BROOME COUNTY

BLUEWAY PLAN



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

PROJECT TEAM

The Broome County Department of Planning provided invaluable guidance and expertise in developing this Plan. Gratitude is extended to the following team members:

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Also, thank you to the many community stakeholders who contributed their time and insights as part of the planning process.

This Plan was prepared by Bergmann with support from Allieway Marketing.

PROJECT FUNDING

This Plan was funded through the New York State Department of State (NYSDOS) under Title 11 of the Environmental Protection Fund.

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1.0

INTRODUCTION

This section provides an overview of a blueway plan and the foundation for the development of a blueway trail system in Broome County. The following topics are covered in this section:

- Purpose and Goals of the Blueway Plan
- Geographic Extent of the Blueway Plan
- Relevant Plans and Initiatives
- Summary of Public Input

 Panoramic Views of the Susquehanna River from Roundtop Park Overlook; Image Credit: Bergmann

1.0 | INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE AND GOALS OF THE BLUEWAY PLAN



What is a Blueway?

A blueway is a connected system of waterways that create a water path or trail that is developed with launch points and points of interest for canoeists, paddle boarders, and kayakers to provide enhanced opportunities for recreational use.

Blueways also provide connectivity to other recreational opportunities including fishing, birdwatching and wildlife viewing, and camping.

OVERVIEW

This plan provides guidance to build a cohesive, connected blueway system between communities in Broome County, establishing and the foundation for a regional blueway trail system.

The primary purpose of the Blueway Plan is to identify local resources and propose recommendations to increase water-based recreation in Broome County. This plan provides guidance to build cohesive connectivity between municipalities and community groups in the County and establish the foundation for a regional blueway trail system.

Establishing a Countywide System

Broome County offers a range of outdoor recreation opportunities enjoyed by residents and visitors year-round. Recent improvements to the county's waterfront areas including multiuse trails and enhanced boat launches are spurring increased interest in water-based recreation and driving demand for new ways to experience the county's waterways. The county's interconnected waterways make it suitable for water trail development linking our urban, rural, and natural assets, however, there are many factors that need to be considered to build a successful blueway system.

This plan provides a planning framework and identifies goals and strategies needed to support the activation and enhancement of a countywide water trail system. The goals of this plan include and are summarized on the following page:

- Improve connectivity between waterfront destinations
- Provide enhanced and equitable water access in the County
- Partner with local and regional water-based recreation groups and organizations
- Provide enhanced resources to better inform users
- Support economic development in the County
- Preserve and protect the region's natural resources

The ultimate goal of this project is to advance a larger, regional water-based recreation effort to increase the economic development of communities across Broome County.

BLUEWAY PLAN GOALS



Provide enhanced and equitable water access in the County

The COVID-19 pandemic made a lasting impact and reinforced the need and desire to provide safe access to outdoor amenities and recreation resources. This plan identifies recommendations to ensure water-based recreation is safe and accessible to all users, regardless of age, income, or experience.



Provide enhanced resources to better inform users

This plan will provide an overview of the various resources available to educated and ensure an enjoyable and safe water-based recreation experience in Broome County.



Improve connectivity between waterfront destinations

In tandem with the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRS) update, a comprehensive analysis of an existing conditions inventory, key recommendations are identified in this plan to provide enhanced connectivity and establish a countywide water trail system including enhanced paddling routes.



Support economic development throughout the County

Broome County's intersecting system of waterways presents a tremendous opportunity to develop a river-based economy by connecting residents and visitors to the area's natural landscapes and water-based activities.



Partner with local and regional water-based recreation groups + organizations

The long-term success of the Blueway Trail system is not possible without the partnership and support of community recreation groups and organizations including local stakeholders and local leaders.



Preserve + protect the region's natural resources

This plan along with the LWRS update, will help establish policies along the waterfront to address local and regional waterway issues, improve water quality and natural areas, guide development to areas with adequate infrastructure and services away from sensitive resources, promote public waterfront access, and provide opportunities for redevelopment in underutilized waterfronts.

1.0 | INTRODUCTION

GEOGRAPHIC EXTENT OF THE BLUEWAY PLAN

OVERVIEW

Broome County is located along the south border of New York State in a region known as the Southern Tier. There are two major watersheds located in Broome County: the Susquehanna and the Delaware. The Susquehanna is the largest river basin on the Atlantic Coast, with nearly 90% of the County draining towards it. Major tributaries in Broome County include the Chenango, Tioughnioga and Otselic Rivers. The Delaware River watershed is smaller, along Broome's southeastern boundary.

Broome County's intersecting system of waterways presents a tremendous opportunity to develop a river-based economy by connecting businesses, residents, and visitors to the area's natural landscapes and water-based activities.

The Water Revitalization Area

The Waterfront Revitalization Area (WRA) is structured around the County's designated inland waterways, as defined by New York State Executive Law, Article 42, Section 911. The WRA consists of the Chenango, Delaware, Susquehanna, and Tioughnioga Rivers and Nanticoke Creek, the shorelines and all lands within approximately 500 feet of these waterways, as well as significant natural, recreational, cultural, and economic resources with direct connections to these waterways.

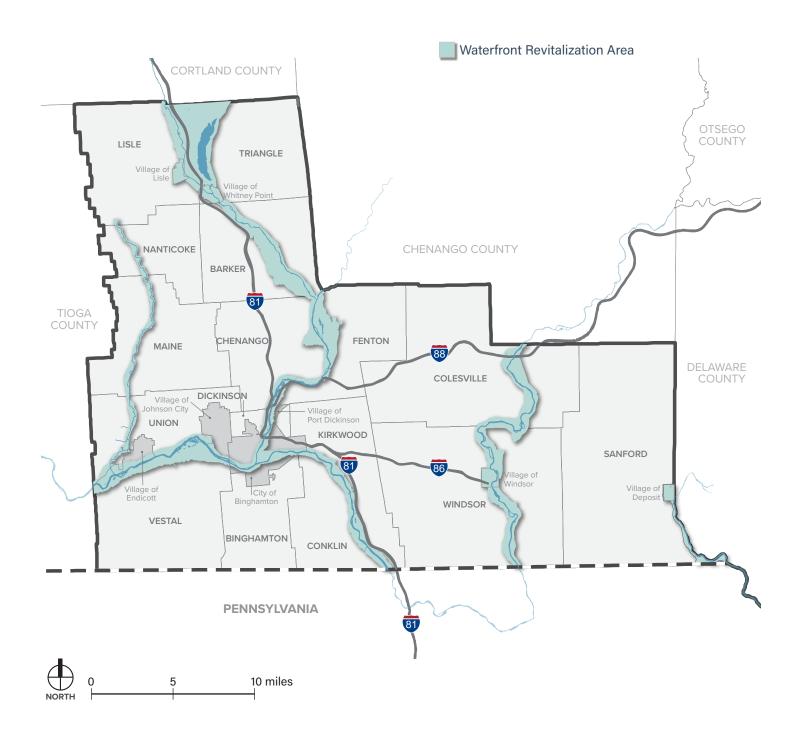
The WRA boundary expands beyond 500 feet in several locations to capture downtowns and village centers located proximate to the waterfront in order to strengthen the natural relationship and connectivity between centers of economic activity and the rivers.

BROOME COUNTY



Broome County is located along the south border of New York State in the Southern Tier region.

GEOGRAPHIC EXTENTS OF THE BLUEWAY PLAN



1.0 | INTRODUCTION

RELEVANT PLANS AND INITIATIVES





Image Credit: Ahwaga Canoe and Kayak Club

WHAT THIS PLAN BUILDS ON...

The Blueway Plan builds on past planning efforts focused on the expansion of water recreation, accessibility and related resources in Broome County to promote the use of the County's waterways. The two primary planning efforts this plan is building on include the Intermunicipal Waterfront Public Access Plan developed in 2011 and the 1975 Broome County Rivers Guide.

Intermunicipal Waterfront Public Access Plan

The Broome County Intermunicipal Waterfront Public Access Plan (2011) was developed as a resource to guide future development activity along Broome County's riverfronts, focusing on a united vision for economic development, riverfront access and environmental stewardship. This plan builds on that effort and serves as a framework for waterfront revitalization planning efforts, with projects ranging from recreational use of the waterways, enhancing access to the riverfronts, protecting important natural resources, and promoting economic opportunities.

The County, in collaboration with individual municipalities, and local organizations is currently in the process of completing a county-wide Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRS) through New York State Department of State's (NYSDOS) Office of Planning and Development. The update expands upon the 2011 framework and affords a unique opportunity for residents and visitors to help determine how the County can fully become a destination for a vibrant riverfront economy, priding itself upon enhanced connectivity between water-dependent uses and recreational opportunities. Additionally, the LWRS in conjunction with the Blueway Plan will yield a unified waterfront vision to integrate a beautiful landscape and a reimagined economy, with enhanced opportunity for improved riverfront access and waterfront uses.

Broome County Rivers Guide

Last published in 1975 by the County's Department of Parks and Recreation, the Broome County River Guide served as the primary resource for water recreation for nearly 50 years. The guide features a series of 10 enlargements of the County's waterways including trip descriptions and general hazards. The guide also provides trip preparation suggestions, identification of hazard markers, and general safety information. Combined planning efforts through the Blueway Plan and LWRS, the need to develop an update of the County's river guide was realized. Additional information on the updated river guide can be found later in this plan on page 46.

THIS PLAN ALSO BUILDS ON...



Intermunicipal Waterfront Public Access Plan (2011)

This plan establishes a comprehensive vision for the future of Broome County's waterfront. It includes goals related to access, economic development, biodiversity, flood control, public health, connectivity, and multimodal transportation, as well as proposed improvements to achieve these goals.



Current Local Waterfront Revitalization Program Update (2023)

The County recently completed a county-wide Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRS) through New York State Department of State's (NYSDOS) Office of Planning and Development. This LWRS builds on, expands, and updates the 2011 Intermunicipal Waterfront Access Plan and yields a unified waterfront vision that integrates a beautiful landscape and a re-imagined economy with opportunities for improved riverfront access and uses, while also preserving ecological benefits.



Two Rivers Greenway Design Guidelines and Signage Plan (2012)

The Two Rivers Greenway is a 13.5 mile system of paved trails for walking and biking paralleling the Susquehanna and Chenango Rivers. This plan establishes a complete and unified wayfinding system that spans across Broome and Tioga Counties to promote the regional multi-modal trail system.



Broome County River Guide (1975)

This guide was published by the County's Department of Parks and Recreation in 1975 and served as a primary resource for water recreation. The guide identified regional access points, trip description, destinations, water levels, and general hazards.



New York's Southern Tier Water Trail (ongoing)

A regional effort is currently being conducted to map various resources, points of interest, opportunities, and hazards that exist within the Southern Tier waterways, which includes the entirety of the Chemung and Susquehanna watersheds in New York State.

