Paddling the Islands

Experience the thrill of gliding across the Lake Erie Islands on your own kayak or canoe. The Islands offer a perfect opportunity to explore the natural beauty of the area, with paddling trails around each island. The Lake Erie Islands Water Trails (LEIWT) provide a network of trails that connect all the islands, allowing you to paddle from one to another. These trails are well-marked and suitable for both experienced and novice paddlers.

There are also several launch sites available on the mainland and on the islands themselves. You can choose from a variety of kayak and canoe rentals to suit your needs. Some of the popular launch sites include Put-in-Bay, North Bass Island, and South Bass Island. Each site provides easy access to the water and offers ample space for holding equipment.

Staying Safe

Safety is key when paddling on Lake Erie. Always wear a life jacket and be aware of the water conditions. Check current water temperatures, lake condition warnings, and the weather forecast before you set out. Be mindful of potential hazards such as sudden changes in water levels, strong currents, and underwater obstacles. Always paddle in pairs or groups and keep a safe distance from others.

The Harbor at Kelleys Island

Middle Bass Island

Put-in-Bay (PIB) Harbor

South Bass Island Trail

AROUND THE ISLANDS

- The Harbor at Kelleys Island
- Middle Bass Island
- Put-in-Bay (PIB) Harbor
- South Bass Island Trail

Enjoy the Lake Erie Islands Water Trails!
Paddling the Islands

Lake Erie Islands Water Trails

Stay close to shore as much as possible, but watch for traffic, boat wakes, ferry routes and docks (marked with a flag).

• West Harbor and East Harbor channels
• Sandbar North Bass Island State Park
• Paddle float

SAFETY EQUIPMENT
• Life jacket
• Waterproof bags
• Compass and a map
• Radio and/or (marine flares, flag, mirror)
• First aid kit
• Trash bag
• Throwbag
• Bilge pump
• Personal radio

WEATHER
• Avoid storms
• Check the weather forecast

SAFETY IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY PADDLING PREPARE
Close everything lower!

PROTECTING THE LAKE

SAFETY FOR NON-MOTORIZED PADDLE FLOATS

• Do not carry or transport fuel
• Do not have fuel onboard
• Do not take stern out

• Avoid carrying fuel
• Do not transport

• Keep your fuel tank empty
• Do not carry

• Keep fuel tank full
• Do not carry

• Keep fuel tank empty
• Do not carry

• Keep fuel tank full
• Do not transport

• Keep fuel tank empty
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Paddling the Islands

Explore the mainland islands of Lake Erie with a visit to the Lake Erie Islands Water Trails. This trail is a 22-mile route that can be enjoyed as a whole, or in segments, to suit your personal preferences. The trail provides a variety of island experiences, from sandy beaches and rocky cliffs to sheltered coves and open bays. The trail is also home to a diverse array of wildlife, including monarch butterflies, and is a popular destination for bird watchers. For more information about the trail, including access points and trail conditions, visit the Ohio State Parks website or the Lake Erie Islands Water Trails website.

Staying Safe

SAFETY IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

- Wear a life jacket at all times while on the water.
- Use a well-maintained, properly loaded boat.
- Be familiar with the area and navigate carefully.
- Use proper anchor technique and maintain a proper distance from other boats.
- Be aware of weather conditions and stay informed about potential hazards.

WEATHER

Weather, wind and water conditions on Lake Erie can change quickly. Always check the forecast and lake condition warnings. Be aware of tides, currents, and weather conditions. Stay close to shore as much as possible.

SAFETY QBCICJN

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Protecting the Lake

PROTECTING THE LAKE

- Do not litter or discard anything that can end up in the lake.
- Use certified septic systems.
- Do not use flame retardants.
- Do not use fertilizer containing nitrogen and phosphorus.
- Do not use cyanide-based fire retardants.
- Do not use herbicides or pesticides.

Mainland Trail

Enjoy the 42-mile Mainland Trail, which connects the mainland shoreline towns of Sandusky, Catawba Island, and Put-in-Bay. The trail provides a scenic route for boaters to enjoy the natural beauty of the Lake Erie Islands, including sandy beaches, rocky cliffs, and forests. For more information about the Mainland Trail, visit the Ohio State Parks website or the Lake Erie Islands Water Trails website.
**Paddling the Islands**

Lake Erie provides a unique opportunity to explore its islands, each with its own personality, heritage, and opportunity that provides a new perspective and a deeper appreciation of the Great Lake. Paddling is quickly becoming one of the more popular ways to put a paddle in the water and explore Lake Erie.

