



Mississippi Water Trail Now Nationally Designated

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar gave the Mississippi Water Trail a national designation earlier this month, along with three other trails in Alabama, Georgia and Kansas, committing to work with state and local partners to increase water-based outdoor recreation, encourage community stewardship, and promote tourism that fuels local economies.

“Restoring our nation’s rivers and expanding outdoor recreational activities on them is one of the major goals of President Obama’s America’s Great Outdoors Initiative,” Salazar said. “Through a national network of National Water Trails, we are not only connecting people to the outdoors and supporting conservation efforts for our scenic rivers, but also supporting tourism and the recreation economy in nearby communities.”

The Mississippi Water Trail begins in Saverton, Mo. at mile marker 301, and ends at mile marker 180 on the St. Louis Riverfront. The water trail, managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, is lined with majestic bluffs, steeped in history, features abundant wildlife, and provides plenty of places to stop and relax whether it be a remote island or a river town. The home of the National Great Rivers Research and Education Center, the Jerry F. Costello Confluence Field Station, is located along the trail near the Melvin Price Locks and Dam in Alton.

“Water trails require minimum infrastructure so their upkeep is sustainable,” said Dale Chapman, Lewis and Clark Community College president and NGRREC board chair. “They also represent a great way to connect families and individuals to our great rivers

and at the same time showcase the power of the rivers' natural capital to support local and regional economic redevelopment, which is why informed stewardship of the river is so important.”

The NGRREC Education and Outreach team develops programs to foster a greater understanding and appreciation for great rivers.

“These programs take the shape of events like the annual Water Festival, which provides teachers and students with curriculum and a day of experiential water lessons or speaking engagements with adult audiences where we aim to share the knowledge gained from research with the public,” said Marcia Lochmann, director of Sustainability at Lewis and Clark. “This region has a tremendous group of environmental education heroes who work daily to reconnect youth and adults to this precious river resource. NGRREC works with the Corps, The Nature Institute, the Audubon Center at Riverlands, the Sierra Club and many of the schools in the area to carry out what we believe to be a very important mission.”

Other recently nationally-designated trails include the Alabama Scenic River Trail, the Okefenokee Wilderness Canoe Trail in Georgia and the Kansas River Trail.

Earlier this year, Salazar established the National Water Trails System as a class of national recreational trails under the National Trails System Act of 1968. The designation acknowledges not only the recreation values of the trails but also the excellent stewardship of the state, local communities and other partners who maintain their natural beauty and integrity.

With the designation, the National Park Service will work with the state and local partners to provide resources and technical expertise to promote the development and recognition of the trail.