1.0 | INTRODUCTION

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INPUT



Key Stakeholders for Blueway Development.

Organization Affiliates:

- Ahwaga Canoe & Kayak Club
- Binghamton Rotary Club
- Binghamton University
- Broome County Historical Society
- Chemung River Friends
- Chesapeake Conservancy
- Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) of Broome County
- Go All Out Broom County
- Greater Binghamton Chamber of Commerce
- Southern Tier Independence Center
- ST SUP & Yoga Adventures
- Susquehanna National Heritage Area
- Visit Binghamton
- The Susquehanna River 444 Mile Club

Agency Affiliates:

- Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study (BMTS)
- Broome County Environmental Management Council (EMC)
- Broome County Parks, Recreation & Youth Services
- Broome County Soil &Water Conservation District (SWCD)
- National Park Service
- NYSDEC Region 7
- USACE



National Support.

The River Management Society (www. river-management.org) works to protect and restore rivers by bringing together professionals and advocates to share knowledge and experience in river ecology, conservation, and recreation.

OVERVIEW

Targeted public outreach was conducted through stakeholder conversations and an online survey to identify key factors that would enhance water access and increase water recreation usage in the County.

Stakeholder Conversations

A series of individual and group stakeholder conversations were conducted to identify information that would be key in the development of a sophisticated countywide blueway trail system. Representatives from NYSDEC Region 7, Broome County Environmental Management Council, Broome County Planning and Economic Development, Southern Tier Independence Center, Visit Binghamton, and Ahwaga Canoe and Kayak Club, and a range of other stakeholders were included in these discussions. Public engagement and conversations with stakeholders should be continued in the future to maintain momentum focused on water accessibility and usage.

The need for clear and cohesive signage, an updated rivers guide, increased equitable access, safety, and water-based events emerged as consistent desires among stakeholders. Additionally, several conversations underscored the negative perception of water quality, lack of resources and information, and safety with water recreation in the County.

Online Public Survey

An online public survey was made available to help provide an initial assessment of local needs and desires for a county-wide blueway trail network. A total of 215 responses were received during a two-week collection period. Participants were asked a series of multiple-choice and open-ended questions in a two-part survey about the county-wide Blueway Plan and Local Waterfront Revitalization Strategy (LWRS).

The first part of the survey focused on questions that would help inform the blueway trail experience, including preferred trip length, points of interest and safety information, and amenities. The second part of the survey solicited feedback on projects proposed in the LWRS update with an emphasis on blueway projects. The survey also provided an opportunity for participants to submit open-ended comments in regard to both the Blueway Plan and LWRS. Full survey results can be found in the Appendix.

THE SURVEY SAYS...



75% of survey participants have used waterways in Broome County for water-based recreation and 25% of survey participants have not.



Most participants said they use waterways in the County several times a season or once or twice a season. Only 5% of participants are on the water daily for water recreation in Broome County.



41% of participants selected 2-4 hours as a preferred average trip time for water-based recreation.

The second highest average trip time was 1-2 hours and only 2% of participants selected a full day (6+ hours) for a preferred average trip time for water-based recreation.



57% of participants selected wayfinding signage as the most helpful amenity to increase their water-based recreation usage in Broome County.

Rest area facilities, watercraft rentals, and mobile apps were also selected as desired amenities and resources to increase waterbased recreation in the County.

KEY THEMES

ACCESSIBILITY







Additional water quality and water level information

Additional restroom facilities

CONNECTIVITY

Increased integration with walking and biking paths

Enhanced wildlife habitat





2.0

EXISTING CONDITIONS

This section provides an overview of existing conditions within the WRA and identifies various opportunities and challenges that exist within the current blueway system. The following topics are covered in this section:

- Overview of Water Resources
- Existing Water Access Points
- Existing Hazards
- Existing Services and Resources
- Existing Signage
- Opportunities and Challenges
- Existing Boat Launch in the Village of Windsor

OVERVIEW OF WATER RESOURCES





Top Image Credit: Go All Out Broome County, Bottom Image Credit: Ahwaga Canoe and Kayak Club

OVERVIEW

Broome County lies within the Susquehanna and Delaware River basins, offering diverse paddling along the Susquehanna River and tributaries such as the Chenango, Tioughnioga, and Ostelic Rivers. These waterways provide opportunities for flatwater trips and mild whitewater through scenic rural landscapes.

Four Rivers

The Susquehanna River is the main waterway running through Broome County, providing approximately 46 miles of paddling through Broome County, with 200-1000 foot widths and ideal depths of 3-4 feet available year-round for flatwater plus some Class I-II rapids through scenic forests, farmland, rural, and urban areas along the river. Highest water levels are typically in April and lowest in mid-to-late summer.

The Chenango River provides approximately 30 miles of paddling opportunities as a major tributary flowing through rural areas and joining the Susquehanna in Binghamton, with 150-300 foot widths and ideal depths of 3-5 feet offering a mix of flatwater and Class I rapids through scenic farmland and forests. The Chenango has highest water levels in early spring.

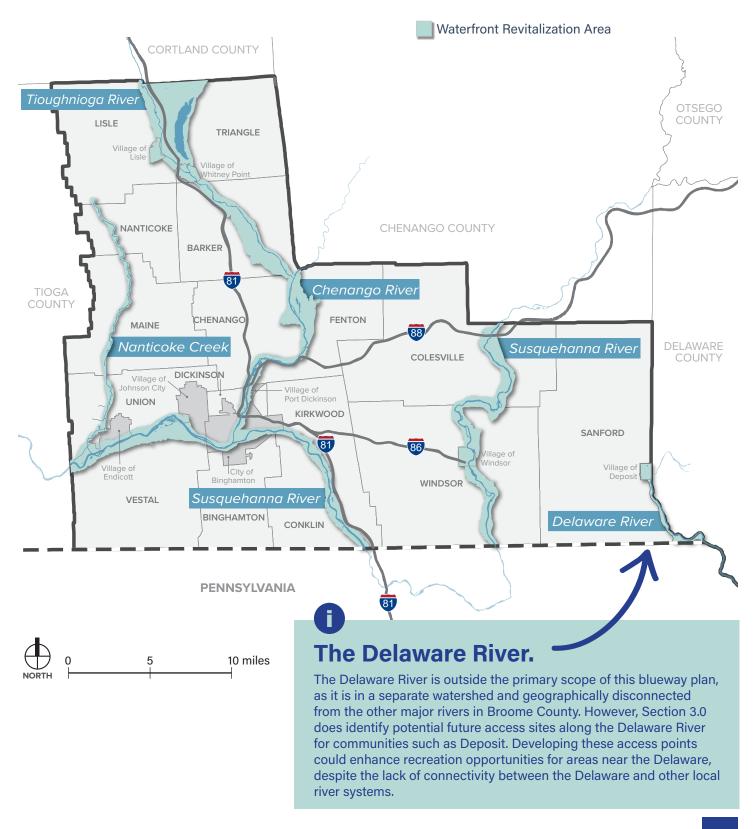
The Tioughnioga River provides approximately 15 miles of paddling through rural countryside and small towns in Broome County, with 50-100 foot widths and consistent 2-5 foot depths ideal for beginners to navigate flatwater and Class I-II rapids as this tributary flows north into Broome from Cortland and Chenango counties as part of the Susquehanna River Basin. The Tioughnioga allows for short or day trips in a scenic rural setting.

The intimate Otselic River provides approximately 7 miles of peaceful paddling through rural, forested areas in Broome County, with 30-80 foot widths and consistent depths of 2-4 feet ideal for flatwater and Class I-II rapids, as it winds north from Cortland County as part of the Susquehanna River Basin, eventually feeding into the Whitney Point Reservoir. The winding, wooded nature of the Ostelic creates scenic paddling opportunities with trout fishing along the way before reaching the reservoir.

One Creek

Nanticoke Creek offers approximately 22 miles of calm waters flowing through the Broome County towns of Lisle, Nanticoke, Maine, Union, and Endicott, ideal for fishing opportunities. While not currently used extensively for paddling, Nanticoke Creek's tranquil and flatwaters present opportunities to explore the creek's potential as a paddling destination in the future as its navigability is further assessed.

WATERWAYS OF BROOME COUNTY



EXISTING WATER ACCESS POINTS





(Top) Major Boat Launch at Grippen Park; (Bottom) Minor Boat Launch at Riverview Park

OVERVIEW

Broome County's waterways support a variety of recreational uses that rely on direct access to the water, especially boating and fishing. Popular activities include kayaking, canoeing, shore fishing, and motorized boating at numerous public and private launch sites located throughout the county.

Boat Access

Boating in Broome County is primarily non-motorized, with canoes, kayaks, and rowboats being most common. There are 28 public and private boat launches providing access to local waterways, with the majority located along the Susquehanna River. Launches are found in the City of Binghamton, Town of Union, Town of Vestal, Village of Endicott, Village of Johnson City, Town of Conklin, Town of Kirkwood, Town of Colesville, and Town of Windsor. Additional launches provide limited access to the Chenango River, Tioughnioga River, and Whitney Point Reservoir. The condition and amenities of launches vary. Both hand-carry and paved ramp launches exist, with paved ramps generally located in deeper waters suitable for motorized boats.

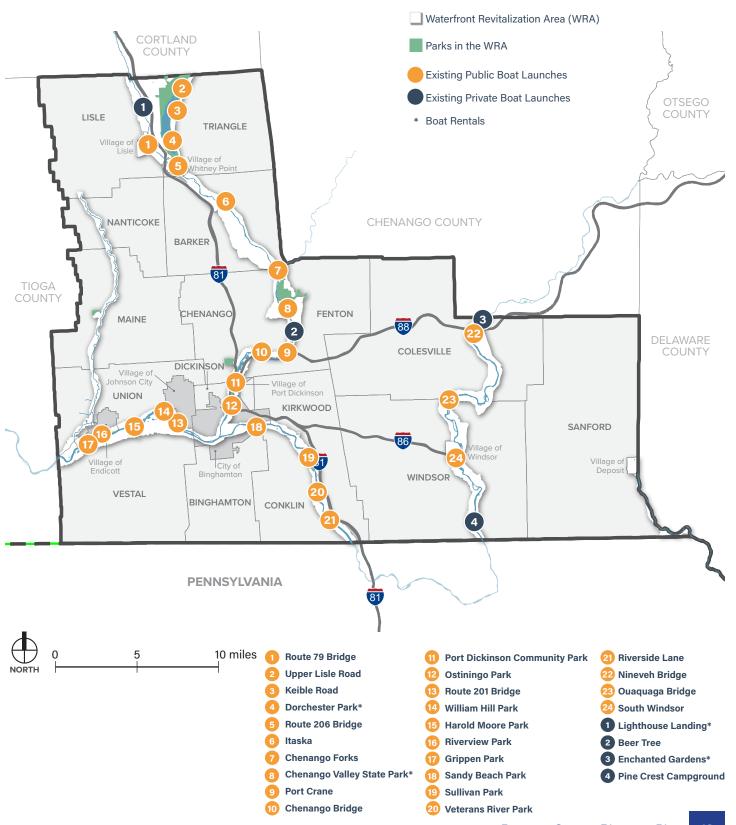
While most launches are within a few miles of each other, gaps over 5 miles exist on the Chenango River and parts of the Susquehanna. Specific areas include in Colesville between the Nineveh NYSDEC launch and the Ouaquaga Bridge NYSDEC launch, in the Town of Windsor between the South Windsor NYSDEC launch and Windsor's most souther border, and the in Town of Barker between the Itaska NYSDEC launch and the Chenango Forks NYSDEC launch.

