



Safety Guide

- Always wear a life vest (personal flotation device).
- Be familiar with your route before you go. Bring a map, compass, and/or GPS navigation.
- Let others know where you will be and how long you plan to be there.
- Boating alone is not recommended.
- Be aware of changing weather conditions. Windy conditions can cause waves that make paddling dangerous. Be aware of high wind forecasts. Strong winds can pose a serious challenge to paddlers on this large water body. Paddle within your experience and fitness level.
- Be prepared to swim. Fasten all ropes so there is no danger of being entangled if you overturn.
- Cold-water hypothermia can be paralyzing to both mind and body.
- Avoid high boat traffic areas and paddle near shore to reduce encounters with high-speed craft. Don't paddle near the dam control tower.
- Never paddle while under the influence of alcohol.
- Paddling distances may change with water level and the route you choose. Lake conditions and your paddling speed will determine the time between access points.

South Shore Water Trail

Access S-0 Intaglio Rd at Island View Park
GPS: N 40° 50.012 W 92° 54.310
Experience level: Gateway or recreational.
Description: This section of water trail offers a beginning level paddle on calm days. The access point is in a protected cove to allow beginners to practice paddling skills.
Amenities: Water, restroom, picnic. Adjacent camping is 0.5 miles. Adjacent Beach.
Distance to next Access: 3.8 miles.

Access S-3.8 Iris Rd. at Island View West
GPS: N 40° 50.251 W 92° 56.837
Experience level: Recreational
Description: Short access trail from parking area to shoreline.
Amenities: Parking
Distance to next Access: 2.6 miles

Access S-6.4 Redhawk Rd.
GPS: N 40° 50.839 W 92° 58.618
Experience level: Recreational.
Description: Easy access to launch via a boat ramp.
Amenities: Parking.
Distance to next Access: 4.3 miles

Access S-10.7 South Fork Park
GPS: N 40° 50.490 W 93° 00.984
Experience level: Challenge.
Description: South Fork Park and this water trail access.
Amenities: Boat ramp access and restrooms.
Distance to next Access: 1.8 miles.

Wilderness Trail
Experience level: Wilderness.
Description: This section of water trail on the South Fork Arm offers a wilderness paddling experience with wildlife viewing, and protection from winds. Powerboat traffic is minimal. Paddling distance up South Fork Arm from Access 14.4 varies with lake elevation.

Access S-12.5
S-70 Rd at South Fork Bridge boat ramp.
GPS: N 40° 50.754 W 93° 02.589

Access S-14.4
125th Ave. off 455th Street from S-70 Rd.
GPS: N40° 49.552 W93° 03.362

North Shore Water Trail

Access N-0 Buck Creek Park Marina
GPS: N 40° 50.794 W 92° 52.491
Experience level: Recreational to challenging.
Description: Launch craft from the cove on the south side of the marina. When paddling through the channel to the main lake, hug the northern shoreline to avoid boat traffic. Be careful of waves. Before entering the main lake be sure your skill level matches the forecasted lake conditions.
Amenities: Overnight parking, convenience store, water, restroom.
Distance to next Access: 2.3 miles.

Access N-2.3 Paddler's Pines Camp
GPS: N 40° 51.037 W 92° 53.320
Experience level: Challenging; depending on wind.
Description: This camping area is Paddle-in/hike in only, "no trace camping", carry out all refuse. No vehicle access. Rugged shoreline access to a tall pine forest. Tent camping among pines. Beautiful sunsets and lake vistas.

Amenities: Pit toilet restroom, water hydrant, fire ring, great sunset views.
Distance to next Access: 1.9 miles.

Access N-4.2 Honey Creek Resort Park Beach.
GPS: N 40° 52.166 W 92° 54.952
Experience level: Recreational.
Description: Honey Creek Resort, Lodge. Access on the shoreline by beach.
Amenities: Lodge, restaurant, kayak rentals.
Distance to next Access: 1.1 mil es.

Access N-5.3
Honey Creek State Park High Water Boat Ramp
GPS: N 40° 52.219 W 92° 56.051
Experience level: Recreational.
Description: Parking lot, boat ramp.
Amenities: Overnight parking, Restroom.
Distance to next Access: 2.9 miles.



Navigation

Access points are marked with a water trail sign and access number. Navigating on the water will require any of the following: map; compass; GPS unit. There are no further signs or buoys on the water to direct your travel.

Zebra Mussels

Rathbun is infected with Zebra Mussels, an aquatic nuisance (invasive) species, that spread to other waterbodies must be prevented. **CLEAN** any visible plants, animals or mud from boats and equipment before transporting. **DRAIN** all water from boats and equipment before transporting. **DRY** anything that comes in contact with water before transporting to another waterbody.



Experience Definitions

Each water trail segment is categorized according to a range of experience types to allow paddlers to match routes with their abilities and expectations.

