

SAFETY TIPS & OUTDOOR ETHIC

Please review the following safety tips and outdoor ethic.

Safety Tips

1. Consult a map and know current river conditions before boating and then file a float plan with a reliable person indicating where you are going and when you will leave and return. Remember to contact the person once you have returned safely. The rural sections of the Blanchard River Water Trail are relatively remote and isolated in places, thus offering a wilderness-like experience.
2. Be prepared for any unknown event. Know how to get to roads if you must walk out. Know the local emergency telephone numbers. Know where you are along the trail in case you need to request emergency assistance.
3. It is wise to never boat alone. Do yourself a favor and take a friend.
4. Dress for the weather and water temperature. Bring an extra change of clothing with you in a waterproof bag. Pack your cellphone in the same waterproof bag with your clothes. Neoprene shoes or tennis shoes with woolen socks are recommended footwear.
5. Carry plenty of drinking water.
6. Do not overload or unevenly load your boat. Keep the weight in the boat centered from side to side and from bow to stern. The lower and closer the load in the boat is to the boat's centerline, the more stable it will be.
7. Wear a properly fitted, Class III, U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket. Life jackets provide buoyancy in the event you capsize, provide protection for your torso if you fall down or hit something sharp, and help retain body heat when water and air temperature are cold.
8. Be prepared to swim.
9. Always maintain three points of contact (e.g. two hands and one foot touching the boat) while moving around in the boat.
10. Do not attempt to stand or walk in swift water.

11. Never paddle over a dam.
12. Portage (i.e. carry your boat around) any section of water, hazard, or obstacle that you feel uncertain about.
13. Avoid boating in extreme weather conditions.
14. If you capsize, hold on to your boat unless it presents a life-threatening situation. If floating in a current, position yourself on the upstream side of the capsized boat.

Outdoor Ethic

Outdoor Ethic #1: Travel on durable surfaces, such as rock, gravel, and sand when launching, landing, and portaging. Avoid vegetation if possible.

Outdoor Ethic #2: Dispose of waste properly—pack it out. Plastic is especially dangerous to wildlife.

Outdoor Ethic #3: Leave what you find. Appreciate artifacts and natural objects, but leave them undisturbed.

Outdoor Ethic #4: Respect wildlife. Observe from a distance. Do not feed, follow, or approach wildlife. Control pets or leave them at home.

Outdoor Ethic #5: Respect the privacy and rights of landowners, since most of the riverbank is privately owned. Use public access sites and refrain from landing on private property while paddling, except when portaging around obstructions.

Outdoor Ethic #6: Be considerate of others, avoid boisterous behavior, and let nature's sounds prevail. A few of the great joys associated with canoeing and kayaking on the Blanchard River Water Trail include the beautiful sounds of silence, listening to birdsong, watching deer drinking water along the riverbank, seeing goslings and the parental tactics of Canada geese, watching great blue herons float on air within the river corridor, spotting a raccoon playing a game of peek-a-boo, and if you are lucky, witnessing mature bald eagles overhead or perched on a limb like sentinels. These are the special moments to experience if you are quiet and if you let nature's sounds prevail.



The Hancock Parks Foundation is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization that supports the Hancock Park District's programs, parks, and recreational facilities. To learn more and to make a tax-deductible donation, visit www.HancockParks.com or call (419) 425-7275.



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Zonta Landing Boat Rentals
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OUTFITTER SERVICE



Blanchard River Water Trail

From the urban confines of Riverside Park Waterfront, Zonta Landing, and River Parks to the many rural destinations and wilderness-like experiences, the 37.6-mile Blanchard River Water Trail offers an escape into relative isolation and solitude, the sound of silence, and scenic beauty. It is characterized by bends, riffles, and forested riverbanks.