Fishing Access

Fishing is a popular activity in Broome County, with a variety of fish species present in local rivers including northern pike, walleye, smallmouth bass, trout, and tiger muskie. All but two privately owned existing boat launches allow fishing access across the county's waterways. Most sites offer basic amenities such as parking. The NYSDEC has obtained public fishing rights along Nanticoke Creek and Ouaquaga Creek, and is working to establish parking facilities on Nanticoke to facilitate shore fishing.

While existing facilities are limited, the NYSDEC is actively expanding public fishing access in the county through proposed new sites on Nanticoke Creek and other waterways. Enhancing fishing access to take advantage of the county's excellent fisheries remains an ongoing priority. More details on current and proposed future public fishing access points can be found later in this document on page 35. The sites identified will serve to expand fishing opportunities across Broome County.

EXISTING WATER ACCESS POINTS



EXISTING CONSTRAINTS AND HAZARDS



Looking Ahead.

The following strategies can be implemented as a starting point for short and long-term solutions to mitigate navigable hazards:

Short-Term Solutions:

Suggested short-term approaches to mitigate hazards include:

- Install clear portage signage and improve trailhead access at dams
- Add safety signage/buoys at pipeline crossings and confluences
- Launch real-time hazard awareness tools online

Long-Term Solutions:

Suggested long-term approaches to mitigate hazards include:

- Assess dam removal or modification feasibility
- Explore mitigation options for pipelines and confluences
- Develop interactive maps of hazards and safety tips
- Increase educational programming and guided tours



Key Safety Resource.

The United State Geological Survey (USGS), National Weather Dashboard (NWG) provides real-time water levels, weather, and flood information in Broome County and can be accessed by going to www.waterdata.usgs.gov.

OVERVIEW

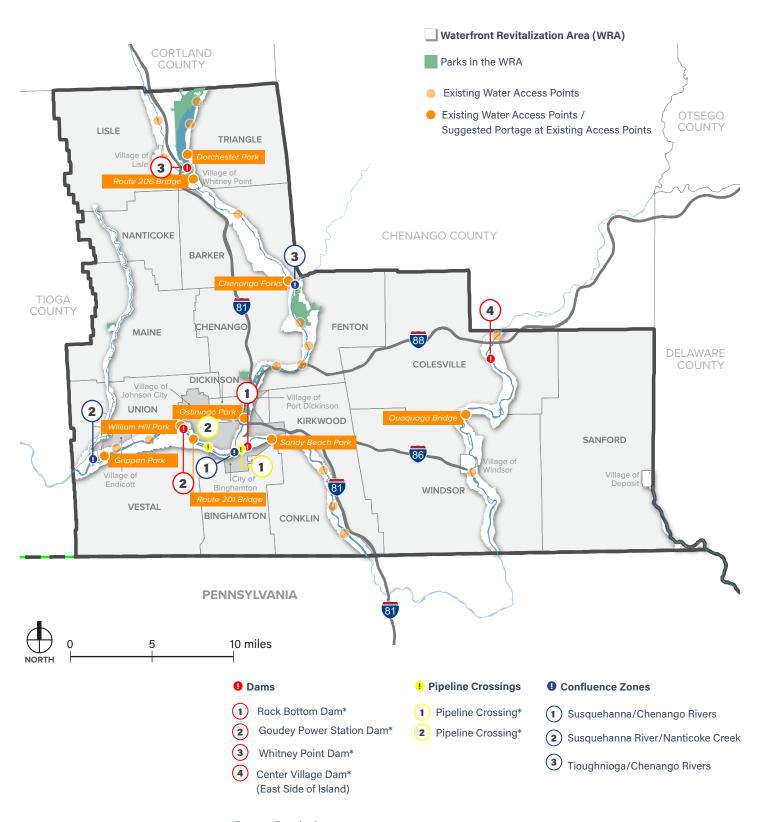
Several existing infrastructure constraints and hazards impede continuous boat navigation in Broome County. Expansion of riverfront development over time increased the need for dams, flood control structures, pipelines, bridges, and other critical infrastructure. While this infrastructure, serves important purposes, it hinders recreational water access.

Dams Hazards

There are currently four dams within the WRA waterways that disrupt continuous transit by boat or personal watercraft, requiring portage:

- The Rockbottom Dam in Binghamton spans the width of the Susquehanna River, creating dangerous paddling conditions. This low-head dam is located just south of the Exchange Street Bridge near Rockbottom Dam Park. Paddlers are strongly advised to portage well before the dam by taking out on the right side adjacent to N Shore Drive. Relaunching just south of the Exchange Street Bridge allows bypass of the dam. To avoid navigating additional hazards around the dam, alternate portage routes can be taken further south at Sandy Beach Park or further north at the Route 201 Bridge.
- The Goudey Station Dam spans the width of the Susquehanna River south of the Route 17C bridge, between Johnson City and Vestal. Currently, paddlers must take out well before the dam either at William Hill Park or the Route 201 Bridge to avoid this dangerous barrier. Over the long term, exploring the creation of a safe and accessible portage path adjacent to the old Goudey Station on the right could enable passage across this interrupted section of river. If created, clear signage would be necessary to denote the portage route around the dam for safe travel.
- Whitney Point Dam situated north of Whitney Point village is a large earthfill dam built for flood control purposes which spans the width of the Otselic River, creating Whitney Point Reservoir. The dam features turbulent hydraulics and requires paddlers to portage well above the concrete obstruction near launch points at Dorchester Park or south of the reservoir at Route 206 Bridge. Proper caution and preparation for portage past this flood control dam is critical to safely navigate this stretch of the Otselic River.
- Center Village Dam in the hamlet of Center Village in the Town of Colesville is a low-head dam that requires staying right of the east bank to avoid the hazardous low-head dam spanning the left side.

KEY EXISTING HAZARDS



^{*}Portage Required

EXISTING CONSTRAINTS AND HAZARDS



Looking Ahead.

The following strategies can be implemented as a starting point for short and long-term solutions to mitigate navigable hazards:

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Long-Term Solutions:

Suggested long-term approaches to mitigate hazards include:

- Assess dam removal or modification feasibility
- Explore mitigation options for pipelines and confluences
- Develop interactive maps of hazards and safety tips
- Increase educational programming and guided tours

Pipeline Crossings and Other Navigable Hazards

There are currently two pipeline crossings within the WRA waterways that disrupt continuous transit by boat or personal watercraft, requiring portage:

- One pipeline lies just east of the Confluence Park zone, south
 of the Memorial Bridge. This crossing requires portage for most
 paddlers and lies within Binghamton city limits. Existing boat
 launches where paddlers can exit to portage around this hazard
 are the Route 201 Bridge launch to the west and Sandy Beach
 Park to the east.
- A second pipeline also resides within Binghamton just before the Route 201 Bridge on the western city border.

Beyond hazardous pipelines, paddlers along Binghamton's rivers face additional obstacles such as debris, log jams and fluctuating water levels which frequently disrupt passage and endanger safety for continuous water recreation. Natural debris buildup and manmade dams and pipelines constitute physical barriers that prevent seamless navigability. Inadequate dam portage mechanisms, sudden changes in elevation from flooding, and hidden underwater trash also expose paddlers to unexpected, risky conditions within the city.

In the short term, raising community hazard awareness through signage, notifications and focused paddling safety education can help inform the public and improve caution near dangerous zones. However, more expansive action is still needed to tackle connectivity issues for safe water access routes. Long term solutions involve comprehensive, systemic infrastructure assessments to identify and map specific problem areas, such as insufficient dam passageways.

Obtaining an accurate inventory of hazards enables strategic investments in building out new portage points and clearly delineated passages past infrastructure barriers. Purposeful modifications like transforming hazardous pipelines, dams and debris piles into managed portage pathways would open up previously blocked zones for safer, marked navigation along both the Susquehanna and Chenango Rivers within the City of Binghamton. Developing formal portage routes around dangerous areas makes the rivers more friendly for continuous passage. Signage and wayfinding to guide paddlers to these planned portage takeouts allows broken segments to become recognized points of safe traversal, rather than obstructed dead ends.



▲ Rockbottom Dam; Image Credit: Chesapeake Bay Program via Flickr

EXISTING SERVICES AND RESOURCES



Volunteers at the Annual Broome County Riverbank Cleanup; Image Credit: SUNY Broome



The County's guide to water-based recreation opportunities; Image Credit: Go All Out Broome

OVERVIEW

Broome County has a strong foundation for paddling access through boat rentals and launches, but opportunities remain to expand waterfront programming, paddling instruction, retail, and transportation options to further drive engagement in paddle sports.

Paddling Rentals and Retail

While seasonal rentals are available, Broome County lacks year-round paddling outfitters and specialty retail options. Expanding rental selections, rental periods, and dedicated local paddle sport retailers would help meet rising recreational demand. National retailers provide some equipment currently, but the area has no specialty paddling store. Developing new outfitters and shops would make rentals, sales, and service more accessible for residents and visitors.

Within the WRA there are only four boat rental outfitters - two private businesses (Enchanted Garden in Harpursville and Lighthouse Landing in Marathon) offering shuttles for off-site paddling, and two municipal on-site rentals at Chenango and Dorchester Parks. Two additional on-site rental outfitters just outside the WRA are located in Greenwood Park and Nathaniel Cole Park.

Waterfront Programming

Local organizations including BC Parks, CCE Broome, and the ACKC provide some guided paddling trips and group activities but more beginner programming is needed to promote water-based recreation more broadly. Expanding introductory classes and tours for people new to water-based recreation could further engage the community and drive greater participation in Broome County's waterways.

Go All Out Broome is the County's guide for outdoor water-based recreation. Their website features an interactive map, identifying boat launch sites, rental locations, river trails, hazards, parks, and amenities. Go All Out partners with various organizations including Ahwaga Canoe and Kayak Club, Headwaters River Trail, and Visit Binghamton to promote healthy living, outdoor tourism, environmental stewardship and economic development.

