

Genesee River Main Stem Canoe/Kayak Access Improvement Plan

Executive Summary

Genesee RiverWatch, in partnership with Genesee Valley Conservancy and Genesee River Wilds, has created a *Canoe/Kayak Access Improvement Plan* that prioritizes car-top boat access sites on the main stem of the Genesee River that need upgrading and locations for new sites. The *Plan* was developed using stakeholder and general public input, the results of several in-field assessments, GIS/aerial imaging, and our team's extensive knowledge of access sites. This plan will be used to solicit funding to make the upgrades to existing sites and build new ones.

The *Plan* identifies the need for 6 new sites: 3 to fill in gaps of more than 10 miles between access locations; and 3 others where new access is needed. It also prioritizes 8 existing sites that need varying degrees of upgrade to improve safe access.

Background

Genesee RiverWatch hosted the 4th Annual Genesee River Basin Summit on June 15, 2017 at the entitled: *Genesee River Access & Recreational Opportunities*. The purpose of this Summit was to bring together those interested in improving the recreational appeal of the Genesee River Basin. That included direct users, such as boaters, fishermen, hikers, bikers, and birders. It was also attracted those interested in improving the economic and social appeal of our river assets, such as business owners, government officials, farmers, elected representatives, economic development professionals, engineers, educators, media, and conservation groups.

Expert speakers provided a comprehensive review of the Genesee Basin's existing river access and recreational opportunities. Economic development and government officials described the importance of these resources to economic opportunities and quality of life along the entire river from Pennsylvania to the Rochester Harbor. Attendees heard examples of work being done on other rivers and plans in the works along the Genesee.

Those attendees frequently raised concern about the need for improved infrastructure for safe and convenient access to the river for boating, hiking, biking and fishing. As follow-up to that feedback Genesee RiverWatch, in partnership with the Genesee Valley Conservancy and Genesee River Wilds, secured funding from New York Sea Grant in 2019 to do the following tasks:

1. *Engage the Public* – Conduct forums with stakeholders and citizens to solicit feedback and input on existing car-top boat access sites that need improvement and possible locations for new sites;
2. *Prepare a Plan* – Use public input, aerial imaging, GIS, work of others, and site visits to identify the sections of the river that could support new or improved access. Create a prioritized list of sites for new and improved access for a plan to be used to solicit funds for construction of new or modification of existing sites;

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3. *Develop Version 2 of Genesee River Blueway Trail Map* – Determine the type of information to be included on the map versus information that can be accessed via QR code on the map. Collect necessary information. Create a website or webpage on an existing site to house the information and allow ready updates and additions; and
4. *Distribute Version 2 of Genesee River Blueway Trail Map* – Print Map. Design, fabricate, and install map holders/signage for each access point.

This report focuses on *Task 2* above: Prepare a plan that can be used to solicit funds for the construction of new or modification of existing canoe/kayak access sites on the main stem of the Genesee River.

Approach

The *Plan* was created by first soliciting public input, assessing the condition of existing sites, identifying where new sites were needed, and prioritizing which existing sites should be upgraded. Once these tasks were complete the *Plan* was developed. The approach and results of each step in that process are described below.

Public Input – Three public engagement forums were held, one each in the Upper, Middle and Lower basins. Feedback from those forums assisted in the identification of locations and attributes of new or modified sites. The raw input we received from the public sessions on these topics is shown in APPENDIX A. The summary of that raw feedback can be found in APPENDIX B.

In general, participants identified locations of existing sites that they felt warranted consideration for upgrading and the features they would like to see in those upgrades. They also suggested locations for new sites.

Assess Existing Sites – The sources of information listed below were used as a basis for this analysis of existing sites and to determine which ones need to be upgraded or where new ones should be constructed.

