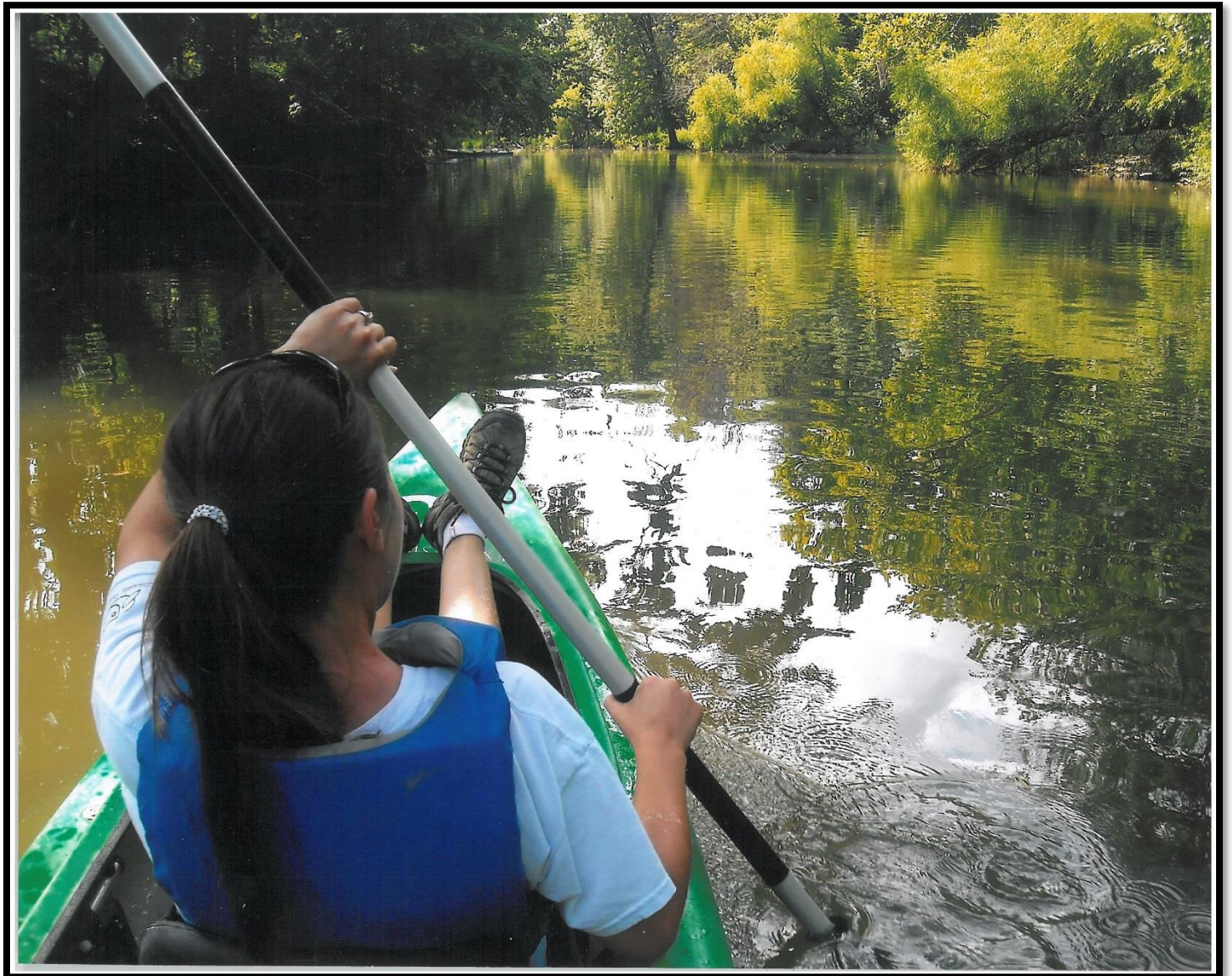


Blanchard River Water Trail

Map and Guide



A 37.6-Mile Water Trail

Photograph by Frank Wilson



This publication is the result of a cooperative effort
by the Hancock Park District and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources.

Blanchard River Water Trail

The 37.6-mile Blanchard River Water Trail is predominately a rural waterway that affords relative isolation and solitude. It is characterized by bends, riffles, and forested riverbanks. The urban section flows through Findlay, Ohio. 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.

Blanchard River Nature Preserve

Location: Unimproved river access at 22006 County Road 17, Forest. Travel south of Mt. Blanchard on CR 17.