Transportation

While most people currently rely on informal ride sharing, Broome County has an opportunity to explore public transportation options to improve access to waterways. Expanding formal transit services would support greater community engagement in the county's water recreation assets. Assessing feasible public transit and shuttle connections between key hubs and water access sites could significantly broaden inclusive participation on the County's rivers and creeks.

OVERVIEW OF KEY EXISTING LOCAL RESOURCES



RECREATIONAL SERVICE RESOURCES

+ Go All Out Broome | www.goalloutbroome.com

Go All Out Broome is a comprehensive guide to outdoor activities, places, events and organizations throughout Broome County, NY. The interactive map feature makes it easy to locate boat launches, boat rentals, hazards, and river trails throughout the county.

+ Broome County Parks, Recreation, & Youth Services | www.gobroomecounty.com/parks

Broome County Parks, Recreation, & Youth Services operates and maintains ten parks and recreational facilities throughout the county including three riverfront parks and five parks that feature ponds/lakes. Broome County Parks offer a variety of water-based recreation activities including beaches, swimming, fishing access, boat rentals, and boat launches.

+ Visit Binghamton | www.visitbinghamton.org

Visit Binghamton is the official tourism promotion agency for Broome County and provides vital information for local and visiting outdoor enthusiasts to fully explore the County's outdoor adventures opportunities. Visit Binghamton is working with other tourism agencies across the region to develop and promote a regional water trail map.

+ Greater Binghamton Chamber of Commerce | www.greaterbinghamtonchamber.com

The Greater Binghamton Chamber of Commerce organizes various events throughout the year to support existing local businesses and attract new businesses to the area. One popular event the Chamber helps organize is Live on the Waterfront, a popular event located in a riverfront park that features live music, dance, food, and activities for all ages.

+ Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) of Broome County | www.ccebroomecounty.com

CCE of Broome County offers nature-based education programs to local schools and community members free of charge year-round. Guided Canoe and Kayak Nature Tours are held on Whitney Point Lake at Dorchester Park during the summer the promote nature and ecology education and preservation.

+ Ahwaga Canoe & Kayak Club | www.ackcny.org

The Ahwaga Canoe & Kayak Club organizes paddling trips and events for members on the Susquehanna, Chenango, and Tioughnioga Rivers throughout the year.

+ The Susquehanna River 444 Mile Club | www.emheritage.org/444-club

The Susquehanna River 444 Mile Club encourages exploration and recognizes paddlers who have traveled the full length of the Susquehanna River from Cooperstown, New York to the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay in Maryland.

+ Friends of the Chemung River Watershed | www.chemungriverfriends.org

The Friends of the Chemung River Watershed is a non-profit organization that partners with municipalities, sponsors, and members to advocate for the protection of the Chemung River Watershed and promotes responsible recreation of the waterway. The FCRW website includes an interactive map that highlights boat access and launch points throughout the region, including points along the rivers within Broome County.

+ Susquenango Sail & Power Squadron | https://susquenango.org

The Susquenango Sail & Power Squadron is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting safe boating through education. Susquenango Sail & Power Squadron serves Binghamton, Johnson City, Vestal, Endicott, and the surrounding communities, offering a variety of safety and educational programming including safe boating and handling courses and vessel safety checks.



TECHNICAL SERVICE RESOURCES

+ Broome County Environmental Management Council (EMC) | www.gobroomecounty.com/emc

The Broome County EMC is a citizen advisory group to Broome County government on local environmental matters. The Broome County Planning Department and EMC work together to organize the Broome County Annual Riverbank Cleanup to promote the preservation of water quality and safety throughout the county.

+ Broome County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) | www.broomeswcd.org

The Broome County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) assists landowners with conservation plans to protect water quality and wetlands.

+ NYSDEC Region 7 | www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7792

NYSDEC Region 7 enforces regulations, permits, and provides grants related to water protection in Broome County.

+ New York's Finger Lakes Region (FL-PRISM) | www.fingerlakesinvasives.org

New York's Finger Lakes Region PRISM conducts invasive species prevention, early detection, and management across the region's watersheds.

*A list of additional water-based local resources can be found on page 12.

EXISTING SIGNAGE



Best Practices for Water Trail Signage.

- Be Clear. It is critical signs water trail signs are placed in visible locations and provide information that is easily and universally interpreted.
- **Be Concise.** Effective water trail signage should prominently display pertinent and key information only.
- 3 Be Consistent. It is important to provide applicable signage consistently throughout a contiguous water trail corridors and waterfront areas as well as maintain consistent design and branding standards.
- **4 Be Creative.** Water trail signage should be visually engaging, aesthetically pleasing and provide opportunity for individual brands and identities.

OVERVIEW

A cohesive and comprehensive blueway trail requires well-defined signage. Signage plays an important role in creating a positive user experience by guiding people through spaces safely and efficiently. Well-designed signage provides clear navigation and wayfinding cues, points out hazards or restrictions, and highlights key destinations, amenities, and points of interest. It is important to understand what types of signage are already in place and identify opportunities to provide an enhanced wayfinding system throughout the WRA that focuses on helping people navigate the blueway system.

Two Rivers Greenway Signage

In 2012, the Two Rivers Greenway Signage Study introduced a complete and unified wayfinding palette for a regional trail network within the greater Binghamton area. Signage for the Two Rivers Greenway has now been installed in various locations across the county, with some examples shown on the next page. However, there are still many different styles and types of signs being used throughout the county's public spaces. While Two Rivers Greenway signage creates some consistency, overall signage remains inconsistent and disjointed. There is an opportunity to expand the Two Rivers Greenway signage system more broadly to bring greater unity and cohesion to public wayfinding across the county.

NYSDEC and Regulatory Signage

Broome County's rivers are home to several fishing and boat locations including NYSDEC regulated access sites. Regulatory signage is critical at these locations and often require several signs to advise boaters and people fishing of various restrictions and warnings. Several signs that provide critical regulatory information are in need of replacement. The following page shows examples of signs in need of repair and replacement.

Miscellaneous Signage

A variation of sign types with individual brands exist throughout the County including park and trails signage, downtown and village center signage, and regulatory and informational signage. Enhancement efforts can be seen in the replacement of outdated gateway signage in County Parks while smaller municipal parks often lack any adequate signage. With the WRA encompassing the County's largest natural resource and to fully become a vibrant riverfront economy, enhancements to existing signage and wayfinding is essential. An effective County-wide cohesive wayfinding enhancements should build on existing signage while also providing opportunity for individual municipalities to integrate existing or future brand identities.

EXISTING SIGNAGE INVENTORY

TWO RIVERS GREENWAY SIGNAGE







MISCELLANEOUS PARK SIGNAGE





NYSDEC/REGULATORY SIGNAGE







OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES



Invasive Species.

Invasive species are non-native species that threaten both terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. Unmanaged, they can cause degradation and out-compete critical populations and habitats that protect and advance biodiversity. Further, they introduce new diseases, increase coastline erosion, and decrease water quality; negatively impacting recreation and economic opportunity.

The following page provides a link to NYSDEC's guidance on invasive specie management and later in this document, recommendations to advance vitality of native species through healthy riparian zones.

Visit www.dec.ny.gov for more information on aquatic invasive species and management.



Hydrilla, an aquatic invasive plant, clogs up waterways, Image Credit: NYSDEC

OVERVIEW

This plan identifies the existing opportunities and challenges that the County currently faces with existing public waterfront access to increase accessibility, expand user base, and enhance public enjoyment of the rivers.

Opportunities within the Existing System

Broome County's waterways present unique opportunities to develop a complete blueway trail system, including:

- Numerous existing public access points, including some municipalities have expanded;
- Access locations coinciding with scenic views and natural/ cultural resources;
- Potential to enhance local and regional connectivity, ecotourism, and waterfront programming;
- Broad support from government, communities, organizations, and the public; and,
- Publicly available navigation/recreation resources.

Further, the blueway system can promote:

- Business marketing and economic growth;
- Environmental education and stewardship;
- Outreach to beginner paddlers;
- Water-dependent and overall recreation;
- · Health benefits; and,
- Sustainability and resiliency.

Challenges within the Existing System

Creating an accessible, safe, and engaging blueway trail network in Broome County faces several challenges that will require strategic planning and collaboration to address. Key barriers include limited water access points, hazards such as dams and flood zones, insufficient signage, and negative perceptions of water quality and risks. Additional obstacles are the lack of ADA-accessible amenities, limited connectivity between waterways, parks and downtowns, funding gaps for maintenance and upgrades, limited year-round use, and insufficient coordination between agencies and lack of a managing entity.

Overcoming these challenges through partnerships, promotion, and improvements will be crucial steps toward developing a complete blueway system that provides recreation and transportation options across Broome County.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES



Common Themes from Public Engagement

KEY OPPORTUNITIES



Increased Water Access Locations



Enhanced Local + Regional Connections





Public + Municipal Support



KEY CHALLENGES



Facility + Amenity Upgrades





Signage + Wayfinding





Current River Guide(s) + Information





Year-Round Use





Seasonal Flooding



Water Levels and Hazards





Limited Services + Inter-Municipal



Negative Perception







3.0

RECOMMENDATIONS

This section provides an overview of proposed recommendations within the WRA to increase water-based recreation in Broome County. Recommendations include:

- Enhancements to existing minor water access points
- New proposed water access sites
- Wayfinding and signage
- Branding and identity
- Operational recommendations
- Economic development opportunities
- ◆ Confluence Park;
 Image Credit: Visit Binghamton

3.0 | RECOMMENDATIONS **OVERVIEW**





Image Credit: Ahwaga Canoe and Kayak Club

OVERVIEW

Recommendations presented in this section are aligned with the County's vision and goals to increase waterway access for recreational use and enhance key existing water access points through amenity upgrades and enhancements. Further, the proposed recommendations in this plan are intended to lay the foundation for future planning studies and better position for future funding opportunities and partnerships. To provide a feasible action-plan, proposed recommendations were informed by a comprehensive analysis of existing conditions, a review of related plans and initiatives, stakeholder conversations, and public feedback. The following recommendations are explored further in this section.

Enhanced Access and Connectivity

This plan proposes water access upgrades to 26 existing access points in efforts expand user base and enhance inclusiveness. Key upgrades included accessible boat launches, expanded public space, and shoreline restoration. Further detail on proposed enhancements are described on the following pages. Additionally, this plan proposes a series of new water access points to improve connectivity between waterfront destinations and leverage existing waterfront assets.

This section also provides initial recommendations for establishing a cohesive wayfinding system for the future Blueway Trail which build off the Two Rivers Greenway signage system in efforts to advance a distinct county-wide identity.

Economic Development Opportunities

In addition to proposed enhancements, this section explores strategies to increase water-based recreation in Broome County among residents and visitors through programming recommendations and identifying gaps in key service areas that are ripe for funding and development opportunities.