- Stakeholder and general public feedback
- A variety of existing maps of river access sites
- The results of in-field assessments
- GIS/aerial imaging
- Our team's extensive personal knowledge of access sites

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The results of that assessment are detailed in a table provided in APPENDIX D. The designations for each site were preliminarily broken down and color coded into following groups:

- Blue – Existing sites with safe access, parking, some with signage, and with varying degrees improvement needed;
- Green – Existing sites with safe access, parking and signage, and no need for improvements at this time when compared to other sites;
- Yellow – Potential locations for new sites; and
- Orange – Potential locations for new sites to fill in “gap” sites. (Explained below.)

Identification of Potential New Sites – The three criteria used for the identification of potential locations for new sites were:

1. Ensure that there is no more than 10 miles between put-in and take-out sites;
2. Provide access where no formal one exists or there is a demand for access;
3. Provide downstream access where upstream sites can only be used for takeout due to an in-river structure that requires a significant portage to a downstream location.

The analysis resulted in the identification of three segments of the river that need a “gap” site to be added to meet criteria 1 above:

1. One between Indian Fort Nature Preserve and Geneseo;
2. One between Fillmore and Whiskey Bridge; and
3. Another between Avon and Scottsville.

One site was located in Belmont that met criteria 3 above. The current access site in Belmont is just upstream of the dam in the village. There is no formal site immediately downstream. The nearest official site is the Transit Road site about 7 miles downstream leaving this section of the river without adequate access.

Two other locations were identified as needing access. The first one is in Fillmore where the current access point is informal and has created the need to provide a formal, approved site. The second one is in the Village of Houghton where there is an interest to provide direct access to the river rather than having to go miles upstream or downstream to gain access.

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Prioritize Existing Sites – Five criteria were developed to help evaluate the condition of existing sites and prioritize which ones should be upgraded first. The lower the score worse the condition and the higher need to upgrade. Those criteria are:

1. Boats can be put-in (PI) the water safely (This is at the water's edge.);
2. Boats can be taken-out (TO) of the water safely (This is at the water's edge.);
3. Ease of PI/TO (This is from the parking lot to water's edge. Eroded/steep banks make this difficult.)
4. Signage indicating this the site is a PI/TO site; and
5. Automobile parking nearby.

A matrix was developed to rank the sites based upon the scoring of each one against these criteria. The higher the score the less need for improvement. The scoring was based upon a 0 to 3 scale with:

- 3 meaning the site satisfies the criteria completely,
- 2 meaning the site just satisfies the criteria,
- 1 meaning the site barely satisfies the criteria, and
- 0 meaning the site does not satisfy the criteria.

Once that was complete, a closer look was taken at the sites that scored below average (<13). Some of those sites had issues that precluded them from being considered for upgrades at this time. The results of that analysis are shown in the table below. Sites that should be considered for upgrade are shaded in gray in that table.

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Number	Site	Safe PI	Safe TO	Ease of PI/TO	Signage	Parking	Score
1	Genesee Town Park	3	3	3	3	3	15
2	Graves	3	3	3	2	3	14
3	Jack Bridge	3	3	3	3	3	15
4	Riverwalk Park	3	3	3	3	3	15
5	Scio	3	3	1	2	1	10
6	Amity	3	3	3	3	3	15
7	Belmont	2	2	1	3	3	11
8	Transit Bridge	3	3	3	3	3	15
9	Belfast	3	3	3	3	3	15
10	Caneadea	2	2	1	2	3	10
11	Whiskey Bridge	3	3	3	1	3	13
12	Portageville	0	3	3	0	2	8
13	Mt. Morris Dam	2	2	0	2	3	9
14	Mt. Morris Old	3	3	3	2	2	13
15	Mt. Morris New	3	3	3	3	3	15
16	Indian Fort Nature Preserve	3	3	3	1	2	12
17	Genesee River Access Park	2	2	1	2	2	9
18	York Landing	3	3	1	3	3	13
19	Avon	1	1	1	3	3	9
20	Scottsville	3	3	2	3	3	14
21	Black Creek	3	3	3	3	3	15
22	Genesee Waterways Center	3	3	3	3	3	15
23	Corn Hill Landing	3	3	3	1	3	13
24	Seth Green Island	3	3	0	0	3	9
25	Turning Point Park	3	3	1	1	2	10
26	Petten Street	3	3	3	1	3	13
27	Ontario Beach DEC	2	2	3	3	3	13

