed in low water (typically July-October)
- Respect private property & wildlife refuge land — stay out of Gee Creek

- 2-mile stretch of Lake River has heavy traffic — subject to wakes

- Historic Railroad trestle bridge
- BeeBe's Campground private boat launch $5/day
- Bachelor Island Slough
- Overhead power lines
- Ridgefield Kayak - rental & guiding service

- 0 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 Miles

- Cowlitz County
- Clark County
- N
- Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge
- Bachelor Island
- Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge
The paddle trip around Bachelor Island can be highly variable due to changing water levels and the dynamic nature of the Columbia River. The Columbia is an active shipping channel where paddlers should stay far from large vessels. Wildlife viewing is more successful along the shores.

Use care in seasons of high water not to unintentionally enter the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge, a protected shoreline, and disturb the wildlife. During hunting season (October–January), this is a recommended paddle since waterfowl hunting is prohibited in the Slough. River otters have been seen along the shoreline and sandhill cranes can sometimes be seen and heard in later September and October.

From Ridgefield Marina, the Bachelor Island Loop may be paddled clockwise or counter-clockwise. The non-vegetated southern beach (exposed at low water) of Bachelor Island is administered by Washington Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR) and open to the public; the Refuge portions are signed and closed to the public.

July-October: low tide/water may require portage between Bachelor Slough and the Columbia, and just beyond the bridge connecting the Refuge’s River “S” and Bachelor Island units.

Bachelor Island Loop Duration: 5-6 hours (10 miles) Best paddled in clockwise direction.

DIVISION STREET/ RIDGEFIELD SHORE LAUNCH
Ownership: Public
Signage: Visible from road
Launch: Gravel ramp
Parking: Gravel, road shoulder, 10 spaces
Restroom: Portable toilet
Fees: Launch $6/day or $20 season pass; obtain permit at Mill St. boat ramp site
Notes:
• Access along Lake River on alignment of Division Street, west of Railroad Avenue

• Waterfront redevelopment in process, changes to access may occur

MILL STREET/ RIDGEFIELD BOAT RAMP
Ownership: Public
Signage: Visible from road
Launch: Boat ramp, paved
Parking: Paved, 20 spaces
Restroom: Flush toilet
Fees: Launch $6/day or $20 season pass
A 8.5 mile stretch of Lake River from Ridgefield to Felida is quiet with little boat traffic. The best way to approach this paddle is to start at either Ridgefield or the Felida Moorage. Either launch location makes for a very long trip if you plan to go end-to-end. You may prefer to start at either end and paddle out-and-back. This section is heavily affected by tides and wind and can be a torturous trip against the tide and into the wind.

Less than a mile south of the Ridgefield Boat Launch, Lake River passes beneath the bridge connecting the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge Unit “S” to the mainland. Herons, egrets and other waterfowl are frequent along this section of river. Watch for bald eagles, osprey and otters.

**Division Street/Ridgefield Shore Launch**
- **Ownership:** Public
- **Signage:** Visible from road
- **Launch:** Gravel ramp
- **Parking:** Gravel, road shoulder, 10 spaces
- **Restroom:** Portable toilet
- **Fees:** Launch $6/day or $20 season pass; obtain permit at Mill St. boat ramp site
- **Notes:**
  - Access along Lake River on alignment of Division Street, west of Railroad Avenue
  - Waterfront redevelopment in process, changes to access may occur

**Mill Street/Ridgefield Boat Ramp**
- **Ownership:** Public
- **Signage:** Visible from road
- **Launch:** Boat ramp, paved
- **Parking:** Paved, 20 spaces
- **Restroom:** Flush toilet
- **Fees:** Launch $6/day or $20 season pass
Lake River, which connects Vancouver Lake to the Columbia River near Ridgefield, can flow in or out depending on tidal cycles and water levels in the lake relative to the Columbia River. Clark County Code restricts motorboat use on the lake to slow-no wake.

The Felida moorage, a private launch in a houseboat community, was recently improved and lends itself wonderfully for kayak launching. You can paddle past the boathouses, going north to begin your journey up Lake River or head south to explore the shallow waters of Vancouver Lake.

Once you pass the boathouses, keep a sharp eye out for the mouth of Salmon Creek which, when the water is high enough, makes for a great side trip.