▲ Ouaquaga Bridge - Nearby Existing Major Water Access

3.0 | RECOMMENDATIONS

MAJOR WATER ACCESS POINT **ENHANCEMENTS**

OVERVIEW

Major Water Access Enhancements focus on expanding amenities to improve accessibility, enhance user experience, provide more recreational offerings, and support a county-wide recreational boating network. Major water access points often coincide with existing waterfront parks and are important components of the Blueway Trail, providing land-water accessibility.

The following enhancements are recommended at existing access locations to upgrade them into major water access points:

- 1 Cohesive water-based recreation signage system, including regulatory signage, identification signage and mile markers;
- 2 Boat launch area with boat storage, vehicular and bike parking and where feasible, car, ADA, and hand-launch accommodations;
- 3 Bike and boat rentals;
- (4) Pedestrian amenities, such as seating, picnic tables, and plazas/park areas; and,
- (5) Shoreline restoration and stabilization to include flood mitigation and invasive species management.

Proposed Upgrades

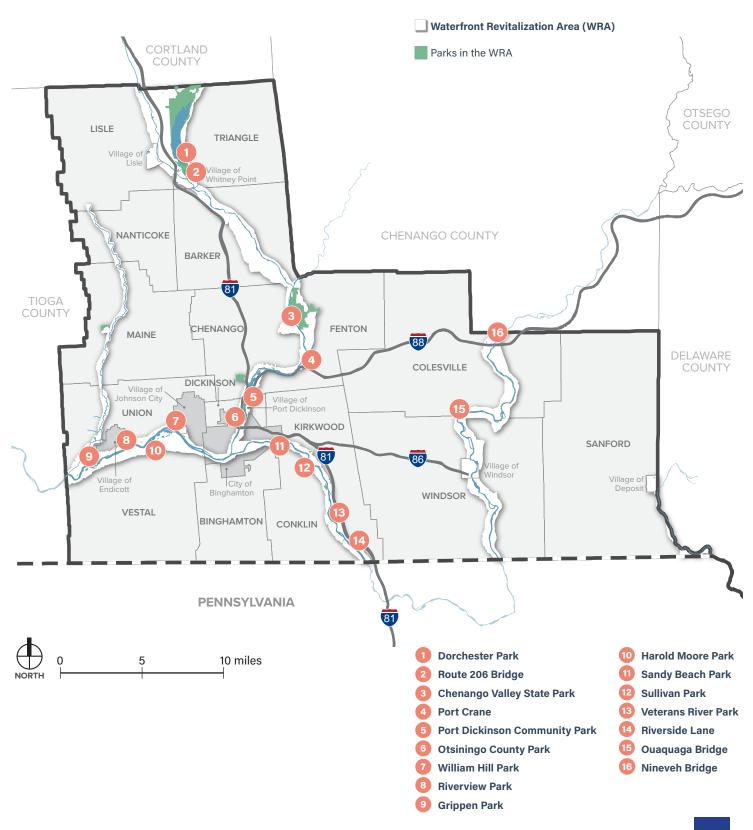
Upgrades are proposed at the following existing major water access locations:

- Dorchester Park, Triangle
- Route 206 Bridge, Whitney Point
- Chenango Valley State Park, Fenton
- Port Crane, Fenton
- Port Dickinson Community Park, Port Dickinson
- Otsiningo County Park, Dickinson
- · William Hill Park, Union
- Riverview Park, Endicott
- Grippen Park, Endicott
- Harold Moore Park, Vestal
- Sandy Beach Park, Binghamton
- Sullivan Park, Conklin
- Veterans River Park, Kirkwood
- Riverside Lane, Kirkwood
- Ouaquaga Bridge, Colesville / Windsor
- Nineveh, Colesvillle

The following page shows a corresponding map of the proposed major water access upgrade locations.



MAJOR WATER ACCESS POINT ENHANCEMENTS



3.0 | RECOMMENDATIONS

MINOR WATER ACCESS POINT ENHANCEMENTS

OVERVIEW

Minor Water Access Enhancements include upgrades to existing public water access points in the WRA, with the focus on improving accessibility for all users. The following improvements are recommended at existing minor water access locations:

- 1 Cohesive water-based recreation signage system, including regulatory signage, identification signage and mile markers;
- (2) Boat launch area with ADA and hand-launch accommodations;
- 3 Pedestrian amenities to include seating and picnic tables; and,
- 4 Shoreline restoration and stabilization to include flood mitigation and invasive species management.

Proposed Upgrades

Upgrades are proposed at the following existing minor water access locations:

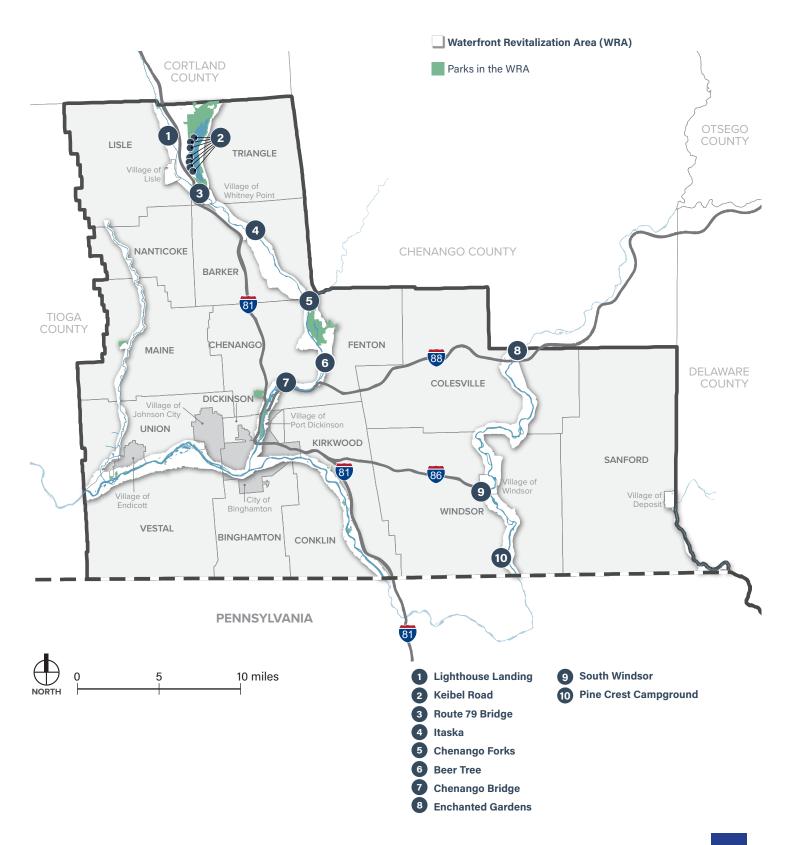
- Lighthouse Landing, Lisle
- · Keible Road, Triangle
- Route 79 Bridge, Whitney Point
- · Itaska, Barker
- Chenango Forks, Fenton / Barker
- Beer Tree, Fenton
- Chenango Bridge, Fenton
- Enchanted Gardens, Colesville
- South Windsor, Windsor
- Pine Crest Campground, Windsor

The following page shows a corresponding map of the proposed minor water access upgrade locations.



▲ Conceptual Rendering of a Proposed Minor Water Access Point

MINOR WATER ACCESS POINT ENHANCEMENTS



NEW PROPOSED WATER ACCESS POINTS



Major Water Access Point vs. Minor Water Access Point.

- Major water access points often coincide with existing waterfront parks that offer more refined watercraft launches that include vehicular launching capabilities for larger motorized boats. Major boat launches also provide additional pedestrian amenities that may include boat storage, restroom facilities, and enhanced public space for seating and picnicking.
- Minor water access points only provide boat launches for non-motorized, smaller watercraft's that do not need assistance from a vehicle for launching. Further, minor water access sites provide basic day-use amenities.



Newly Renovated NYSDEC Boat Launch in Buffalo, NY; Image Credit: BuffaloBlueway.com

OVERVIEW

Expanding public access is a key goal of Broome County's Blueway Plan. Enhancing existing sites and creating new access points will build an interconnected system to make waterways more accessible for recreation. Increased access provides many benefits - boosting recreation options, drawing visitors, enabling waterfront development, restoring shorelines, and fostering stewardship. Strategic investments in water access will unlock the full potential of Broome County's water trails for recreation, tourism, economic growth, and environmental protection.

New Proposed Water Access Points

A total of nine new water access points are proposed in the WRA which will help to create a robust, accessible water-based recreational network. The following locations were proposed based on opportunity to expand water access on public land, geographic distribution, and public input:

Susquehanna River:

- Roberson Museum, Binghamton
- Confluence Park, Binghamton
- Boland Park, Union
- Castle Gardens Park, Vestal
- Centerville Loop Road, Colesville

Chenango River:

Binghamton Plaza

Tioughnioga River:

Jennings Creek Road, Lisle

Delaware River:

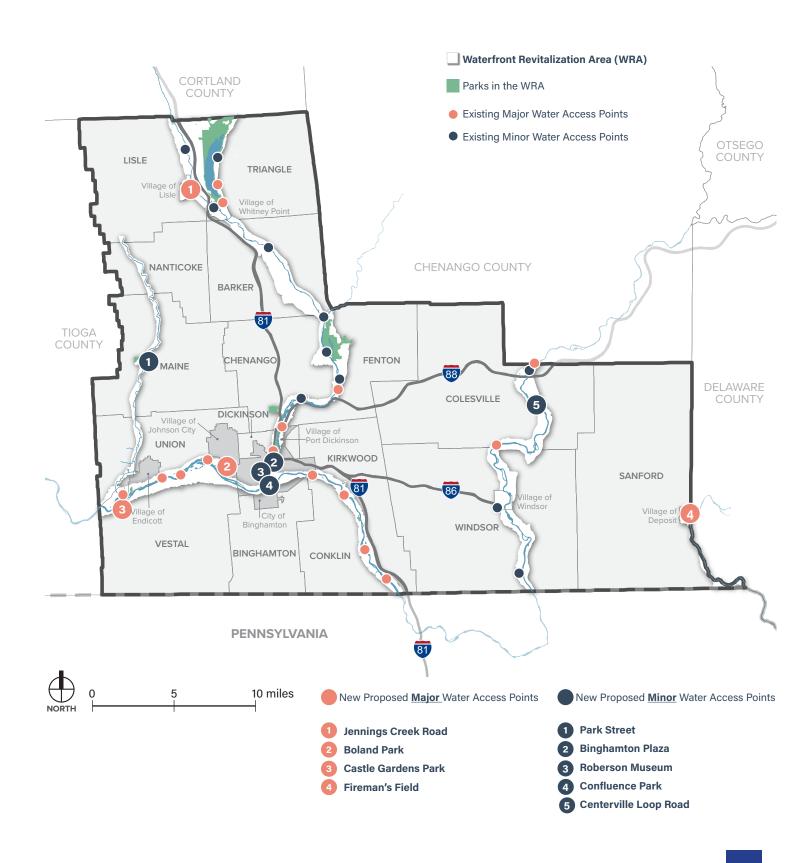
· Fireman's Field, Deposit

Nanticoke Creek:

Park Street, Maine

These water access sites will improve the overall connectivity and expand paddle access across the county. Additional Susquehanna River access points will enable more put-ins and take-outs to facilitate water trail use. Prioritizing quality shoreline access on public lands can build a robust water trail network. Specific areas for future access point exploration include potential launches between South Windsor and Windsor's southern border, as well as between Itaska and Chenango Forks in the town of Barker. Developing these strategic sites would further enhance connectivity and continuous paddling opportunities along the water trails.

