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# Inclusive Universally Accessible and ADA Compliant Water Trail Launch Site Features

Paddlers of all abilities want to launch and land smoothly without capsizing or damaging their watercraft. They need firm surfaces that support their movement from their arrival place to the launch at water's edge and sufficient space to accommodate the length of their watercraft during put-in and take-out. In addition, paddlers must be able to stabilize their watercraft during transitions into and out from their vessel and into and out from the water. It is important to consider universal design practices in the development of the complete water trail access facility, from car to launch. Simply put, good inclusive universal design makes every water trail launch site easier to use by everyone of all ages and abilities together!

Launch sites that provide inclusive universal accessibility for everyone, including paddlers with disabilities, have the following site design features and amenities that are easy to use by everyone together:

- Improved surface accessible route with slopes no greater than 5% and at least 6 feet wide from parking to restrooms and water source, information kiosks, and to launch at water's edge. Route widths 6 to 12 feet wide best accommodate a two-person watercraft carry and it provides enough space for two people to pass and 5-foot-wide gangways onto launch systems.
- Routes that have switch back turns need level landings at every change of direction and the landing must be large enough to accommodate a two-person carry down with vessel to make the turn without stepping off the route surface or encountering elevated barriers such as handrails or landscaping.
- Gangway and ramp slopes that are below 8.33%, which is the maximum slope allowed in the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessible Design Guidelines (and the hardest slope allowed by law), under 5% for inclusive universal design.
- Accessible restrooms with at least one universally accessible single-user unisex restroom so opposite gender care givers can provide assistance, there is enough interior space for someone using a walker or wheelchair to maneuver and/or parents of young children have space for strollers and to assist kids.
- Accessible potable water source that is approachable on all sides and that is operable with one hand, doesn't require pinch grasp or wrist twist, and requires less than 5

pounds of force to operate. Water spigots for filling water bottles where the water flow stays on so you can fill a bottle with one hand.

- Kiosk information provided in accessible formats and approachable via accessible surface surrounding the kiosk.
- Accessible parking space(s) located nearest the accessible route to the launch at water's edge, including both car and car/trailer parking spaces.
- At least one accessible design picnic table such as the Spyder Table by Wabash Valley, grill, etc. all of which are useable by everyone together and located on an accessible route.
- Universally accessible canoe/kayak launch system such as the EZ Launch (the only inclusive universally accessible design launch on the market to date) that is connected to the accessible route; at least 25 feet long to allow paddlers "dry" access to entire length of their watercraft when preparing to enter/exit the craft prior to launching; a means of transfer/boarding assistance such as a boarding bench that centers the paddler over the craft to enter/exit; and pull rails & rollers to assist moving the vessel into and out of the water on a surface that stabilizes the craft and doesn't damage the crafts bottom.
- Indicate accessibility features on maps, websites (this could be a drop-down list with descriptions). Launch sites that meet all of the above could be identified by the Access to Recreation logo on the signs on the water trail (parking, restrooms, picnic, water, EZ launch, etc.) and on information kiosks. Websites and maps could list features.
- If there is NOT an EZ Launch, a good description and photo(s) of the water's edge exit/entry point should be provided (so the paddler can decide if it's useable for them) along with information about any accessibility features at the location. This information can be on the website to help paddlers planning. On maps, indicate fully accessible sites, indicate those sites that only meet minimal ADA access, and provide a list of features.