COLORADO RIVER

BOATING TRAIL GUIDE

DAVIS DAM TO PARKER DAM

A Publication of the California Department of Boating and Waterways
The Colorado River

Davis Dam to Parker Dam

The 1974 Recreational Trails Act recognized the need to provide for increased recreational boating opportunities on California’s rivers by designating specific rivers for study as boating trails. The California Department of Boating and Waterways has published this Boating Trail Guide, with the cooperation of other agencies, to provide basic information which will assist you in accessing and boating the waterway.

The Colorado River from Davis Dam to Parker Dam draws boaters in all types of craft, including canoes, fishing boats, ski boats, and houseboats. Attractions include a variety of birds and animals, Indian petroglyphs, historical sites, parks and marinas, marshes, mountain peaks and canyons.

Land along the river is both publicly and privately owned. Please do not trespass on privately owned property. Contact the manager of the particular publicly owned riverfront area you plan to visit for permission or a reservation (see back page). Some portions of public lands are fragile riparian (riverside) wildlife preserves which should not be disturbed. The courteous river boater should use riverbanks specifically designated for recreational purposes.

Fishing is very good on the river and in some backwater areas. Regulations and information are available from the California Department of Fish and Game, (909) 597-9823, and the Arizona Department of Game and Fish, (602) 942-3000.
Safe Boating and River Hints

Life Jackets... Federal and state law require that a U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket be carried on the vessel for each person on board. Non-swimmers and children should wear life jackets at all times while boating. By law, children under the age of 12 must wear their life jackets while on underway vessels of 26 feet or less.

River Boating... Because river boating involves remote areas, swift water, and uncharted hazards, never boat alone. A team effort of two motorboats or three paddle-powered boats is best. Carry extra fuel, a spare prop and shear pin, tools, anchor line, and an extra paddle.

River boating requires different boat-handling techniques from lake boating. Look for: swift main currents, strong back eddies, boils, deep channels, sandbars, blind turns, fluctuations in flow levels, etc.

Hazards... Be alert for submerged hazards such as sandbars, rocks, snags, and other river debris. Visibility of hazards varies with water level fluctuations.

Traffic... Other boaters in both powered and non-powered craft will be sharing the river with you. Canoeists should stay together in a single-file group; powerboats should stay alert and give slower craft a wide berth. Learn and follow the “rules of the road.”

Weather... Temperatures can often exceed 110 degrees in the summer. The water temperature varies little, from 59 degrees to 64 degrees. The contrast between the air and water temperatures can be shocking, so be prepared to assist anyone who falls into the water. Take precautions against heat exhaustion and glare: wear a hat, a long-sleeved shirt, sunglasses and sunscreen. Southwest headwinds and occasional thunderstorms occur. Heavy rains can cause flash floods in side washes and backwaters. Obtain the latest weather report before embarking on a trip.

Water... Dehydration is a danger. Potable water, available at only a few locations, should be carried, at least a gallon per person per day. To make river water potable, boil it for 10-20 minutes, or use halizone tablets.

Sanitation... Most parks and marinas along the river provide restrooms. Where facilities are not available, carry a portable toilet.

Camping/ Open Fires... Camping and open fires are not allowed in the Havasu National Wildlife Refuge, except at Five Mile Landing, and along the Arizona shoreline south of the southernmost buoy line above Mesquite Bay.

Pitch In... The beauty of this river can best be preserved by its users. Pitch in and do your part to keep it clean. Take waterproof trashbags along and boat out what you boat in.

Lights... After sunset, a light which shines 360 degrees and is visible for two miles must be displayed by manually propelled craft. Powerboats must display all lights required by state and federal law. (See the Department of Boating and Waterways’ pamphlet, The ABCs of California Boating Law.)

Float Plan... Boaters should leave word with a responsible person regarding their route and expected date of return.
Alcohol... Alcohol is a major factor in many boating injuries and fatalities on the Colorado River. Alcohol combined with wind, heat, boat noise, vibration, wave action, and sun glare adversely influence judgment and response time. Operating a vessel under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs is a misdemeanor carrying a penalty of up to six months in jail or a fine of $1,000, or both. Do not drink and operate a boat.

Additional Information
The California Department of Boating and Waterways offers several free boating safety pamphlets helpful to Colorado River boaters:

- The ABCs of California Boating Law
- Safe Boating Hints for the Colorado River
- A Boating Trail Guide to the Colorado River (Blythe to Imperial Dam)
- Personal Flotation Devices
- Paddlecraft
- Water Skiing
- Hunters and Anglers

The Arizona Game and Fish Department offers, free, the Arizona Boating Guide, (602) 942-3000.

For a copy of Boating Regulations for Nevada-Arizona Interstate Waters, contact the Nevada Department of Wildlife, (702) 486-5127.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service publishes an excellent map to the Havasu National Wildlife Refuge, as well as several pamphlets describing the area’s birds and animals, (928) 343-8112.

The U.S. Geological Survey topographic maps of the area, including Needle, Topock, and Castle Rock, are available from BLM offices and authorized map dealers.

See back cover for phone numbers and additional listings.

Guide Maps
From Davis Dam to Parker Dam, the river flows approximately 88 miles. Most of this stretch of the river is a wide expanse of Class 1, fast-moving water with no whitewater rapids. When facing downstream, the land to the right (river-right) is in Nevada or California, while the land to the left (river-left) is in Arizona. The river follows the boundary between the Pacific Time Zone (river-right), and the Mountain Time Zone (river-left). The following maps illustrate the river’s course, featuring boating access areas, as well as side channels and backwaters to be explored.