NEW PROPOSED WATER ACCESS POINTS



IDENTIFYING NEW WATER ACCESS POINTS AND ENHANCEMENTS



How is Broome County Controlling Stormwater Pollution?

The urbanized center of Broome County is within a designated MS4 area. MS4 stands for "Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems." Any MS4 designated urban area within the United States is regulated under federal law commonly known as EPA's Phase II Stormwater Rule. This regulation is part of the Clean Water Act.

As a designated MS4, Broome County is required to develop and implement a Stormwater Management Program (SWMP) Plan which addresses certain minimum control measures. These measures are designed to reduce the discharge of pollutants into surface waters to the maximum extent practicable to protect water quality and to satisfy water quality requirements set forth in the **Environmental Conservation Law and** the Clean Water Act. Broome County manages and regulates it's stormwater program through the joint efforts of the Planning Department and DPW-Engineering Division.

IDENTIFYING WATER ACCESS POINTS

As highlighted on the previous page, new water access point locations have been identified as part of this plan, including four new major water access sites and five new minor water access sites. The criteria for proposing these sites were based on gaps between existing access points, opportunities to expand on public lands, and public input.

Comfortable paddling distances for novice paddlers to navigate between locations are generally 3 to 5 miles. While there are several existing access sites in the County within 5 miles or less of each other, gaps of over 5 miles exist along the Tioughnioga River and parts of the Susquehanna River. Opportunities exist to expand public access to waterways between the Itaska NYSDEC launch and the Chenango Forks NYSDEC launch and in the town of Windsor between the South Windsor NYSDEC launch and Windsor's most souther border. Nanticoke Creek also presents an opportunity for improved public access. While the creek is currently used mainly for fishing, there are no public boat launches or access points. Developing public infrastructure along Nanticoke Creek would open up the waterway to more recreational users beyond just fishing.

DETERMINING WATER ACCESS ENHANCEMENTS

This plan previously highlighted the current conditions of existing water access points in need of upgrades and enhancements. 26 existing water access points have been identified for improvements including launch accessibility upgrades, expanded amenities, and shoreline enhancements. A summary of proposed improvements is provided on the following page and should serve as a checklist for determining enhancements to existing sites in the future. When possible, the seven universal design principles should be employed during design and implementation to maximize accessibility for all. Any new or altered boat launches must comply with ADA standards. As mentioned, this is an opportunity to work with STIC to assess the accessibility of current sites and identify actions to improve it.

Additionally, historic flooding has greatly eroded shorelines, threatening ecosystems and vital riparian vegetation. Heavy flooding also causes wastewater discharge from combined sewer systems, negatively impacting public perceptions of water quality for recreation, though boating remains safe per DEC assessments. DEC would issue an advisory if waters were unsafe. Water access locations with eroded shorelines should be prioritized for stabilization efforts to mitigate erosion. Proposed enhancements include native vegetation that can act as a barrier to sediment and pollutants before entering waterways. Educating the public on properly disposing of waste, fertilizers, herbicides and other chemicals is also essential to keeping waters clean and safe for recreation.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED ENHANCEMENTS AT WATER ACCESS POINTS:

Major Water Access Points

Minor Water Access Points



Cohesive water-based recreation signage system, including regulatory signage, identification signage and mile markers



Boat launch area with vehicular and bike parking and where feasible, car, ADA, and hand-launch accommodations



Bike and boat storage and rentals



Pedestrian amenities, such as seating, picnic tables, and plazas/park areas



Shoreline restoration and stabilization to include flood mitigation and invasive species management



Cohesive water-based recreation signage system, including regulatory signage, identification signage and mile markers



Boat launch area with ADA and hand-launch accommodations



Pedestrian amenities, such as seating and picnic tables



Shoreline restoration and stabilization to include flood mitigation and invasive species management

The American Disability Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) for recreation facilities can be found here: www.usdoj.gov

Note: Though, this plan recommends a general checklist of elements and amenities, each existing or new site should be individually assessed and design in further detail to accommodate varying site characteristics.



Seven Universal Design Principals for Water Access.

- **1 Equitable Use.** Water access sites should provide the opportunity to be utilized by all people regardless of ability.
- **2** Flexibility in Use. Water access sites should be adaptable and support various capabilities.
- **3** Simple and Intuitive Use. Water access sites should not be complex, rather site elements including launches should be simple and easy-to-use to support all skill levels.
- 4 Perceptible Effort. Key information including safety and hazard information should be easily understood by all people regardless of ability.

- **5 Tolerance for Error.** Water access sites should be design to mitigate any unsafe conditions.
- **6** Low Physical Effort. Water access sites should not have labor-intensive elements and amenities.
- 7 Size and Space for Approach and Usage.
 Water access sites should not have access
 limitations regardless of space, size, and mobility.

PROPOSED WAYFINDING SIGNAGE



Key Considerations for Water-Based Signage.

- Approvals. Any signage placed on public lands or waterways will require approval from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and potentially the Army Corps of Engineers. Additionally, local regulations, building codes and right-of-way rules may impact signage placement, sizes and styles.
- Liability. Organizations need to consider liability should an accident or injury occur along the route. Warning signs at potential hazards, waiver forms for trips/events and insurance coverage are recommended.
- Vandalism. Signage, kiosks and other amenities can often be targets for vandalism or damage, requiring ongoing maintenance, repairs and replacement costs.
- Consistent Branding. Developing a cohesive branding and style for the full signage system requires more effort up front but is worthwhile for a professional, navigable system.
- Cost. Design, production, materials and installation of comprehensive signage systems carries significant upfront costs. Grants and sponsorships often help offset these.
- Water Levels. Signage may need to be adaptable since water levels can fluctuate, especially on creeks and rivers.

OVERVIEW

To improve navigation and strengthen identity across the region, a unified wayfinding signage system is recommended along the Blueway Trail and broader Waterfront Revitalization Area. Developing consistent visual design standards for signs will enhance the ability of residents and visitors to locate destinations and access services. Careful planning of adaptable signs is needed to address fluctuating water levels and other challenges. A cohesive system that reinforces the area's character can make travel safer and easier while showcasing unique waterfront attractions. Partnerships with local agencies will be key to permitting and placement of signs on public lands and waterways.

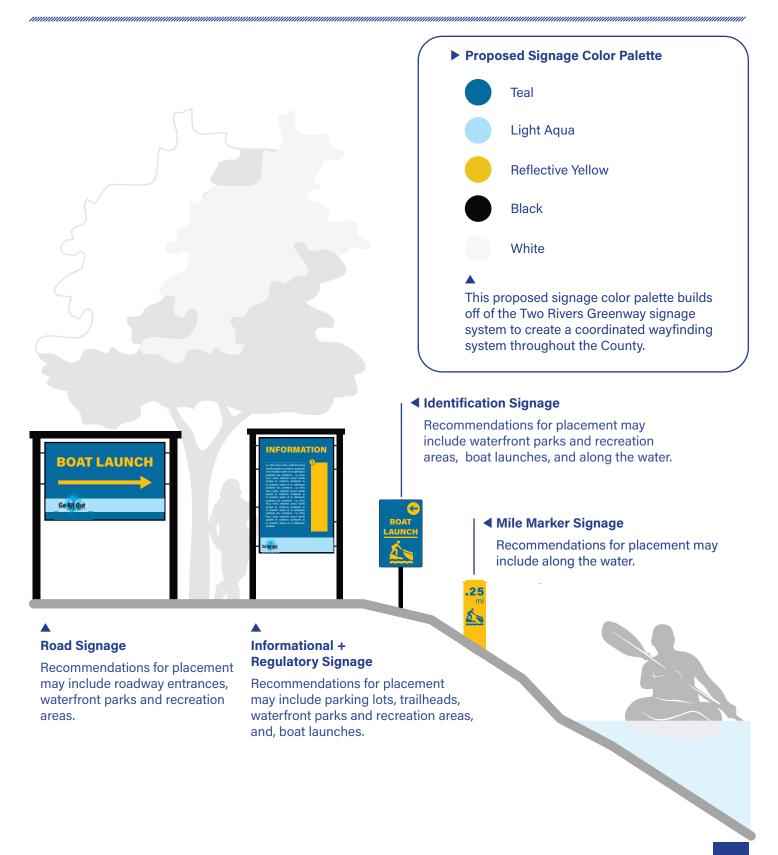
Establishing Cohesive Water-Based Signage

The wayfinding signage proposed in this Blueway Plan builds upon and expands the Two Rivers Greenway signage system and uses the Go All Out Broome County branding to create a cohesive, legible, and distinct signage system throughout the WRA. Blueway signage should be developed in coordination with individual municipalities to complement unique brands and identities. Additionally proposed blueway signage should take into account branding as part of a larger blueway trails system (i.e. Chemung and Susquehanna Water Trail). The following sign types were identified as part of a larger wayfinding signage palette explored in the County's LWRS to enhance water access, connectivity, and safety:

- Road Signage: Provides enhanced visibility to water access sites.
- Informational and Regulatory Signage: Provide important information and regulations for water-based recreational activities to enhance users' experience and safety. They may also feature maps, QR Codes, and other visual and interpretive elements that support water-based recreation in the County.
- Identification Signage: Provides boaters, and paddlers with key information such as launch locations, highlight unique cultural or natural resources, safety, and hazard notification. Signs in this category may also include trail mile markers.

To ensure a cohesive wayfinding system aligning with broader branding efforts, the proposed signage concepts should first undergo a detailed design study and review process. This will allow for refinement and unity before fabrication and installation begin.

PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL WAYFINDING SIGNAGE



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES





Boat Rentals Available at Dorchester Park; Image Credit: Dorchester Park

OVERVIEW

The ultimate goal of this project is to advance a larger, regional water-based recreation effort to increase the economic development of communities across the County and the Southern Tier. Expanding waterway access and implementing county-wide amenity upgrades will advance the County's vision to leverage its vast regional waterways to boost economic development.