River Mile: 84.1 Coordinates: 40.84407 -83.55662

Support Facilities: Small unimproved parking lot and seasonal restroom (portable toilet).

Description: A quiet country setting and scenic start for a day trip to either Riverbend Recreation Area (20.9 miles) or Riverside Park (25 miles), or a two-day trip with overnight tent camping at Riverbend Recreation Area (37.6 miles). Until improvements are made, river access is primitive. Use caution. It may be necessary to drop the canoe or kayak down along the eroded riverbank into the river, secure it, and then drop down into the boat. A ladder may be necessary to assist with loading and launching. Access the river south of the driveway. Follow the signs.

Blanchard River Nature Preserve is an undeveloped natural area. It includes 7,200 linear feet of Blanchard River channel, over 50 acres of wooded riparian floodplain, and riparian oxbow wetlands and vernal pools that provide excellent, high quality aquatic and terrestrial habitat. With a strong emphasis on environmental preservation, visitation is limited to boating and fishing via a primitive river access site, and hiking, birdwatching, and nature photography along a quiet walkway to the river's edge. It is a special place.

Island Park

Location: Unimproved river access west of the parking lot at Water Street and Market Street, Mt. Blanchard.

River Mile: 77.9 Coordinates: 40.90053 -83.55966

Support Facilities: Developed parking lot and year-round waterless restroom (pit latrine).

Description: An alternative starting point on the Blanchard River Water Trail or a nice place to stop and rest. Access the river approximately 225 feet west of the parking lot along a natural surface and then up and over a steep forested riverbank.

Jackson Landing

Location: Unimproved river access at 16894 Township Road 173, Findlay. Follow the trail to the river's edge.

River Mile: 67.2 Coordinates: 40.99228 -83.55674

Support Facilities: Unimproved parking lot and seasonal restroom (portable toilet).

Description: A .9-acre natural area located four miles south of Riverbend Recreation Area. It is southeast of the bridge.



U.S. Geological Society River Gage Height and Boating Guideline

The opportunity to paddle the south section of the Blanchard River Water Trail exists for a brief time only. The Blanchard River Water Trail from Blanchard River Nature Preserve to Island Park, Jackson Landing, and Riverbend Recreation Area requires a river gage height of at least four feet before canoeing and kayaking. Flood information can be checked online at www.findlayohio.com – reference site number 04188337. A river gage height of four feet or more typically occurs following a substantial and prolonged rainfall. However, the south section of the Blanchard River drains quickly.

Hazard: Dam near Findlay Reservoir. 41.01625 -83.55869

Portage: Portage on the left side of the Blanchard River. Approximate distance: 100 feet.



Riverbend Recreation Area

Location: River access southeast of the covered bridge on Township Road 241, Findlay.

River Mile: 63.2 Coordinates: 41.03450 -83.56081

Support Facilities: Developed parking lot, year-round waterless restroom (pit latrine), drinking water (seasonal drinking fountain), picnic tables, and a primitive campground for tents only (reservations required) are located in the Big Oaks Activity Area. A pay telephone is available at the Riverbend Maintenance Facility.

Description: Access is located approximately 350 feet from a roadside pull-off on Township Road 241 southeast of the covered bridge. Equipment can be carried to the river along a multi-use asphalt trail followed by a hard surface walkway to the river's edge.

U.S. Geological Society River Gage Height and Boating Guideline

The Blanchard River Water Trail from Riverbend Recreation Area to the State Route 568 bridge requires a river gage height of at least six feet and five inches before canoeing and kayaking. Flood information can be checked online at www.findlayohio.com – reference site number 04188400.

Hazard: Dam west of Riverbend Recreation Area. 41.03353 -83.57687

Portage: Portage on the left side of the Blanchard River. Approximate distance: 200 feet.



Eastpoint Area

Location: River access at East Main Cross Street and Bright Road, Findlay.

River Mile: 60.5 Coordinates: 41.03802 -83.61284

Support Facilities: Developed parking lot, bench, and picnic tables.

Description: Access is provided by an asphalt boat ramp with concrete edge to aid launching and landing. Eastpoint Area provides easy access to a section of the Blanchard River Water Trail that is navigable year-round. Paddlers can travel upstream beyond Vogelsong Conservation Area to the Sandusky Street/State Route 568 bridge and/or downstream to Zonta Landing at Riverside Park.