Table 1: Scoring Matrix, Existing Sites

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Results

The table below summarizes the *Canoe/Kayak Access Improvement Plan* developed. It prioritizes car-top boat access sites on the main stem of the Genesee River that need upgrading and locations for new sites. The *Plan* was developed using stakeholder and general public input, the results of several in-field assessments, GIS/aerial imaging, and our team's extensive knowledge of access sites. This *Plan* will be used to solicit funding to make the upgrades to existing sites and build new ones.

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Type of Site	Location	Description
New	Wildlife Management Area (Potential)	Close gap between Fillmore & Whiskey Bridge
	Air Museum in Geneseo (Potential)	Close gap between Mt. Morris & Geneseo
	Golah Road (Potential)	Close gap between Avon & Scottsville
	Fillmore	Provide formal public access
	Houghton	Provide access for Houghton residents and students
	Belmont	Provide downstream access in Belmont
Existing	Scio	Improvements for easier/safer PI/TO
	Belmont	Improvements for easier/safer PI/TO
	Portageville	Signage in-river for safe and visible exit
	Mt. Morris Dam Upper	Improved trail to river and platform/dock to launch
	Indian Fort Nature Preserve	Needs signage and parking
	Geneseo River Access Park	Need improvements for easier/safer PI/TO
	Avon	Need improvements for easier/safer PI/TO
	Turning Point Park	Need to clear cattails and install sign

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APPENDIX A

**Genesee River Basin Canoe/Kayak Map
Public Input Sessions
November 13, 19, and 20, 2019**

***NOTE:** This only includes feedback on access sites. The feedback collected during these forums on the map are not included.*

Existing Sites: Provide comments/feedback on condition, usability, and accessibility of existing boating/fishing access sites

1. "River exit" sign to alert paddlers to take-out locations
2. Mt. Morris – new launch – beautiful but cannot use it due to property owner issues
3. Rt. 251 at Genesee River – unsafe access, vertical drop, silt, muck
4. Village of Geneseo wastewater treatment plant – not sure it still in an official site – poor signage
5. Geneseo WWTP site needs upgrade
6. All sites in Livingston County downstream of Mt. Morris Dam have the challenge of fluctuating water levels from the dam water releases regulated by USACE
7. Many existing sites need upgrades
8. Multiple languages available – Spanish, Chinese, German, Middle Eastern, Eastern Europe, others
9. Rt. 252 access difficult to get boat in and out of water
10. Accessibility for those with physical/other/mental challenges/needs
11. Mention what causes stressed fisheries and what can visitors do to help decrease stress to aquatic organisms
12. Fishing access sites difficult to get a boat in the water
13. Improve site at Rt. 251
14. Make access disabled access because it enables beginners and families
15. Clear and maintain hand launch at south end of Turning point park boardwalk
16. Dock in Bausch-Lomb park (UR) just north of the pedestrian bridge, slit, etc.
17. Mt. Morris 96.2 – formal trail to river from/near "G.R. Hotel" signage (wooden ramp)
18. Rt. 251 rocky, no dock, mooring, water is a challenge to use
19. Rt. 253 silted in, too steep a drop for safe use
20. Black Creek 148.9 – "nice location", "keep up"
21. Geneseo at bridge 111.1 Rt. 63 – parking, signage, wooded ramp
22. Improve Avon site, bank too steep to haul a boat up and down
23. Existing Belfast launch site is getting difficult to launch from
24. Caneadea needs better river access at GRW site – real erosion issues
25. Whiskey Bridge mile 72.6 cement blocks or timbers on bank under bridge, set as long stair steps
26. Genesee PA Town Park access point needs signs