**FELIDA MOORAGE BOAT RAMP/NW 122ND STREET**

**Ownership:** Private  
**Signage:** Not visible from road  
**Launch:** Boat ramp, fee, paved  
**Parking:** Gravel, 30 spaces  
**Restroom:** Flush toilet  
**Fees:** Parking $.50/vehicle, $3/boat launch per person  
**Amenities:** Camping  
(tent and RV)

**Note:**  
- Houseboat community along Lake River just north of Vancouver Lake
LAKE RIVER: SOUTH GREEN LAKE SECTION

Legend
- Shore Launch
- USGS River Miles-Lake River
- Boat Ramp
- State/Federal Lands
- Public Parks

Lake River - South Green Lake Section

Felida Moorage Boat Ramp
- Private
- Paved ramp
- Launch fee $3 per boat
- Flush toilets
- Gravel parking: .50 cents per vehicle: 30 spaces
- Signage for launch is not visible from road

Salmon Creek: Confluence Characteristics

National Wildlife Refuge
Shillapoo Wildlife Area

Green Lake
Buckmire Slough

4.5 miles to Ridgefield

Culvert planned for removal

Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge
Vancouver Lake, Clark County’s largest natural lake, has a surface area of approximately 2,300 acres that varies with seasonal changes. Shoreline is seven miles and the lake’s maximum width is two miles. Lake depth is three to 15 feet.

Paddling on the open water can be highly variable with weather conditions liable to change rather quickly. Paddling close to shore will add more visibility for potential bird watching and other wildlife encounters. Bald eagles are frequent visitors to the Lake.

*Summer: Low water conditions in the Lake can lead to algae blooms, resulting in unsafe swimming conditions. Be aware of water quality conditions before enjoying recreational opportunities.

Vancouver Lake Park: A 234-acre day-use park on the southwest shore of Vancouver Lake is a great place to stage or rest as part of a paddle trip. Canoes and kayaks can be launched from the beach.

The WDFW boat launch is on the south shore of the Lake at the end of La Frambois Road.

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**Vancouver Lake: West Section**

Vancouver Lake, Clark County’s largest natural lake, has a surface area of approximately 2,300 acres that varies with seasonal changes. Shoreline is seven miles and the lake’s maximum width is two miles. Lake depth is three to 15 feet.

Paddling on the open water can be highly variable with weather conditions liable to change rather quickly. Paddling close to shore will add more visibility for potential bird watching and other wildlife encounters. Bald eagles are frequent visitors to the Lake.

*Summer: Low water conditions in the Lake can lead to algae blooms, resulting in unsafe swimming conditions. Be aware of water quality conditions before enjoying recreational opportunities.*

Vancouver Lake Park: A 234-acre day-use park on the southwest shore of Vancouver Lake is a great place to stage or rest as part of a paddle trip. Canoes and kayaks can be launched from the beach.

The WDFW boat launch is on the south shore of the Lake at the end of La Frambois Road.

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**Vancouver Lake:**

**Ownership:** Public

**Signage:** Not visible from road

**Launch:** Shore, sand

**Parking:** Paved, fee, 50 spaces

**Restroom:** Flush toilet

**Fees:** None

**Amenities:** Sandy swim beach, shower

**Note:** “No boat access” sign is for motorized boats. Hand-carry non-motorized boats from vehicles in the parking area.

**Vancouver Lake WDFW Shore Launch**

**Ownership:** Public

**Signage:** Not visible from road

**Launch:** Unimproved boat ramp

**Parking:** Gravel

**Restroom:** None

**Fees:** Discover Pass $30/yr or fishing/hunting license required

**Notes:**
- Southern end of Vancouver Lake, La Frambois Rd. leads through Shillapoo Wildlife Area to shallow waters of the Lake.
- Shore launch conditions vary with lake levels.
Vancouver Lake Regional Park Shore Launch
- Public
- Sand launch
- No launch fee
- Flush restrooms & shower
- Paved parking for fee: $3 per car, $6 car & trailer, $8 bus, $40 annual pass: 50+ spaces
- Signage for launch is not visible from road (?)
- Regional park amenities

Felida Moorage
- Public
- Unimproved boat launch
- Discovery Pass $30/year or fishing/hunting license required
- No amenities