U.S. Geological Society River Gage Height and Boating Guideline

If the river gage height is nine feet, the river current upstream and downstream from Eastpoint Area may be too strong to paddle due to flooding or substantial and prolonged rainfall. Flood information can be checked online at www.findlayohio.com – reference site number 04188400.

Zonta Landing

Location: Landing area at Riverside Park Waterfront, Findlay (near the old reservoir). Follow the signs to Zonta Landing.

River Mile: 59.1 Coordinates: 41.04412 -83.63018

Support Facilities: Riverside Park has developed parking lots, restrooms (flush toilets), drinking water (seasonal drinking fountain), and picnic tables.

Description: Zonta Landing at Riverside Park Waterfront is the location of a seasonal boat rental operation managed by the Hancock Park District. Zonta Landing Boat Rentals provide canoes, kayaks, and pedal boats on weekends and holidays, 1:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day - \$5 for a ½ hour rental. It also serves as a landing site for paddlers who want to stop for a break, have a picnic, or end a self-guided float trip.

Waterfalls Area

Location: River access at 923 East Main Cross Street, Findlay. Follow the multi-use trail to river access sites.

River Mile: 59 Coordinates: 41.04177 -83.63053

Support Facilities: Developed parking lot, bench, picnic table, and landing and launching facilities.

Description: Waterfalls Area serves as a portage at the dam. It also provides easy access to sections of the Blanchard River Water Trail that are navigable year-round. Paddlers can travel downstream from the waterfall or upstream beyond Eastpoint Area and Vogelsong Conservation Area to the Sandusky Street/State Route 568 bridge and back.

Hazard: Dam near Waterfalls Area and Riverside Park. 41.04181 -83.63127
Portage: Portage on the left side of the Blanchard River. Approximate distance: 500 feet.



Riverside Landing

Location: River access is located at Riverside Park Waterfront (231 McManness Avenue, Findlay), south of the swimming pool and Riverside Park Waterfront parking lot. Follow the boat ramp to the river's edge.

River Mile: 58.6 Coordinates: 41.04202 -83.63224

Support Facilities: Riverside Park has developed parking lots, restrooms (flush toilets), drinking water (seasonal drinking fountain), and picnic tables.

Description: Access is provided by an asphalt boat ramp with zero depth entry, just south of the parking lot. Riverside Landing provides easy access to the Blanchard River Water Trail and a variety of float trip options ranging from brief excursions to a half-day trip, including Great Karg Well Historical Site (1.1 miles), Liberty Landing (2.9 miles), and Blanchard Landing (12.1 miles).

With ample support facilities, including parking lots and restrooms, and with plenty to do at Riverside Park, Riverside Landing is a good choice when starting a float trip on the Blanchard River Water Trail.

Great Karg Well Historical Site

Location: River access at River Street and Liberty Street, Findlay. Follow the walkway down and around to the river's edge.

River Mile: 57.5 Coordinates: 41.04356 -83.65511

Support Facilities: Developed parking lot.

Description: Great Karg Well Historical Site serves as an alternative river access site to Liberty Landing when paddling a popular 9.3-mile route from Liberty Landing to Blanchard Landing, thus adding 1.8 miles to the trip. It also gives paddlers an opportunity to rest before continuing downstream as part of a longer float trip.

Liberty Landing

Location: Developed boat launch facility on Liberty Township Road 89, west of County Road 140.

River Mile: 55.8 Coordinates: 41.05637 -83.69364

Support Facilities: Developed parking lot, seasonal restroom (portable toilet), and a picnic table.

Description: Liberty Landing marks the beginning of a popular float trip to Blanchard Landing. At 9.3 miles, it is scenic with frequent bends, narrow sections, and exciting riffles with no known hazards. Wildlife sightings are common. Paddlers will pass two bridges and travel along the border of the Indian Green-Worden Family Conservation Area and the south unit of Litzenberg Memorial Woods.

Blanchard Landing

Location: Developed boat launch facility on State Route 235, south of U.S. Route 224 West.

River Mile: 46.5 Coordinates: 41.04610 -83.78857

Support Facilities: Developed parking lot, seasonal restroom (portable toilet), and picnic tables.

Description: Blanchard Landing marks the end of the Blanchard River Water Trail. It also serves as a rest area or starting point for canoeists and kayakers paddling downstream to Gilboa, Ottawa, or to the Auglaize River, the Maumee River, and Lake Erie for a multi-day paddling expedition.



