

BUCKHANNON & TYGART VALLEY RIVER WATER TRAIL



A Water Trail tells an interconnected story of the river and land, its flora and fauna, as well as our own heritage and history. The Water Trail supports a network of river access sites along a 45-mile section of the river suitable for paddlers and other river users to enhance connection, foster stewardship and spark appreciation of the natural world.

ABOUT THE TRAIL

The proposed Water Trail is 45 miles originating near the community of Sago in Upshur County and ending near the Arden community in Barbour County. The trail is mostly flatwater with occasional riffles, offering excellent beginner and family friendly routes.

The proposed Water Trail flows through peaceful landscapes, quiet meanders, and mature forested landscapes, as well as communities rich in history, including two historic covered bridges. Wildlife is plentiful along the entire waterway, with herons, beavers, and bald eagles among the highlights. There are a few short sections of Class I/II water for more experienced paddlers to explore.

ABOUT THE DESIGNATION

A Water Trail is a sponsored and maintained recreational route along a waterway that is promoted by local entities with publicly accessible access points. A Water Trail promotes Leave No Trace principles, respect for private landowners, proper river safety, and fishing and boating regulations.

The West Virginia Department of Transportation Recreational Trail Advisory Board oversees the application and approval process to become a designated Water Trail. As part of the designation process, the Water Trail must have sponsoring entity, conduct a river assessment to identify river hazard and points of interest, and hold a 2 month public comment period.

PRIMARY SPONSORS

The Buckhannon River Watershed Association (BRWA) and Save the Tygart Watershed Association (STTWA) are the primary co-sponsors of the Water Trail. Both groups are grassroots 501(c)(3) organizations assembled by concerned citizens to monitor and improve water quality of the rivers.

The primary co-sponsors organize the Buckhannon & Tygart Valley River Water Trail Working Group includes representatives from partnering organizations and community stakeholders to oversee the planning, development, maintenance, and management of the Water Trail. The meetings are open to the public and new members are encouraged to attend and participate.

Formal outreach to Barbour and Upshur County Commissions were conducted to present an overview of the Water Trail and included three main ask to adopt a resolution in support of the Water Trail. BRWA presented to the Upshur County Commission on February 29, 2024. Save the Tygart WA present to the Barbour County Commission on March 4, 2024. Both counties adopted the resolution to support the Water Trail.

BENEFITS OF DESIGNATION

The benefits of designation include:

- Become eligible for funding to improve the Water Trail through the Division of Highways, via the Federal Highway Administration Recreational Trails fund
- Enhance recreational opportunities by providing more publicly available river descriptions and maps
- Support access to the river by building inclusive river access sites to ensure people of all abilities can experience the river
- Promote Leave No Trace principles, respect for private property, and proper fishing and boating regulations
- Support general appreciation for the river to foster stewardship and support of conservation efforts
- Promote the scenic, educational, historical, and cultural points of interest
- Support opportunities for our local residents to get to know their local river, which is the source of drinking water in our communities
- Promote an outdoor recreation economy



RIVER HAZARDS

For most of its course, the proposed Water Trail is slow and placid, offering excellent beginner friendly paddle opportunities.

River hazards along the proposed Water Trail include:

- Water Trail Mile 0.8: $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of Class I/II riffles downstream of the Sago bridge
- Water Trail Mile 8.0: Two low-head dams on the Buckhannon River in the City of Buckhannon located between the Riverwalk Park and North Buckhannon Park. We recommend all paddlers take out at Riverwalk Park, then drive to North Buckhannon Park to continue their paddle.
- Water Trail Mile 30.8: There are 2 miles of class I/II rapids starting 0.75 miles upstream of Carrollton and continuing to Tygart Junction.
- Water Trail Mile 37.8: Rock Dam on the Tygart River upstream of Philippi. There are two established Access Sites upstream and downstream of the dam, which make it easy for paddlers to avoid the dam. It is also possible to portage the dam on river right.
- Water Trail Mile 43.5: 1 mile of Class I/II rapids starting 1.7 miles downstream of the Arden Grade Rd Access site and continuing to the Arden Bridge.

ALONG THE WAY

Numerous types of wildlife and fish call the river and the surrounding riparian area home: hawks, bald eagles, blue and green herons, river otter, groundhog, muskrat, and foxes. Fishing opportunities are also plentiful.

The region is rich in social, cultural, and historical heritage.

Along the way, points of interest include:

- Buckhannon Riverwalk Park & Trail
- City of Buckhannon
- WV Wesleyan College
- North Buckhannon Park
- Pringle Tree Park
- Carrollton Covered Bridge
- Tygart Junction
- Philippi Covered Bridge
- City of Philippi
- Blue & Grey Park

Many other attractions and points of interests are located in the vicinity of the proposed trail.



MAP, ACCESS SITES, MILEAGE TO NEXT PUT IN, & RIVER RATING

Sago (3.5; Class I/II)

There is currently no public access at this site, but we hope in the future to secure landowner permission to create an access site.

Hampton (4.5; Flatwater)

River Left. Exit Rt. 20 onto Sago Road. Turn left onto Hampton Road. Turn right onto Ivanhoe Road.

Riverwalk Park (portage, dam downstream)

River Left. Exit Rt. 20 onto Marion Street. Turn left onto Camden Avenue. Turn right onto Walktrail Lane.

North Buckhannon Park (3.75; Flatwater)

River Left. Exit Hwy 48/US Rt. 33 south onto 5th Street. Turn left onto Cleveland Ave. Turn right onto 6th Street.

Pringle Tree Park (1.25; Flatwater)

River Left. Exit Rt. 119 onto Pringle Tree Park Road.

River Road (4; Flatwater)

River River. Exit Hwy 48/US Rt. 33 south onto 5th Street. Turn left onto Hall Road. In 1.8 miles, turn right onto River Road

Hall Road South (7; Class I)

River Left. Exit Hwy 48/US Rt. 33 south onto 5th Street. Turn left onto Hall Road. Access is 4 miles down Hall Road.

Hall Road North (2.5; Class I)

River Right. Exit US 119 onto Audra Park Road. Turn right onto Hall Road.

Boulder/Rangoon (7; Class II)

River Right. Exit US 119 onto Audra Park Road.

Philippi Above Dam (Portage)

River Left. Exit US 119 onto Audra Park Road. Turn right onto Hall Road.

Philippi Covered Bridge (3.6; Class I)

River Left. Exit US 119 onto gravel road south of Blue and Grey Park.

Arden Grade Road (3.2; Class II)

River River. Exit Main Street onto Pike Street. Turn right onto Merdian Street. Turn left onto Chestnut Ridge Road. Turn left onto Arden Grade Road.

Arden Bridge (Exit River)

There is currently no public access at this site, but we hope in the future to secure landowner permission to create an access site.

The Buckhannon and Tygart Valley Rivers flow in a generally northern direction.