Vancouver Lake WDFW Boat Ramp
- Public
- Unimproved boat launch
- Discovery Pass $30/year or fishing/hunting license required
- No amenities

Vancouver Lake Crew
(private dock)

Shillapoo Wildlife Area

Port of Vancouver

LEGEND
- Shore Launch
- USGS River Miles-Lake River
- Boat Ramp
- State/Federal Lands
- Public Parks
- City Boundary

VANCOUVER LAKE: WEST SECTION
Most of the land along the shores of Vancouver Lake is conserved for wildlife habitat, especially for migratory waterfowl. The city, county and partner agencies have helped restore extensive wetlands; portions of the lowlands are leased for farming.

The WA Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) property provides a launch at the end of La Frambois Road.

**VANCOUVER LAKE WDFW SHORE LAUNCH**

**Ownership:** Public  
**Signage:** Not visible from road  
**Launch:** Unimproved boat ramp  
**Parking:** None  
**Restroom:** None  
**Fees:** Discover Pass $30/yr or fishing/hunting license required  
**Notes:**  
- Southern end of Vancouver Lake, La Frambois Rd. leads through Shillapoo Wildlife Area to shallow waters of the Lake.  
- Shore launch conditions vary with lake levels.

**FELIDA MOORAGE BOAT RAMP/NW 122ND STREET**

**Ownership:** Private  
**Signage:** Not visible from road  
**Launch:** Boat ramp, fee, paved  
**Parking:** Gravel, 30 spaces  
**Restroom:** Flush toilet  
**Fees:** Parking $.50/vehicle, $3/boat launch  
**Note:**  
- Houseboat community along Lake River just north of Vancouver Lake
GEAR CHECKLIST

Always wear a life jacket with a whistle. In Washington, children 12 years and younger are required by law to wear life jackets when in boats that are underway.

- Personal flotation device
- Extra paddle & leash
- Non-cotton clothes
- Drinking water/food
- First aid kit
- Maps/compass/GPS
- Flashlight/headlamp/extra batteries
- Rope or bungee cords
- Bailer or bilge pump
- Pocket knife or multi-tool
- Sunscreen & lip balm
- Hat with brim
- Sunglasses
- Extra ropes
- Dry bags
- Matches/lighter in waterproof container
- Whistle
- Cell phone (coverage is often unreliable)
- Binoculars
- Emergency Blanket
RESOURCES

EMERGENCIES Call 9-1-1

RIVER FLOW/TIDAL INFORMATION
waterdata.usgs.gov/wa/nwis/rt
www.west-fly-fishing.com
Tide Predictions www.saltwatertides.com
Tides www.tidespy.com

PERSONAL FLOAT PLAN

WEATHER
Local Weather www.weather.yahoo.com
Weather Radio All Hazards www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr
Recorded Weather Forecasts (NOAA) 503-261-9246

BOATER INFORMATION
American Canoe Association www.americancanoe.org
Washington Kayak Club www.washingtonkayakclub.org
Washington Water Trails Association www.wwta.org
Canoe & Kayak Resources www.paddling.net
Lower Columbia River Water Trail
www.columbiawaterrat.org
Boating Handbook
U.S. Coast Guard www.uscgboating.org

OTHER
Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge
www.ridgefieldfriends.org
www.fws.gov/ridgefieldrefuges/complex/

INSTRUCTION/TOURS & RETAIL/RENTALS
Checklists, Classes and Videos – REI www.rei.com
Rentals & Guided Paddling Excursions
www.ridgefieldkayak.com

CAMPING
Pekin Ferry Inland Navigation Company www.pekinferry.com
Washington State Parks www.parks.wa.gov
(see Paradise Point State Park)
Felida Moorage local.yahoo.com/info-22274862-felida-moorage-marine-service-vancouver
Overnight camping is not allowed at parks owned by Clark County.
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The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA) is a community assistance arm of the National Park Service. Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation received a RTCA technical assistance grant to help develop a plan for Clark County’s first official water trail along 32 miles of waterways between Woodland and Vancouver Lake. This paddling guide is one outcome from the water trail plan.

Help support your waterways, parks and recreation areas with a donation to the Parks Foundation of Clark County. Go to www.parksfoundation.us for information.