Liberty Landing



Blanchard Landing

U.S. Geological Society River Gage Height and Boating Guideline

The Blanchard River Water Trail from Liberty Landing to Blanchard Landing requires a river gage height of at least one foot and five inches before canoeing and kayaking. Flood information can be checked online at www.findlayohio.com – reference site number 04189000.



River Miles/River Access Sites:

84.1/Blanchard River Nature Preserve
 77.9/Island Park
 67.2/Jackson Landing
 63.2/Riverbend Recreation Area
 60.5/Eastpoint Area
 59.1/Zonta Landing at Riverside Park Waterfront
 59.0/Waterfalls Area
 58.6/Riverside Landing at Riverside Park Waterfront
 57.5/Great Karg Well Historical Site
 55.8/Liberty Landing
 46.5/Blanchard Landing

Next Site:

6.2 miles
 10.7 miles
 4 miles
 2.7 miles
 1.4 miles
 .1 mile
 .4 mile
 1.1 miles
 1.7 miles
 9.3 miles
 -

April, May, and June are the most reliable months to enjoy canoeing and kayaking on the rural sections of the Blanchard River Water Trail as long as there is enough water due to spring rain. The water level is usually too low to paddle during other times of the year unless it is within approximately 72 hours following a substantial and prolonged rainfall. The urban section near Riverside Park and east (upstream) to the State Route 568 bridge is usually navigable all year. For information about Zonta Landing Boat Rentals at Riverside Park Waterfront, Daily Boat Rentals, Group Boat Rentals, and Self-Guided Float Trips in May, September, and October, view the Seasonal Program & Event Guide online at www.hancockparks.com or call the Hancock Park District at 419-425-7275.



Self-Guided Fall Float Trips • Saturdays and Sundays in September and October • www.hancockparks.com

COMMON HAZARDS

Learn to recognize the following hazards and manage your risk appropriately.

Common Hazard #1: Dams

Never attempt to paddle a boat over a dam. Small dams may look harmless, particularly in swollen streams, but they are very dangerous because of the turbulence at the base of the dam. Boats or persons may become trapped in a hydraulic. Know the location of dams, scout the river by land prior to the trip, and avoid the hazards.

Common Hazard #2: Foot Entrapments

Do not attempt to stand or walk in swift-moving water. You may slip and pin a foot between submerged rocks. Once pinned, the force of the current can push your body under water and hold it there. If your boat capsizes, keep your feet up and pointed downstream. Swim to calm water before standing.

Common Hazard #3: Floods and Swift Water

Novice paddlers should never boat on the Blanchard River when water is spilling out of the banks. High water causes hazards such as dams to become even more dangerous. Unseen obstacles such as floating logs or submerged trees may also threaten a boater. Know the water conditions before you go. Check conditions online at www.findlayohio.com.

Common Hazard #4: Strainers

Obstructions that allow water to flow through, but block boats and persons are known as strainers. Overhanging branches, downed trees, log jams, and flooded islands are potential strainers. Strainers should be avoided, especially in swift water.

Common Hazard #5: Cold Water Immersion and Hypothermia

Sudden immersion in cold water can lead to hypothermia within 30 minutes. It can be deadly. The initial cold shock can cause immediate, involuntary gasping, hyperventilation, panic, and vertigo – all of which can result in water inhalation and drowning. It can also cause sudden changes in blood pressure, heart rate, and heart rhythm that also may result in death. The best prevention is to avoid capsizing your boat, keep your life jacket securely fastened, and dress in layers using materials that wick moisture away and retain heat, such as fleece and wool. You do not have to be submerged to succumb to hypothermia – wind chill, rain, and perspiration can contribute to the condition. Uncontrollable shivering, slurred speech, and the lack of coordination are early symptoms of hypothermia.



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 a boat 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 #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 sound of silence, listening to birdsong, watching deer 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.

Blanchard Corridor Recreation Program

The purpose of the Blanchard Corridor Recreation Program is to raise awareness about and promote year-round outdoor recreation opportunities resulting from the combination of four interconnected components, including the Blanchard River Greenway, River Parks, the Blanchard River Greenway Trail, and the Blanchard River Water Trail, thereby creating a well-known and high-profile outdoor recreation destination within the heart of Findlay.