Building a Water-Based Tourism Economy

A lack of various waterfront services present unique opportunities to regenerate a vibrant riverfront economy. Only two outfitter locations in the County allow boat renters to travel off-site to other river destinations and only one outfitter location provides guided tours. Further, there are very few lodging and dining options in close proximity to waterways that allow tourists to embark on full-day or multi-day excursions. This gap in key services allow for the creation of new businesses, improved access between the waterfront and existing businesses, and business development support for entrepreneurs looking to leverage the waterways as part of their business.

Programming

The desire for more and enhanced water-based recreation programming was identified through various public outreach including stakeholder conversations and a public survey. The extensive waterways in Broome County allow for diverse programming for water-based recreation including but not limited to, excursions, festivals and events, competitions, and stewardship programs. Hosting regular events (e.g., annual festivals) draws people to the waterfront, creates opportunities for the local economy, and increases awareness of the county's water-based recreational resources.

The Susquehanna Greenway Partnerhsip (SGP) is the leading nonprofit organization that works to advance the Susquehanna Greenway within Pennsylvania. Their work focuses on building partnerships and using collaborative approaches through special projects and programs. However, there is currently no equivalent organization established in Broome County. Forming a local nonprofit organization or program partnership could similarly work to build community connections to waterways through initiatives such as SGP's River Towns and Trails programs. This local group could collaborate with existing organizations such as SGP, Chemung River Friends, and Southern Tier Water Trails to coordinate programming and stewardship efforts across Broome County and beyond.

KEY WATER-BASED PROGRAMMING



Expand and implement blueway guided tours and excursion packages.

Blueway guided tours and excursions can be a great way to introduce water-based recreation to novice paddlers and allow people to experience waterfront areas throughout the County by water and land. Tours could range from half-day to multi-day trips paired with local food/beverage, lodging, and historic/scenic destinations. A partnership between Go All Out Broome (a Broome County tourism initiative), Visit Binghamton, the County, and local water recreation groups could mutually benefit through this economic and recreational opportunity. When coordinating tours, liability and insurance considerations would need to be explored given the inherent risks of water-based activities.

Case Study: Kayak + Canoe Nature Tours | Dorchester Park, Whitney Point, NY Each year Cornell Cooperative Extension provides free guided nature tours on kayak or canoe on Whitney Point Lake. The tours discuss a variety of topics including the lakes history, flora and fauna of the lake, and general safety.



Implement additional blueway themed festivals and special events.

Blueway festivals and events allow the waterways to be celebrated and appreciated as a regional asset and resource. Go All Out Broome, Visit Binghamton, Broome County, and other local businesses and organizations should look for opportunities to collaborate to coordinate unique events and festivals that get people close to, and in, the water. An annual calendar of events would ensure consistent programming along the County's waterways. A secondary impact of bringing people to the water for special events – above and beyond economic development - may include educating people about the perceptions of water quality and safety.

Case Study: Beer Tree River Float | Port Crane, NY

In partnership with Visit Binghamton, local brewery, Beer Tree Brew has hosted a popular low-cost summer event in the Binghamton area know as Beer Tree River Float. Attendees were able to bring their water float or raft of choice to float down the Chenango River. The event continued into the evening at Beer Tree Brew with beer, food, and live music.



Provide increased opportunities for water-based education and safety trainings.

It is important to provide increased opportunities for water-based education and various trainings (i.e. swimming lessons, kayak and canoe lessons, first aid) to promote safe and accessible water recreation for all. Go All Out Broome, Visit Binghamton, Broome County, and local water-based groups should work together to build cohesive and consistent water education classes and safety trainings.

Case Study: Chemung River Friends | Elmira, NY

Chemung River Friends host several educational workshops for all ages and interests. The organization has hosted classes from fly fishing to general water safety courses to watercolor painting classes.



Implement more opportunities for water-based and other environmental stewardship programs.

Waterways are complex natural systems that need to be maintained, protected, and respected for the health and safety of all inhabitants and recreational users. Building upon and expanding local initiatives such as the Broome County Riverbank Cleanup can help promote awareness, education, and future funding opportunities for river-based activities and initiatives. Including but not limited to, Go All Out Broome, Visit Binghamton, Broome County, and local water recreation groups should look for and provide opportunities to collaborate on various programs for enhanced environmental stewardship efforts.

Case Study: Chemung River Friends | Elmira, NY

Chemung River Friends partners with municipalities, sponsors, and members to protect waterways of the Chemung River Watershed through education, outreach, and stewardship programs. Their River Guardian program encourages volunteers to "adopt" a stretch of riverbank to cleanup.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES (CONT.)



One Big Event.

Each year, the Adirondack region kicks off their paddling season with an annual event, the New York Paddlefest and Outdoor Expo. The event is typically held at the start of the season in May and in two different locations: Old Forge and Saratoga Springs. The event is hosted by a local outdoor supply company, that provides hundreds of canoes, kayaks, and stand-up paddle boards (SUPs) that are available to test before a potential purchase.

The event also provides free clinics offering a range of guidance related to paddling techniques, boat construction and design, safety instruction, and kayak and SUP lessons. Other vendors join the multi-day event to provide live music, food, and beverage. Each year, the event draws hundreds of people from across the state, and the event has expanded to two different locations over several days.



Image Credit: Joe Geronimo

Key Partnerships

Long-term success of the Blueway will largely depend on the County to maintain and build partnerships with local businesses, vendors, organizations, municipalities and agencies. The following initial actions are recommended for the County to coordinate with partners to implement an accessible county-wide blueway and riverfront economy:

- Increase Planning Capacity. Boost county planning to ensure blueway growth. Establish coordination across municipalities and state agencies for enhanced capacity and funding.
- Support Local Groups. Continue building partnerships and providing support to existing organizations. Develop a network of riverfront businesses/vendors to partner on future programs and the local economy.
- Expand Equipment Rentals. Increase accessibility through expanded rentals with local businesses or self-service options.
- **Expand Public Transportation.** Work with BC Transit to provide free/low-cost summer transport to recreation areas.
- Implement an Advertisement Campaign. Promote the blueway through NYS Welcome Centers, Taste NY and tourism channels.

Additionally, an entity outside the County government should be established to spearhead blueway management. This could involve creating a new nonprofit organization or delegating an existing group. Steps would include:

- Filing for 501(c)(3) nonprofit status with the IRS
- Developing bylaws, leadership structure, fundraising plans
- Recruiting board members, volunteers, building partnerships
- Creating blueway programming, events, and stewardship initiatives
- Applying for grants, soliciting donations, and sponsors
- Hiring paid staff as funding allows

With a dedicated organization and continued county-led actions, the blueway can be enhanced to fill gaps and meet community recreation needs. More implementation details are in Section 4.0

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED INITIAL ACTIONS

The following provides a summary of the recommended list of initial actions the County can begin to implement as well as a summary of programming efforts the County in partnership with Go All Out Broome, Visit Binghamton, local water groups and organizations, and others to grow a vibrant blueway system and riverfront economy. As part of the County-led recommendations, two case studies; Rent.Fun and the CDTA Nature Bus are highlighted as relevant examples the County can reference for future planning purposes.

Recommended County-Led Initiatives



Increase Planning Capacity



Build on and Create Partnerships



Establish Cohesive Water-Based Signage



Expand Equipment Rentals

Case Study: Rent.Fun

Rent.Fun is a self-service equipment rental company that partners with communities and businesses to activate water recreation opportunity. Similar to a bike share model, Rent.Fun provides 'stations' where kayaks and SUP's can be unlocked through a self-service mobile app for day use rental. Rent. Fun also provides maintenance and marketing, services as well as customer service. Rent.Fun would be a good alternative to provide the County with more off-site rental opportunities.



Expand Public Transportation

Case Study: CDTA's Nature Bus | Albany, NY

Nature Bus is a free service offered by the Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) that connects Albany, NY communities to area nature preserves and open spaces during the summer. Service routes largely encompass NYSDEC potential environmental justice areas (PEJAS), providing historically marginalized communities with opportunity to feasibly access outdoor recreation opportunities.



Implement an Advertisement Campaign

Recommended Programming through Partnerships



Expand and implement blueway guided tours and excursion packages



Implement additional blueway themed festivals and special events



Provide increased opportunities for water-based education and safety trainings



Implement more opportunities for water-based and other environmental stewardship programs



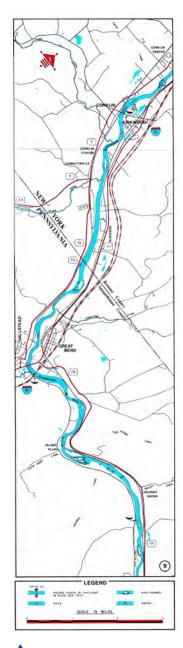
Key Considerations.

- Self-service stations should be located in areas that are not susceptible to frequent flooding
- Users will need to plan transportation to and from access points for multi-day, point A to point B trips
- Collaboration with relevant municipalities and other access point sites will be important for permitting, parking, restroom facilities, and other necessary infrastructure and amenities



Typical Rent.Fun Self-Service Kayak Station, Image Credit: Village of Spring Lake, MI

BROOME COUNTY RIVER GUIDE UPDATE



Insert from the 1975 Guide to Broome County Rivers developed by Broome County's Department of Parks and Recreation in 1975.

OVERVIEW

The Broome County River Guide was last published in 1975 by the County's Department of Parks and Recreation and has served as the main reference for water recreation in the area for nearly 50 years. Updating this guide will provide paddlers and other blueway users with an essential resource to access the county's water trails and enhance their overall experience. A new river guide is needed to capture major changes along the waterways over the past five decades, including new access points, hazards, rentals, trails, and other facilities. The updated guide will improve accessibility to important information that can help blueway users better plan trips, stay safe, discover new areas, and fully utilize Broome County's exceptional water recreation opportunities.

Components of the Guide

A key goal of the updated Broome County River Guide is to provide paddlers with details on navigable trails and potential hazards requiring portage. The guide outlines six popular under 10-mile routes featuring multiple access and destination points for users to enjoy. To promote safety, the guide clearly denotes dangers like dams, pipelines, and confluence zones that require portage avoidance directly on maps plus descriptions.

Additionally, the guide identifies all existing water access points to assist trip planning. For longer journeys, enlarged map areas show logical geographic paddling zones that travelers may traverse. Beyond maps, the guide includes further trip planning tips, general hazard awareness, emergency guidance, rental and recreation group info for beginner education. By combining safety infrastructure warnings with multi-use recreational access details in a user-friendly format, the new river guide aims to enable and protect paddlers exploring Broome County's waterways. The updated Broome County River Guide can be found in the Appendix.



