





The Urban Ecology Center's Favorite Canoe/Kayak Routes:

We have rated these routes using the following scale:

 to , with one set of paddles being for beginner routes and five paddles being the most advanced. Many of these routes can be combined into longer trips, so feel free to mix and match!



Note: We recommend referencing the Milwaukee Urban Water Trail Map when using this guide: http://www.mkeriverkeeper.org/sites/default/files/muwt_map_0.pdf

Washington Park Lagoon

The lagoon located at our Washington Park branch provides our most kid-friendly and accessible opportunity for canoeing and kayaking. Borrow a canoe from the Center and walk just a few yards to launch in the lagoon. The lagoon provides calm, still water perfect for beginners and families. Members may borrow canoes and kayaks at Washington Park during our public hours: Tuesday-Friday, 4-7 p.m.; Saturday 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Kletsch Park to Estabrook , 3.4 miles

Start downstream from the Kletsch Park Falls to avoid portaging around the falls. Paddlers will enjoy a more rural setting than what is found farther downstream as they travel along the Milwaukee River from Kletsch Park through Lincoln Park to just upstream of the Estabrook Dam. Take out before the Dam is required (on the east bank before the debris catchers. When paddling on the Milwaukee River, unexpected portages may be necessary if water levels are low. (See locations 6 to 10 on the Milwaukee Urban Water Trail Map)

Estabrook to Riverside Park , 2.5 miles

The Estabrook to Riverside route begins downstream from the Estabrook Falls and takes paddlers past Kern and Hubbard Parks. This route offers some manageable rapids for intermediate paddlers looking for a bit of a challenge. After the initial portage around Estabrook falls, there are no required portages along this route. However, shallow areas do exist when water levels are low. (11 to 14 on the Milwaukee Urban Water Trail Map)

North Avenue to Locust Street Loop , approx. 1 mile bridge to bridge

Put in at Riverside Park. Getting to the launch can be a little tricky (we recommend the teamwork of two adults to carry the boat), but the North Avenue to Locust Street loop provides smooth paddling. This is a calm loop for beginners who are not sure what distance is right for them or who are looking for a shorter paddle. Riverside is located between the North Avenue Bridge on the southern (downstream) end of the loop and the Locust Street Bridge on the northern (upstream) end. Staying between these two bridges allows paddlers to enjoy the beautiful scenery at Gordon and Riverside Parks while avoiding rapids and portages. Beginners should beware of the mouth of the rapids under the North Avenue Bridge. (Launch at 14 on the Milwaukee Urban Water Trail Map)

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Riverside Park to Milwaukee Rowing Club Boathouse , 1.1 miles

This route provides the most experienced paddlers with the opportunity to travel from Riverside Park to the Milwaukee Rowing Club through the rapids located immediately downstream from the North Avenue Bridge. This is a relatively shorter route, however, members should use extreme caution while navigating it. We highly recommend that all but the most experienced kayakers portage around the rapids south of the North Avenue Bridge via the trail on the west bank of the river. (14 to 16 on the Milwaukee Urban Water Trail Map)

Milwaukee Rowing Club Boathouse to Downtown , approx. 1 mile

Putting in at the Rowing Club allows easy access to many downtown destinations without the obstacle of rapids. Paddlers should be careful of motorboats and cruise boats whenever in the downtown area. Once downtown, paddlers have access to plenty of restaurants and other attractions via the Riverwalk. Please bring a bike lock with you to lock up the boat if you dock downtown. For a list of public access points located downtown, please reference the [Milwaukee Urban Water Trail Map](#). (Launch at 16 on the Milwaukee Urban Water Trail Map)

Bruce Street to Menomonee or Kinnickinnic Rivers , approx. 1 mile from ramp to either river

To access either the Kinnickinnic River or Menomonee River from south of downtown, paddlers may put in at the Bruce Street Boat Ramp. The ramp is located along the Milwaukee River across from the harbor entrance to Lake Michigan*, so paddlers should be extremely cautious of the high traffic from motorboats. High winds off the Lake near the Bruce Street Boat Ramp can also make paddling very difficult. Because the ramp is also used as a launch for motorized watercrafts, there is a \$7.00 fee to launch non-motorized boats. To access the Menomonee River, paddlers travel upstream along the Milwaukee River and head west towards the 2nd Street Bridge. To access the Kinnickinnic River, paddlers travel south from the ramp past the harbor entrance towards Skipper Buds Marina. (31 to 29 for the Menomonee River and 31 to 35 for the Kinnickinnic River on the Milwaukee Urban Water Trail Map)

*Urban Ecology Center members are reminded that our kayaks and canoes are NOT allowed on Lake Michigan.

Additional Links:

Why paddle in Milwaukee?

The New York Times:

<http://travel.nytimes.com/2010/05/16/travel/16kayak-roundup.html?scp=1&sq=milwaukee%20kayak&st=cse>

Where to start?

Milwaukee County Parks List of Designated Access Points for Canoes and Kayaks:

<http://county.milwaukee.gov/CanoeingampKayaking9140.htm>

Where to go?

Milwaukee Urban Water Trail:

http://www.mkeriverkeeper.org/sites/default/files/muwt_map_0.pdf

For more information about borrowing boats from the Urban Ecology Center

Canoe & Kayak Guidelines:

<http://urbanecologycenter.org/get-involved/canoe-kayak-guidelines.html>



For more information about the Urban Ecology Center and becoming a member, please visit our website at www.urbanecologycenter.org.