The **Blanchard River Greenway** is a dominant natural feature that offers seasonal color, tranquility, and watchable wildlife. It links River Parks, the Blanchard River Greenway Trail, and the Blanchard River Water Trail together to provide year-round outdoor recreation opportunities, whether it is canoeing or kayaking the waterway, walking or bicycling the tree-lined route, or picnicking along the bank. It is a presence that beckons the nature lover and outdoor recreation enthusiast and serves as a magnet for the passerby.



There are eight **River Parks** located along the Blanchard River Greenway that support outdoor recreation and offer the sights and sounds of nature, including Eastpoint Area, Hancock Park District Administrative Offices, Waterfalls Area, Riverside Park Waterfront, Centennial Park, Civitan Park, Great Karg Well Historical Site, and River Landings. These accessible park locations also serve as a wayside, thus enticing the motorist or bicyclist to stop for a respite and relax whether it involves reading a book, eating lunch, or napping among nature's conversation.



The **Blanchard River Greenway Trail (BRGT)** occupies a section of the Blanchard River Greenway from Bright Road to Fox Street with a spur trail to Broad Avenue. The BRGT consists of a trail surface ranging from narrow concrete sidewalk to 10-foot wide multi-use asphalt trail. It is an environment intermingled with the sights and sounds of urban life and nature, while offering a constant reminder that the Blanchard River is never too far away. The trail marks a route suitable for walking, jogging, and running. And while bicycling can occur on the trail, narrow concrete sidewalks may prove challenging when sharing the trail with others. Be cautious and courteous.

The primary BRGT route from east to west is as follows:

- From Eastpoint Area, follow the trail west past the Hancock Park District Administrative Offices along East Main Cross Street to Waterfalls Area and beyond to McManness Avenue, turn right on McManness Avenue, cross the bridge, turn right into Riverside Park and then turn right and follow the trail along the river.
- From Riverside Park, follow the trail west to Centennial Park, go through the tunnel, follow the trail to Clinton Court, turn left, follow the trail to Taylor Street, turn left and follow the trail to Civitan park, turn right and follow the trail to Main Street.
- From Main Street, follow the trail north to Clinton Court (if bicycling, ride slowly in front of stores and be careful), cross Main Street at the traffic light, continue north to High Street, turn left and follow the trail passed Cory Street and Swale Park to River Landings on Fox Street (trail to the right) where the BRGT ends.

RESOURCES

Emergency Number -----	911
Blanchard Valley Hospital (1900 S. Main Street, Findlay, Ohio 45840) -----	419-423-4500
Flood Information and River Gage Height -----	findlayohio.com
Hancock Park District (river conditions and boat rental) -----	419-425-7275 --- hancockparks.com
Hancock County Convention & Visitors Bureau (local information) – 1-800-424-3315 -----	visitfindlay.com
Leave No Trace (low-impact outdoor recreation) -----	1-800-332-4100 ----- Int.org
ODNR Division of Natural Areas and Preserves (state scenic rivers) -----	614-265-6453 – naturepreserves.ohiodnr.gov
ODNR Division of Parks and Watercraft (boating laws, safety tips) 1-877-4BOATER (Ohio only) -	watercraft.ohiodnr.gov
ODNR Division of Wildlife (fishing, hunting, wildlife viewing) -----	1-800-WILDLIFE ----- wildlife.ohiodnr.gov
ODNR-Paddle Ohio Program -----	paddle.ohiodnr.gov
Ohio Water Trails -----	watertrails.ohiodnr.gov
U.S. Geological Survey (real-time water flow conditions) -----	waterdata.usgs.gov

History of the Blanchard River

The Ohio Geologic Survey tells us that the Blanchard River watershed began at the end of the last ice age approximately 12,500 years ago. The great Laurentide Ice Sheet was retreating from its southern extent near the present-day Ohio River. As the glacier retreated, temporary lakes were formed along its southern boundary. Linear mounds of debris called end moraines were formed as the glacier paused in its retreat. The moraine held the temporary lakes until the water breached the moraine and flooded north to the next moraine.

