March 14th, 2018

Tom Arbour
Land & Water Trails Coordinator
ODNR Division of Parks and Watercraft
2045 Morse Rd. Bldg. C-4
Columbus, OH 43229

RE: Lake Erie Islands Water Trails Network

Dear Mr. Arbour,

The American Canoe Association (ACA) established in 1880, as the current oldest and largest paddle sports organization in the United States, advocates for paddler access, education, stewardship, exploration, and competition. The ACA wishes to convey its full support and enthusiasm to designate the Lake Erie Islands Water Trails Network as an official Ohio State Water Trail. Water trail networks provide paddlers with opportunities to learn about the value of local ecology, understand connection to water resources, and enhance knowledge of boating skills, cultural heritage, and outdoor ethics. We believe that having designated access points and educational materials creates a paddling experience that is more accessible to the most diverse group of paddlers. Engaging more people in their local water resources through water trail networks provides communities opportunities to collaborate, develop, and eventually implement strategies that enhance and restore the health of local waterways and surrounding lands. In addition, the creation of a water trails network will attract new visitors to the region, and become a part of a robust outdoor recreation economy that is valued nationally at 887 billion dollars annually and supports 7.6 million jobs (Outdoor Industry Association). In Ohio, the outdoor recreation economy generates 215,000 direct jobs and 24.3 billion dollars in consumer spending.

We know that the Lake Erie Islands and shores have wonderful resources – nature, history, dining, recreation and more. Establishing the Lake Erie Islands Water Trails Network will bring superb recreational, cultural, and economic benefit. It will create a greater appreciation for the area and its waters, economic opportunities through enhanced tourism as visitors rent kayaks or stay longer to paddle island routes. The citizens of Ohio will prosper from the creation of the Lake Erie Islands Water Trail as the state capitalizes on this growing trend in paddling.

Thank you for your continued efforts in support of the Lake Erie Islands Water Trail Partnership and the ultimate creation of this valuable asset.

Sincerely,
Brett Mayer  
Public Policy Chief  
bmayer@americancanoe.org  
ACA | Canoe - Kayak - SUP - Raft - Rescue