**Staying Safe**

**SAFETY IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY**

- **Clean** all equipment by removing live bait, by following the “Clean, Drain, Dry” method: **CLEAN** all equipment by removing live bait, by following the “Clean, Drain, Dry” method.
- **Drain** any water in the area of the outboard engine, and transom area.
- **Dry** the bottom of the boat and all equipment, after allowing water to drip for 15 minutes.
- **Do not** carry any equipment or watercraft that supports invasive species.
- **Be prepared to swim.** If the water looks too hazardous to paddle, turn around and go back.
- **Know the water temperature, beware of hypothermia in storm seas.** Paddle directly into waves or at an angle.
- **Always** check the forecast and lake condition warnings when traveling on Lake Erie. Visit watercraft.ohiodnr.gov
- **Use** proper safety equipment, such as a personal floatation device (PFD), a whistle, and a whistle (marine flares, flag, mirror), a visual distress signal. Know how to use the whistle and visual distress signal.
- **Do not** attempt to cross Lake Erie from the mainland to the islands without a qualified guide.
- **Use** the anchorage at Kelleys Island State Park and Put-in-Bay (PIB) Harbor as your starting point.
- **Put in** at the north tip of Middle Bass Island and South Bass Island State Park, paddle the West Harbor Boat Trail back to the north shore, paddle the Mainland Shore Trail to Marblehead and features of the West Harbor.

**Protecting the Lake**

**SAFETY EQUIPMENT**

- **Personal floatation device (PFD)**
- **whistle**
- **visual distress signal**
- **Food**
- **Proper footwear**
- **Radio and/or beacon**
- **Trash bag**
- **First aid kit**
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- **Sunscreen and hat**
- **Sunglasses and hat**
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**WEATHER**

- **Current** conditions can be found at www.weather.gov/lakerie
- **Always** check the forecast and lake condition warnings when traveling on Lake Erie. Visit watercraft.ohiodnr.gov
- **Do not** cross Lake Erie on a stormy day.
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**AROUND THE ISLANDS**

- **Put-in-Bay (PIB) Harbor**
  - Marina
  - Public Boat Launching Ramp
  - Village of Put-in-Bay Beach

- **South Bass Island**
  - West Shore Ice Ramp
  - South Bass Island Trail
  - Great Egret Marsh Preserve
  - South Bass Island State Park (north)
  - Fox’s Marsh Wildlife Area
  - South Bass Island State Park (south)

- **Middle Bass Island**
  - East Point Preserve
  - Middle Bass Island State Park (west)
  - Petersen Woods/Kuehnle Wildlife Area

- **North Bass Island**
  - North Bass Island State Park (south)
  - North Bass Island State Park (north)
  - West Harbor Public Boat Launching Ramp

**FERRY SERVICES**

- Ferries run from several locations on the mainland.
- Ohio Beach Guard System for advisories.

**SOUTH SHORE**

- **Catawba Island**
- **Marblehead**

**BEACHES**

- Sandy beaches, rocky cliffs, warm waves, gulls, etc.

**FACILITIES**

- These designated access points are located on public lands.
- There may be a fee to dock or camp overnight at some locations.

**ECONOMICS**

- Area attractions, dining, shopping and events

**ENVIRONMENT**

- Ohio's 312 miles of coastline is part of a coastal ecosystem.
- The 312 miles of Ohio’s shoreline have historically been developed by the Village of Marblehead.

**WEATHER**

- Dress and prepare for extreme weather, hazards, rocky cliffs and backwash.

**SAFETY EQUIPMENT**

- Compass and a map

**HEALTH**

- Know the water temperature, beware of hypothermia in water below 70 degrees F.

**TRANSPORTATION**

- NOAA Great Lakes Coastal Forecasting System
- Great Lakes Public Access

**CULTURE**

- Access to the islands or between islands, especially if you are a new paddler.

**MUNICIPALITY**

- Inscription Rock Petroglyphs
- Great Lakes Public Access

**WATER QUALITY**

- The Great Lakes have been the source of drinking water for generations to come.

**ALGAE**

- Nuisance and harmful algal blooms (HABs).

**WATER PLANTS**

- Aquatic plants like the Waternymph and Waterlily.

**MUNICIPALITY**

- Municipal and residential waste and storm water systems, run-off of lawn and agricultural fertilizers, improving our problems in the Lake Erie basin — reducing the use and disposal.

**ECONOMICS**

- The economic and social benefits of the Lake Erie Islands.

**ECOLOGY**

- The ecological benefits of the Lake Erie Islands.

**PROTECTION**

- Lake Erie Public Access

**PROTECTION**

- Protecting the Lake's Trail

**RESEARCH**

- Ohio Clean Marinas at Ohio State University. Contact info: ohiocleanmarinas@osu.edu

**FACTS**

- Lake Erie Islands Water Trails (LEIWT) and the North Shore of Lake Erie Islands Water Trails (LEWS) are part of the Ohio State University's Lake Erie Water Trail System (LEWT).

**MISCELLANEOUS**

- Lucas County (41°30'00.7"N 82°42'24.5"W)
- Ottawa County (41°32'07.6"N 82°42'43.8"W (rocky))