

June 7, 2017

## Lake Erie Island Partners to Release Paddling Guide at June 9 Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

**PUT-IN-BAY, OH** - The Put-in-Bay Township Park District, along with their partners, the National Park Service - Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program and Ohio Sea Grant announce the release of a new publication: the *Lake Erie Islands Water Trails* guide. A ribbon cutting ceremony marking the grand opening of the trails will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, June 9, 2017 at the South Bass Island State Park during the annual Kayak Rendezvous.

The guide features five circular paddling routes and associated public access points around South Bass, Middle Bass, North Bass, Kelleys Island and the Catawba and Marblehead peninsula area. Access points to the nearly 60 miles of paddling trails are visible from the water and marked with color coded signs that coordinate with the guide by island. Safety, environmental information, access amenities, and paddling distances are also included.

The creation of the guide comes from the growing interest of kayaking and paddling sports in the area. "We wanted to create a guide that could help people be safe on Lake Erie and show them where proper access sites are located," said Lisa Brohl, commissioner, for the Put-in-Bay Township Park District.

Recent statistics from Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) show canoes and kayaks currently account for a little over one third (38%) of all registered boats in Ohio (motorized, sailboats, etc.) and registrations have more than doubled in the last 8 years. Recognizing this increase in demand, ODNR bolstered the Ohio Water Trails program and more than half of the 33 designated access points on the Lake Erie Islands Water Trails are located on the area's eight state parks. "The Lake Erie Islands are a national gem, with so much to see and do within a few miles by land or boat," said ODNR Director James Zehringer.

"This exciting project has come together with the help of many partners who see the opportunities of increased recreation, awareness of island resources and economic impacts," said Andrea Irland, outdoor recreation planner for the National Park Service's RTCA Program. "Residents, visitors and the entire island community will benefit from these Lake Erie Island Water Trails."

The free guides will be available at the Lake Erie Shores and Islands Visitors Centers in Port Clinton and Sandusky, as well as the Lake Erie Island State Park Offices on South Bass, Middle Bass and Kelleys Islands and the Aquatic Visitors Center at Put-in-Bay. It is also available online at [go.osu.edu/LEwatertrails](http://go.osu.edu/LEwatertrails).

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The project was made possible by an Ohio Environmental Education Fund (OEEF) grant from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency.

The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program carries out the natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation mission of the National Park Service in communities across America.

The Put-in-Bay Township Park District was formed in 2006 dedicated to protecting and preserving unique areas that enhance the heritage of the Lake Erie Islands.

Ohio State University's Ohio Sea Grant College Program is part of NOAA Sea Grant, a network of 33 Sea Grant programs dedicated to the protection and sustainable use of marine and Great Lakes resources. For more information, visit [ohioseagrant.osu.edu](http://ohioseagrant.osu.edu).

Ohio Department of Natural Resources works to ensure a balance between wise use and protection of our natural resources for the benefit of all.

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