▲ Kayakers on an Excursion in Broome County Waterways; Image Credit: Ahwaga Canoe and Kayak Club





4.0

IMPLEMENTATION

This section identifies an initial framework for project implementation, including potential funding sources. The update to the Broome County River Guide is also highlighted in this section as an early implementation activity..

◀ Image Credit: Go All Out Broome County

4.0 | IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW



Consolidated Funding Application (CFA).

As part of New York's efforts to improve the business climate and expand economic growth, the NYS Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) was created to support the Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) Initiative.

The CFA allows applicants to access multiple state funding sources through one application, making the process quicker, easier, and more productive.

Plan ahead!

The CFA typically opens in late Spring each year and grant applications are typically required to be submitted by the end of July. Many funding programs also require a local resolution to be passed in support of the grant application.

Environmental Bond Act.

New Yorkers voted on November 8, 2022 to approve \$4.2 billion in funding for environmental and community projects statewide. This includes up to \$650 million pledged by the State to preserve land and expand recreational opportunities.

The funding is anticipated to become available starting in 2024 once planning finishes. When project funding is announced, updates will be posted at www.ny.gov/programs/clean-water-clean-air-and-green-jobs-environmental-bond-act.

OVERVIEW

The section provides an initial framework for advancing the Broome County Blueway including potential state funding sources and a list of projects with key project partners identified that will help to advance the county's vision for a comprehensive blueway system.

Roles and Responsibilities

Implementation of projects that advance the Blueway will largely depend on county and individual municipal action and involvement. It is key for the County to maintain lead facilitation of the Blueway Trail to maintain county-wide coordination with individual groups, stakeholders, and municipalities. Further, the County should maintain an active role in the coordination and development with the New York Southern Tier Water Trail to further the development of a regional blueway system and to leverage economic development opportunities for Broome County.

All proposed new construction projects (e.g., new water access points) fall within county or individual municipal jurisdiction. Proposed projects involving construction will need to undergo additional pre-development work, planning, design, and review prior to implementation. Individual municipalities can leverage various State funding and technical assistance available to facilitate additional pre-development work and implementation.

Prioritization

This plan is intended to be used as a guide to prioritize projects and further development opportunities. The following pages provide a list of proposed projects that should be considered for implementation in the near-term or in anticipation of relevant funding sources.

Funding

This plan builds on past planning efforts including the county-wide Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRS) through NYSDOS. Upon state approval of the LWRS, municipalities will be eligible to apply for funding to implement projects which are included in this plan. Additionally, several state and federal funding sources are available to support the planning, design, implementation, and maintenance of proposed blueway projects. The table on the following page summarizes several state funding sources to implement components of the Broome County Blueway.

OVERVIEW OF POTENTIAL STATE FUNDING SOURCES

Funding Source + Description	Eligible/Relevant Activities	Award				
Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRS) NYS Department of State Office of Planning, Development and Community Infrastructure (DOS)						
Upon approval and local adoption, municipalities are eligible for implementation funds to begin to implement identified and prioritized projects	Must be initiated by municipalities located along New York's coasts or inland waterways or counties with the consent and acting on behalf of eligible municipalities. Eligible activities include costs associated with planning, acquisition, and implementation	Funding through the State's CFA process, award varies, local match required				
Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) / NY Forward (NYF) NYS Department of State Office of Planning, Development and Community Infrastructure (DOS)						
Provides technical and financial assistance to transform downtown neighborhoods into vibrant communities where New Yorkers want to live, work and raise families	Must be initiated by municipalities. Funding supports the development of a Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) and implementation of projects identified in the SIP	\$10 million (DRI); \$4.5 million or \$2.25 million (NYF); one-time award; no local match required				
Recreational Trails Grant Program (RTP) NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP)						
Provides fuding to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both motorized and non-motorized recreational trail uses	Must be initiated by municipalities, State agencies, Federal agencies, public benefit corporations, public authorities, and not-for-profit corporations. Eligible activities include maintenance and restoration, development and rehabilitation of trail facilities, purchase and lease of trail construction and maintenance equipment, construction, easement acquisition and/or fee simple title to property, trail accessibility and maintenance	Funding through the State's CFA process, award varies, local match required				
Environmental Protection Fund Grant Program for Parks, Preservation and Heritage (EPF) NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP)						
Provides funding for the acquisition, planning, development, and improvement of parks, historic properties, and heritage areas located within the physical boundaries of the State of New York	Must be initiated by municipalities, state agencies public benefit corporations, public authorities, and tax-exempt not-for-profit corporations. Eligible activities include pre-development planning and design, construction, acquisition, and administration	Funding through the State's CFA process, award varies, local match required				
Market New York, Empire State Development (ESD)						
Provides funding that supports regionally themed marketing projects that promote tourism destinations, attractions and special events, as well as tourism facility capital improvement projects	Must be initiated by municipalities, not-for-profit corporations, tourism promotional agencies (TPAs), public benefit corporations, and for-profit companies. Relevant activities must support significant tourism initiatives including projects that promote outdoor recreation destinations and activities	Funding through the State's CFA process, award varies, local match required				
Green Innovation Grant Program (GIGP) NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation (NYS EFC)						
Provides funding that supports projects that	Stormwater street trees, rain gardens, bioretention,	Funding through				

permeable pavements, green roofs, and living shorelines

the State's CFA

process, award

required

varies, local match

and create cutting-edge green technologies

utilize unique stormwater infrastructure design

4.0 | IMPLEMENTATION

FRAMEWORK FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The table below includes the identification of priority projects which are identified as short-term projects that could be completed within one to five years. Priority projects have been selected based on immediate next steps and actions that are critical to establishing a blueway system. Further recommendations include prioritizing new water access points that create access to a waterway that doesn't currently exist, such as Fireman's Field which would expand access to the Delaware River and Park Street which would create access on Nanticoke Creek over locations that serve as infill along the Susquehanna and Tioughnioga Rivers. Enhancements to existing access points are not included in the priority implementation table but should be completed on a rolling basis as funding opportunities become available, and in consideration of current conditions and the level of usage at each site.

Project	Timeframe (Estimated)	Lead / Partners	Potential Funding Source(s)	Cost (Estimated)
Broome County River Guide Updates to the river guide and other promotional materials and platforms	Underway	Lead: Broome County Partners: Individual municipalities Go All Out Broome Recreation Groups	Market New York, ESD Municipal Investment	\$15k
Needs Assessment Conduct an assessment, guided by the recommendations in this plan, to identify priority investments that would expand public access, recreation, and economic benefits and help guide future waterfront planning and development.	Short-Term, 1-5 Years	Lead: Broome County Partners: Individual municipalities Go All Out Broome Recreation Groups	Municipal Investment	Unknown
Wayfinding Signage New proposed water-based identification and regulatory signage Note: Further design will need to be developed and vetted. Estimated signage costs does not include design fees.	Short-Term, 1-5 Years	Lead: Broome County Partners: Individual municipalities	LWRS, NYSDOS DRI/NYF, NYSDOS Market New York, ESD Municipal Investment	 Road Signage: \$10k-\$15k (per sign) Informational &Regulatory Signage: \$10k (per sign) Identification Signage & Mile Marker Signage: \$5k-\$8k (per sign)
Management Organization Establish and organization with an inter-agency planning support focused on waterfront revitalization and water-based recreation advancement	Short-Term, 1-5 Years	Lead: Broome County Partners: Individual municipalities Go All Out Broome Recreation Groups	Municipal Investment	Unknown
Advertisement Campaign Partner with New York Welcome Centers and Taste NY to advertise water recreation in Broome County	Short-Term, 1-5 Years	Lead: Broome County Partners: New York State Department of Economic Development Local Businesses in Broome County	Market New York, ESD Municipal Investment	Varies

Project	Timeframe (Estimated)	Lead / Partners	Potential Funding Source(s)	Cost (Estimated)
On-Going Blueway Trail Events + Programming	On-going	Lead: Broome County Partners: Individual municipalities Local Businesses Go All Out Broome County Recreation Groups Local Chamber(s)	Market New York, ESD Municipal Investment	Varies
Equipment Rentals Install self-service equipment rentals at existing major water access sites and/or partner with relevant local businesses	Short-Term, 1-5 Years	Lead: Broome County Partners: Individual municipalities	LWRS, NYSDOSDRI/NYF, NYSDOSMarket New York, ESDMunicipal Investment	 Varies on provider Initial start-up +/-50k plus annual Fees
New Minor Water Access Points New proposed minor water access points at Park Street, Binghamton Plaza, Roberson Museum, Confluence Park, and Centerville Loop Road	Short-Term, 1-5 Years	Lead: Varies, Individual Municipalities Partners: Broome County Go All Out Broome County Recreation Groups	 LWRS, NYSDOS DRI/NYF, NYSDOS RTP, NYSOPRHP EPF, NYSOPRHP Invasive Species Grant Program, NYSDEC GIGP, NYSEFC (green infrastructure only) Municipal Investment 	 Signage: Varies, +/-\$50k ADA Hand Boat Launch: Varies, +/- \$25k Amenities: Varies, +/- \$50k Shoreline Restoration: +/- \$2.5k per Linear Foot
New Major Water Access Points New proposed major water access points at Jennings Creek Road, Boland Park, Castle Gardens Park, and Fireman's Field	Long-Term, 5+ Years	Lead: Varies, Individual Municipalities Partners: Broome County Go All Out Broome County Recreation Groups	 LWRS, NYSDOS DRI/NYF, NYSDOS RTP, NYSOPRHP EPF, NYSOPRHP Invasive Species Grant Program, NYSDEC GIGP, NYSEFC (green infrastructure only) Municipal Investment 	 Signage: Varies, +/-\$50k ADA Hand Boat Launch: Varies, +/- \$25k Boat Launch: Varies, +/- \$50k Amenities: Varies, +/- \$150k Shoreline Restoration: +/- \$2.5k per Linear Foot
Enhancements at Existing Minor Water Access Points Upgrades and amenity enhancement at existing minor water access points identified	Short-Term, 1-5 Years	Lead: Varies, Individual Municipalities Partners: Broome County Go All Out Broome County Recreation Groups	LWRS, NYSDOS DRI/NYF, NYSDOS RTP, NYSOPRHP EPF, NYSOPRHP Invasive Species Grant Program, NYSDEC GIGP, NYSEFC (green infrastructure only) Municipal Investment	Varies
Enhancements at Existing Major Water Access Points New proposed major water Upgrades and amenity enhancement at existing major water access points identified	Long-Term, 5+ Years	Lead: Varies, Individual Municipalities Partners: Broome County Go All Out Broome County Recreation Groups	 LWRS, NYSDOS DRI/NYF, NYSDOS RTP, NYSOPRHP EPF, NYSOPRHP Invasive Species Grant Program, NYSDEC GIGP, NYSEFC (green infrastructure only) Municipal Investment 	Varies