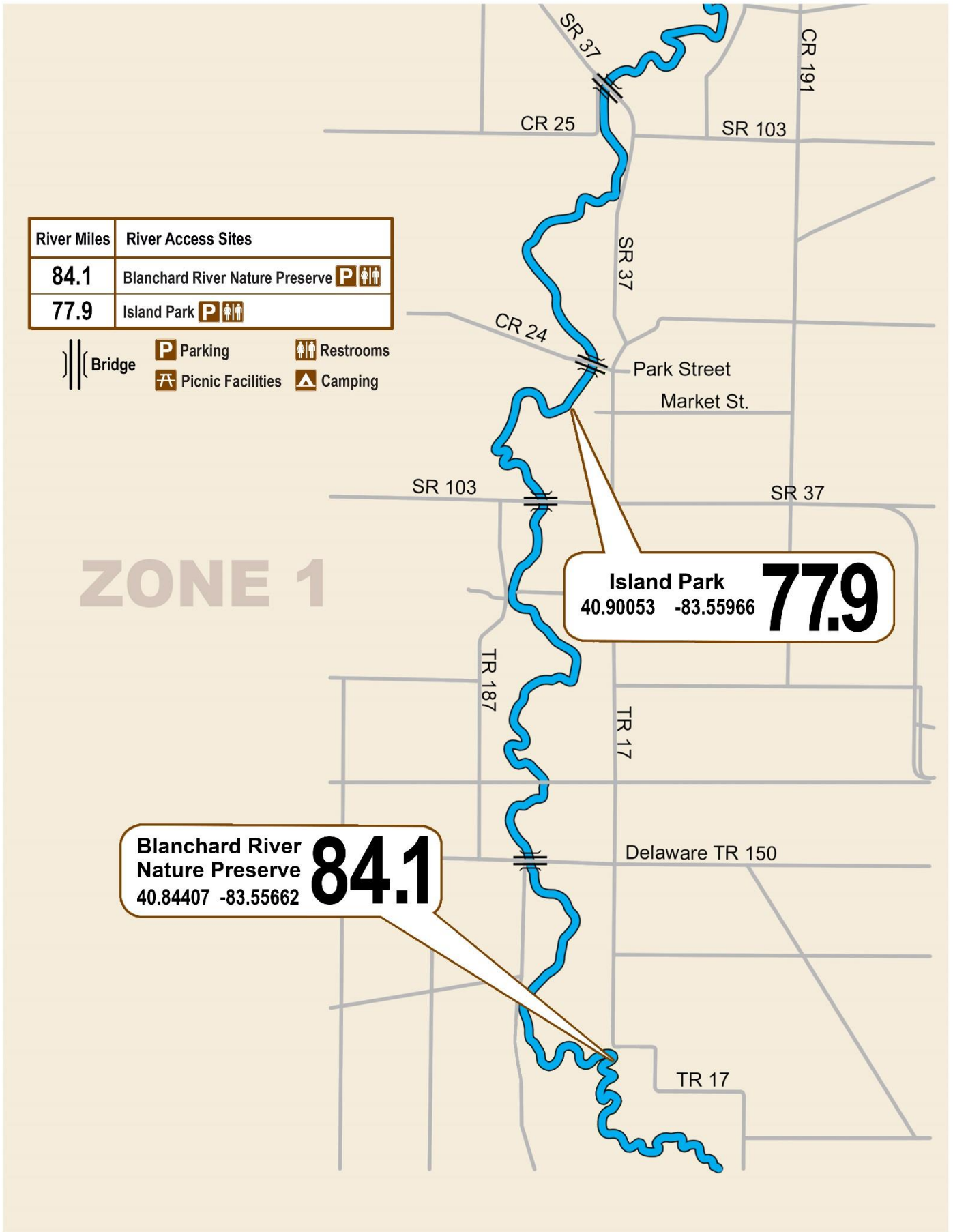
The upper Blanchard River is the result of a series of these temporary lakes and moraines draining further north into the former glacial Lake Erie. The river was not able to breach the moraine that State Route 568 is on near Riverbend Recreation Area, so it turned to the west. As the ancient Lake Erie continued to drain, the waters of the Blanchard River met the Auglaize River as it then drained into the Maumee River system and on to the current Lake Erie.