- **Gateway** – A readily enjoyable setting for those new to paddling; few hazards relative to other segment types. Protected areas in coves.
- **Recreational** - Intended for users with some experience and basic level of navigational maps.
- **Challenge** – Endurance and advanced paddling skills may be required. Launch and/or parking access may be slightly to very difficult to use.
- **Wilderness** - Some degree of solitude, quiet, and viewing of wildlife. Way-finding signage not present at accesses and on-water.

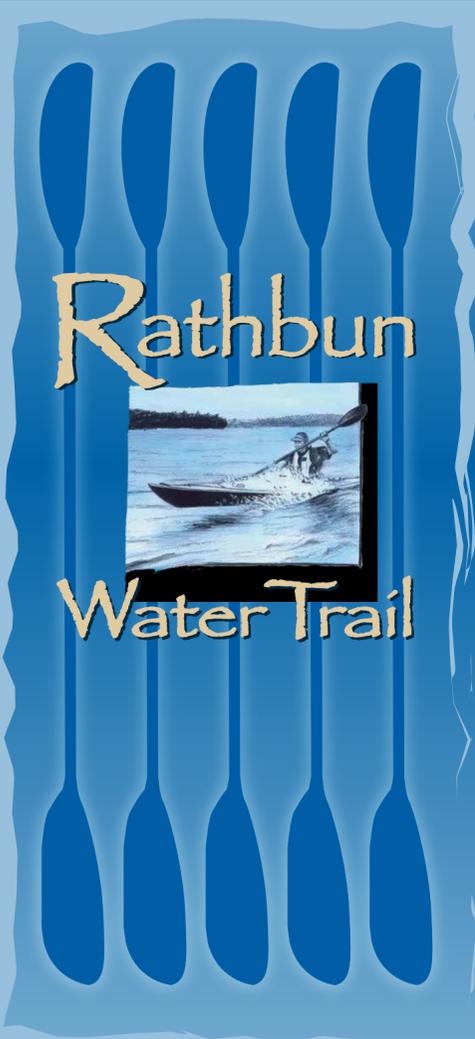
Iowa Laws for Paddlers

Have proper registration for your craft and carry it with you. Wear life jackets or other approved Personal Flotation Devices (PFD).

Night paddling requires use of a stern 360 degree viewable white light and a headlamp.

The Handbook for Iowa Boating Laws and Responsibilities has additional information. <http://www.boat-ed.com/ia/handbook/index.htm>

THANKS
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Introduction to Paddling on Lake Rathbun

Why paddle? There are so many reasons, and Rathbun Lake gives you the opportunity to find them all. Relax and connect with nature, experience the waters without motor noise, enjoy a low impact cardiac workout, or simply for the challenge.

Whether your craft is a long, sleek sea kayak or a short, stable fishing canoe, just getting out on the water is the real pleasure. Rathbun Lake accommodates all boat styles and levels of skill. Sea kayakers can challenge themselves in the vast open waters that stretch for miles. And yet the lake also has endless coves, bays and inlets that offer a hiding place and quiet. It is a paddler's dream, offering challenge, shelter, fishing, viewing ...and solitude. On Rathbun Lake, there's no hassles... just put in and paddle!



Rathbun Water Trails

South Shore Trail: The south shore trail directs you to near shore areas of the lake generally less affected by southerly summer wind. Paddlers of all experience levels – beginner to long distance – will enjoy single or multi-day trips with easy access to the shore line, launch/retrieve points, restrooms, drinking water, and three established modern camping areas. A wilderness paddle experience is also available west of the South Fork Bridge.

North Shore Trail: Paddlers seeking an overnight trip to a secluded camp can take advantage of the no-trace, no-charge camping area. You will pack all your gear into camp via your craft – no vehicle access.



Day Trips
Each segment of this water trail can be paddled individually or in combination depending on your paddling speed and ability. You can make a roundtrip paddle or a point-to-point paddle if you have another vehicle and driver.

Camping Trips

This water trail, on the south shore of the lake, offers three camping areas to make a multi-day adventure out of your trip. Island View Park campground offers tent to full hook-up camping and sites may be reserved by calling 1-877-444-6777, or on at www.recreation.gov. South Fork Marina Campground offers tent to full hook-up camping and site may be reserved by calling 641-647-2625. Lake access points are not located directly in the campground, but some camp sites are easily accessed from shore.

Paddler's Pines Camp offers a primitive camping experience among the pine forest along the western side of the Prairie Ridge peninsula. Set out for the campground from trailheads at Buck Creek Marina or Honey Creek State Park boat ramp, offering overnight parking for paddlers. This camping area is paddle-in only, "no-trace camping", no reservation, and no charge. The campground offers a primitive toilet, water hydrant and a fire ring. Please carry out everything you bring to the campsite to preserve, protect and enhance this beautiful area.