Numerous access points along the way provide a wide range of boating opportunities from short trips lasting an hour or two to half-day and day trips to a two-day trip with primitive tent camping along the Blanchard River at Riverbend Recreation Area. The Blanchard River Water Trail begins at Blanchard River Nature Preserve and ends at Blanchard Landing. A Map and Guide is available at Hancock Park District Administrative Offices, online at www.hancockparks.com and at the Zonta Landing Boathouse during the boat rental operation.



Float Trips on the Blanchard River

To fully grasp the Blanchard River’s many moods and experiences and to appreciate its beauty, wildness, and quality as both a natural resource and an outdoor recreation resource, a person must venture out and explore the waterway by canoe or kayak. Canoeists and kayakers can see wildlife, enjoy scenic beauty, and spend quality time in the great outdoors.

The Hancock Park District facilitates float trips on the Blanchard River from May through November when river conditions are favorable. A variety of services are offered, including Zonta Landing Boat Rentals, Basic Canoeing and Kayaking Courses for Beginners, Self-Guided Fall Float Trips, Daily Boat Rentals, and Group Boat Rentals.

Zonta Landing Boat Rentals

Zonta Landing Boat Rentals at Riverside Park has canoes, kayaks, and pedal boats for rent on weekends and holidays from 1 to 7 p.m. from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day. The standard boat rental fee is \$5 per ½ hour for canoes, kayaks, and pedal boats.

The Special Float Trip Option is \$20 per canoe or \$10 per solo kayak for approximately two hours. Float trips begin and end at Zonta Landing. Boating is limited to an area upstream past the Findlay Country Club golf course, Eastpoint Area, and Vogel song Conservation Area to State Route 568/ Sandusky Street Bridge and back.

Watercraft Safety Rules

- 1. Boat rental operators must be at least 12 years of age unless accompanied by an adult (18 or older).
- 2. Life jackets must be worn at all times.
- 3. Remain seated at all times when operating the watercraft.
- 4. Pedal boats must stay within the old reservoir.
- 5. Canoes and kayaks must not enter the old reservoir and must stay away from the safety line and dam.
- 6. Unsafe operation, ramming, and splashing is not permitted and will terminate use without a refund.
- 7. Canoes and kayaks may be temporarily docked at Waterfalls Area and Eastpoint Area.
- 8. Do not trespass on private property.
- 9. Watch for flying golf balls when paddling through the Country Club golf course.
- 10. Boat rental operators are responsible for their rental time on the water and for taking care of the equipment. Do not litter.

Basic Canoeing and Kayaking Courses for Beginners

Basic Canoeing and Kayaking Courses for Beginners are offered upon request at Riverside Park’s Zonta Landing as part of the Hancock Park District’s Leisure Education Initiative. Instructional content emphasizes safety, basic paddling skills, and maneuverability. The purpose of the course is to teach basic skills, increase confidence, and encourage participation in canoeing and kayaking.

The Hancock Park District’s Leisure Education Initiative involves a series of outdoor recreation skills instructional courses that introduce outdoor recreation activities, teach fundamental skills, and encourage participation in outdoor recreation over the course of a lifetime.



Self-Guided Fall Float Trips

With the closing of Zonta Landing Boat Rentals after Labor Day, self-guided float trips continue on occasional weekends in October and November. Float trips begin and end at Riverside Park’s Zonta Landing.

Canoeists and kayakers will have the opportunity to enjoy autumn along the Blanchard River as they paddle upstream past the Country Club golf course, Eastpoint Area, and Vogel song Conservation Area to the State Route 568/Sandusky Street Bridge and back. The trip takes approximately two hours.



Daily Boat Rentals

Canoes and kayaks can be rented for float trips on the Blanchard River within Hancock County. The transportation of watercraft is the renter’s responsibility. The daily rental rate is \$20 per canoe and \$10 per solo kayak.

Group Boat Rentals

Group float trips are ideal for families, friends, students, and co-workers who want to spend quality time together. Trips begin and end at Riverside Park’s Zonta Landing. Support facilities include parking lots, restrooms, and developed river access sites.

The group rental rate is \$20 per canoe or \$10 per solo kayak.