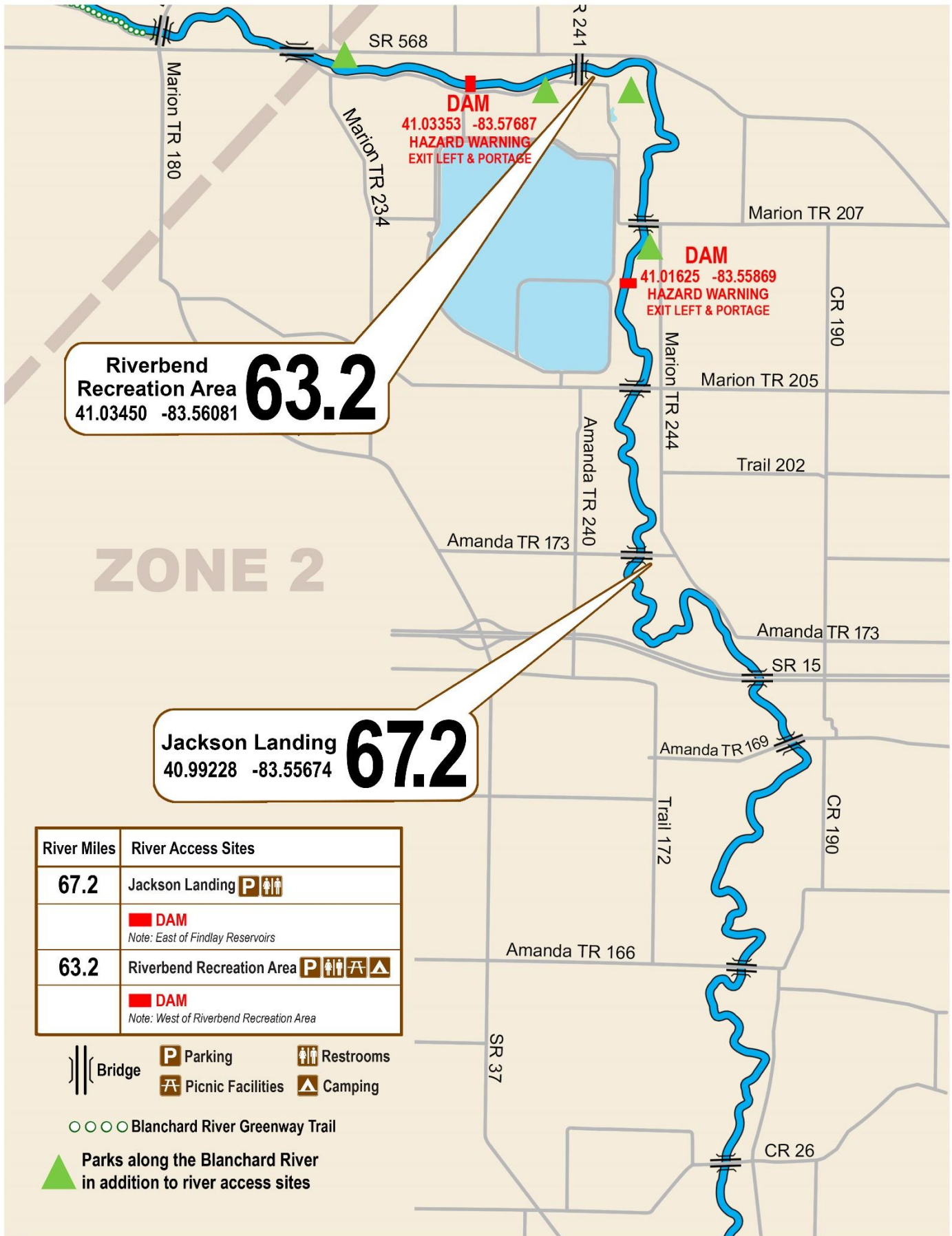
The Blanchard River is a tributary of the Auglaize River – approximately 103 miles in length. It begins in central Hardin County, flows north into eastern Hancock County, turns sharply west on its way through Findlay to Ottawa, and joins the Auglaize River from the east in western Putnam County.