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27. Belmont – floating dock behind marsh landing at mile 34.2 steep
28. Caneadea site possible river access right by parking lot rather than creek (Vote yes #2)
29. Shuttle or Uber availability in Wellsville to park car in Belmont for trip take out

New Sites: Suggest locations for new access sites

1. Honeoye Creek at Genesee River
2. Have a site every hour of paddling
3. At the Greenway Trail
4. At the Old RR trestle
5. At Lehigh RR Trail crossing (Town of Rush)
6. Need a site near Fillmore
7. Genesee Active Transportation Plan is looking at connecting the Greenway to the Village of Genesee by the HAG War Plane Museum, tie in a new Kayak launch site?
8. Multiple languages available – Spanish, Chinese, German, Middle Eastern, Eastern Europe, others
9. Accessibility for those with physical/other/mental challenges/needs
10. Need entry/exit between Mt. Morris and Genesee
11. Pull-off sites along river at 5 to 10 mile intervals
12. Riverton Municipal Golf Course in Henrietta
13. Oatka Creek in Scottsville could be a very good spot to develop
14. Launch at Black Creek on Scottsville Road/Chili Road
15. Bottom of Suntru Street in the city
16. Maybe monthly meeting at launch sites to review requirements, maybe a wish list
17. Kayak and canoe launch sites from Mt. Morris to Black Creek
18. Difficult access at Council House Road
19. Difficult access at Belvidere
20. New access - Fort Hill between Fillmore and Whiskey Bridge
21. Lattice Bridge – any movement on this? Can we convert that to a pedestrian/biking bridge – Belvidere
22. DEC WMU at Mudville – Portageville
23. Open a site in Belvidere, it would be easy to get in
24. Develop sites on either side of Caneadea bridge in conjunction with Genesee Valley trail system and Allegany County trails, hope is to open bridge to pedestrian and recreational traffic in future
25. Sites between Caneadea and Portageville, Fillmore for sure, between Fillmore and Portageville

Site Features: List features/amenities you would like to see at any access site

1. Picnic table
2. Port-o-john
3. Trash can

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4. Multiple languages available – Spanish, Chinese, German, Middle Eastern, Eastern Europe, others
5. Rest or picnic stops every 5 to 10 miles
6. Floating docks for entry and exit or concrete ramps
7. Signage on the river to launch/pull-out sites coming up – long distances between launch and pull-out sites is like missing a thruway exit
8. Accessibility for those with physical/other/mental challenges/needs
9. Map showing site in relation to others
10. Safe access
11. Canoe/kayak rentals
12. Education on aquatic invasives
13. Signage to amenities, food, lodging, etc.
14. Picnic tables
15. Port-o-potty
16. Kiosk with map of “you are here” and area history like thruway rest stop plaques
17. ADA segments to ensure there is a take-out and various trip options
18. Picnic/shade structure
19. Car top launch sites BOTH – roller system accessibility AND low dock 6” water for narrow boat and gel coated light boat that is get deformed by rollers
20. Basic restroom, even porta-potty
21. Cement ramps, if used, please make them grooved like Finger Lakes Museum in Geneva at north end of Seneca lake
22. Parking area and distance to water edge
23. Dock height suitable for kayak/canoe/boat, etc
24. Maps or signs at access points directing to stores, camping or other accommodations, points of interest, etc.
25. Kiosk with local information
26. Lighting
27. Directions to closest town in emergency situations
28. Toilet – possibly compost type, possible rainwater roof catchment for washing
29. Are there any specific sections that are ADA accessible? For instance, a ADA launch on “A”, suitable out at “B”
30. Riparian buffers are critical to protecting this ecosystem – the wider the better
31. Level, hardened parking, easy to turn around, kiosk, picnic tables would be great, water supply?
32. Flag or warning about down river hazards – log jams wired fence, etc.
33. Invasive species information
34. Restrooms when park is open, gravel parking lot, picnic tables
35. Consider “adopt-a-highway” concept to cleanup trees in river

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APPENDIX B: Summary of Public Feedback Associated with Access Site

1. Existing Sites: The sites listed below were identified as worthy of consideration for upgrades.

Site	Site
Genesee, PA	Geneseo Wastewater Treatment Plant
Belmont	York's Landing
Belfast	Avon at Rt. 5/20
Caneadea	Rt. 251 near Industry
Whiskey Bridge	Rt. 253 near Scottsville
Mt. Morris, existing	Black Creek off of Rt. 252 near Ballantyne bridge
Mt. Morris, new	Bausch & Lomb Park
Rt. 63 near Geneseo	Turning Point Park

2. New Sites: The sites listed below were identified as worthy of consideration as potential locations for new sites.

Potential Location for New/Improved Site

Honeoye Creek at Genesee River
Near Fillmore
Near Riverton Municipal Golf Course
Oatka Creek in Scottsville
Black Creek on Scottsville/Chili Road
Jones Bridge Road
Suntru Street, Rochester
Councilhouse Road, Caneadea
Belvidere
Mudville, near Portageville

3. Site Features: The features listed below were suggested.

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Site Feature

Picnic table
Port-o-john
Trash can
Floating dock
Concrete ramp
Signage on river showing exit location
Accessible by persons with disabilities
Kiosk with local information
Hardened parking area
Lighting
Directions/information about local emergency services
Water supply
Map of river and “this location”

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APPENDIX C: Pictures of Existing Access Sites



Middle Basin at Mt. Morris



Lower Basin at Black Creek

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Upper Basin at Whiskey Bridge

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APPENDIX D: Access Site Locations

Genesee River Canoe/Kayak Access Site Locations August 19, 2020											
Mile	Site Name	Description	Comments	Mile	Site Name	Description	Comments	Mile	Site Name	Description	Comments
1				56	Houghton	Potential new site		111	Genesee River Access Park	Developed site	Genesee
5				60	Fillmore	Potential new site		115			
10				65	Proposed gap site	State Wildlife Management Area		120	York Landing	Developed site	
	Genesee Town Park	Existing site in Genesee, PA	No improvements necessary								
15				70				125			
	Graves	Developed site	DEC Fishing Access								
	Jack Bridge	Developed site	DEC fishing access site		Whiskey Bridge	Developed site					
20				75	Portageville	Developed site	Take out only	130	Avon	Developed site	DEC fishing access site
	Trout Run	Potential new site	Private campground								
					Lees Landing	Letchworth State Park					
25	Riverwalk Park	Developed site		80				135	Proposed gap site	Goloh Road	
					St. Helena	Letchworth State Park					
30	Scio	Developed site	DEC fishing access site	85				140			
	Amity	Developed site									
	Belmont	Developed site	No downstream access						Scottsville	Developed site	
35	Belmont	Potential new site	Provide downstream access	90				145			
	Belvidere	Potential new site									
40				95	Mt. Morris Upper	Developed site	Upstream access only	150	Black Creek	Developed site	DEC fishing access site
					Mt. Morris Middle	Developed site					
	Transit Bridge	Developed site	Minor improvements		Mt. Morris Lower	New site			Genesee Waterways Center	Developed site	
45				100	Indian Fort Nat. Pres.	Developed site	Needs parking & signage	155			
	Belfast	Developed site	Minor improvements						Corn Hill Landing	Developed site	Only needs a sign
									Seth Green Island	Developed site	
50				105				160	Turning Point Park	Developed site	
	Caneadea	Developed site			Proposed gap site	Air Museum			Petten Street	New site 2020	
									Ontario Beach	Developed site	DEC boat launch
55				110				165			
	KEY:	Blue	Existing safe access w/parking, some improvements welcome								
		Green	Existing safe access w/parking, no improvements needed								
		Yellow	Potential new site								
		Light blue	Letchworth State Park								
		Orange	Proposed new "Gap" site								
		Bold	On Blueway Trail map								