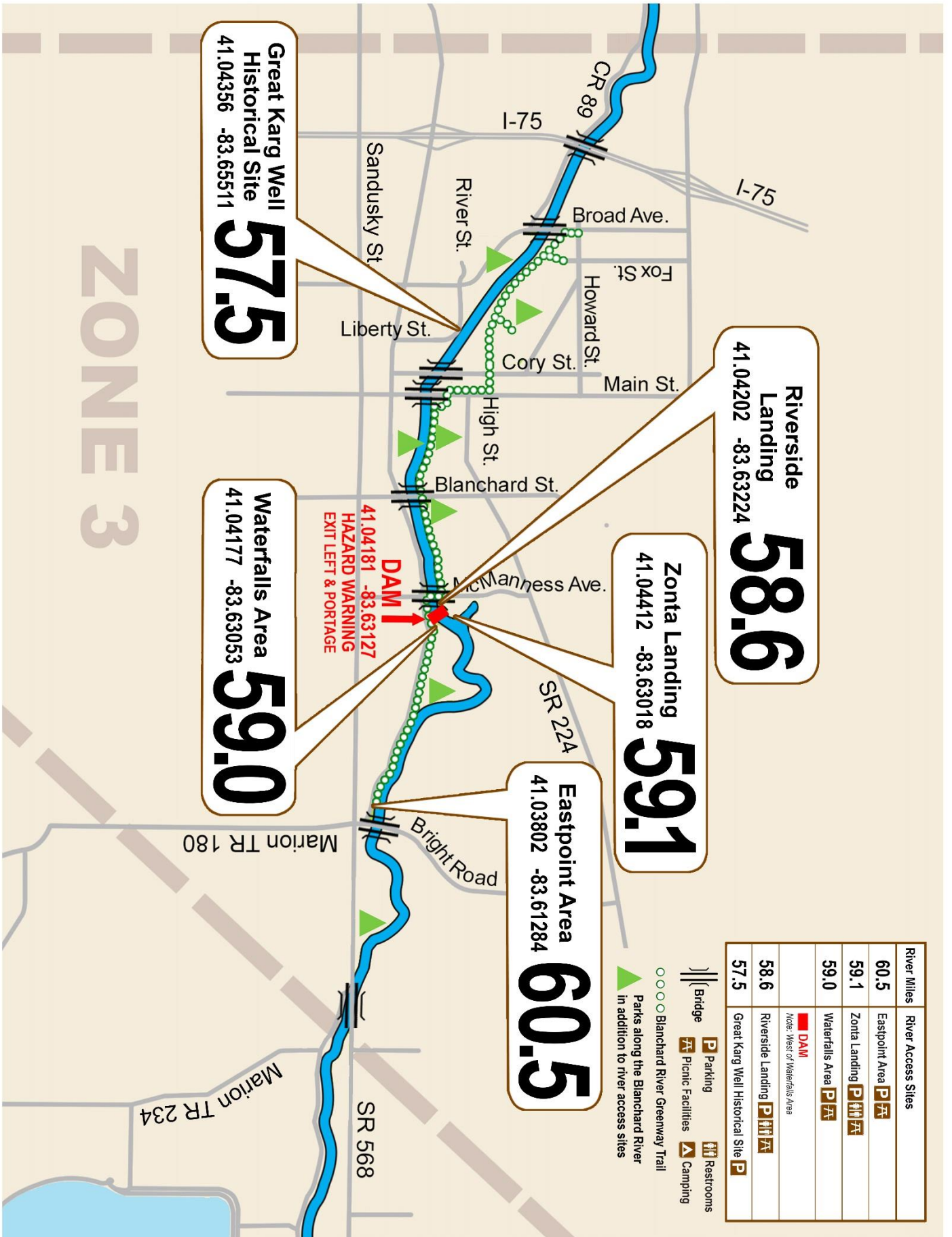
History tells us that the earliest known settler of Hancock County was a Frenchman by the name of Jean Jacques Blanchard who arrived in 1769 and settled with the Shawnee tribe of Native Americans. He may have been a tailor. According to “*History of Hancock County 1886*,” Blanchard and the Shawnees moved near the head of the Blanchard River in 1786, where Jean Jacques Blanchard became skilled at trading furs with Canadians. The Canadians named the river “Blanchard’s Fork of the Auglaize River.” It had also been known as “Blanchard’s River.” The Shawnees honored Blanchard by naming the river, “Sha-po-qua-te-sepe,” or “Tailor’s River.”

In 1908, William “Tell” Taylor wrote “*Down by the Old Mill Stream*” while sitting on the banks of the Blanchard River:

*My darling I am dreaming of the days gone by/When you and I were sweethearts beneath the summer sky;
Your hair has turned to silver, the gold has faded too/But still I will remember, where I first met you.
The old mill wheel is silent and has fallen down/The old oak tree has withered and lies there on the ground;
While you and I are sweethearts the same as days of yore/Although we’ve been together, forty years and more.
Down by the old mill stream where I first met you/With your eyes of blue, dressed in gingham too;
It was there I knew that you loved me true/You were sixteen, my village queen, by the old mill stream.*







ZONE 4

Blanchard
Landing
41.04610 -83.78857
46.5

Liberty Landing
41.05637 -83.69364
55.8

River Miles	River Access Sites
55.8	Liberty Landing
46.5	Blanchard Landing

Bridge Parking Restrooms
 Picnic Facilities Camping

Blanchard River Greenway Trail

Parks along the Blanchard River
in addition to river access sites