Float Time
The “river mile” location of each boating access site is shown on the left side of the guide maps. During the boating season (mid-March through September) an unassisted paddle craft will float at the rate of approximately 2 1/4 miles per hour. Boaters are advised to carefully plan their trips, as much of the Colorado is desolate and river patrols are infrequent.

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation is responsible for controlling water flows. For information regarding expected flows, contact the Public Affairs Office in Boulder City, NV, (702) 293-8419.

NOTE: THIS MAP GUIDE IS INTENDED TO SHOW PUBLIC ACCESS POINTS.
DO NOT USE THIS GUIDE FOR NAVIGATIONAL PURPOSES.
**SPORTSMAN PARK**
Clark Co. Parks and Recreation
Also: Group Camp Sites
Hwy. 163 and Casino Dr.
(702) 298-3414

**DAVIS CAMP**
Mohave Co. Parks Department
Also: Showers, Group Camp Sites, Dump Station, Playground
Hwy. 95, north of Laughlin Bridge
(928) 754-7250

**FISHERMANS ACCESS AREA**
State of Nevada Department of Wildlife
Also: Fish Cleaning Station
Casino Dr., north side of the Riverside Casino in Laughlin
(702) 486-5127

**BULLHEAD COMMUNITY PARK**
Bullhead City Parks and Recreation
Also: Playground
Hwy. 95, south of 1st St.
(928) 763-0158

**RIVER BEND, SUNSHINE MARINA**
Also: Boat Slips, Restaurant
Exit Hwy. 95 at Marina Dr. Located at Whitewater and Rio Grande
(928) 758-6322
Note: See Riviera Map, below, for enlarged view of area.

**BULLHEAD CITY WATERCRAFT LAUNCHING FACILITY**
Section 30 Recreation Area
Bullhead City Parks and Recreation
Exit Hwy. 95 @ Riverview Dr., left on Balboa
(928) 763-1110
Note: Bullhead City Police Dept. and First Aid Station are at launching facility.
Adjacent public use site (northern boundary) has beach/picnic area, gravel parking, and restroom.
Note: See Riviera Map, below, for enlarged view of area.

**SECTION 10 RECREATION AREA**
Bullhead City Parks and Recreation
Note: Parking area is approx. 200 yds. from water.
Exit Hwy. 95 at Ricardo Ave.
(928) 763-0158

**Davis Dam**: Swift current below the dam; water depths can vary up to 8 feet within hours.

**City of Laughlin**: Offers riverfront casinos. Free passenger ferries travel between Laughlin and Bullhead City every few minutes.
Canoeists are advised to begin their downstream journey at Bullhead Community Park in order to avoid the heavy boat traffic around the Laughlin Casino area.
Pumping Stations: The numerous pumping stations located along the river in this area supply irrigation water to the surrounding farm lands. Please do not interfere with their operation.

Mohave Valley: This attractive open valley has long been inhabited by the Mojave Indians. The word "Mojave" is derived from the Indian word "aha majave," which has been interpreted to mean "people who live along the water."

Black Mountains: The legendary Black Mountains form the eastern horizon with Boundary Cone Peak in the foreground. The Dead Mountains form the western horizon.

Topock Marsh Inlet Canal: Located slightly downstream and across the river from Jack Smith Memorial Park. Due to the steep river bank, no portage can be made into the canal.
Beale’s Slough Backwater Wildlife and Fisheries:
Although the slough is blocked by a gravel levee, canoeists can portage into the area.

Topock Marsh: The Topock Marsh consists of a network of bays and channels bordered by bullrush and cattail stands. This wild area contains a variety of local and migratory birds and raptors.

Topock Gorge: A buoy line under the Topock bridges marks the northern boundary of the Topock Gorge Unit of the Havasu National Wildlife Refuge. Originally named Mohave Canyon, this dramatic, walled canyon has left a lasting impression on almost everyone who has passed through it.

No wakes off the main channel, water-skiing, overnight camping, or open fires are permitted between here and the southernmost buoy line, seventeen miles downstream. There are many beaches along this area. They are attractive, undeveloped rest areas for boaters. Please leave no trace that you have used them.

Needles Peak: High up on river-left, these distinctive, jagged peaks can be seen throughout the region.

Devil’s Elbow: This very scenic section consists of a 90 degree turn between steep, high red rock walls.

White Sand Dunes: Large, attractive white sand dunes are partially hidden from view behind Devil’s Elbow.
**Mojave Rock:** This single red-rock monolith on river-left is a distinctive landmark.

**Fluted Bluffs:** A set of vertical formations formed by the erosion of a sand ridge on river-left as you approach Blankenship Bend.

**Castle Rock:** Downstream of the first buoy line is a short channel on river-left which leads to a large bay in front of the low dark rock outcropping known as Castle Rock. Because of unpredictable wind and wave conditions, only experienced lake canoeists should attempt to go on Lake Havasu.

**Second Buoy Line:** Marks the southern boundary of the Havasu National Wildlife Refuge, Topock Gorge Unit.

**Sand Bar:** A very large sand bar which stretches across most of the channel can be hazardous to boaters when the lake and/or river water levels are low. It is formed by deposits of silt and sand carried by the river.

**London Bridge:** This historic bridge was dismantled, transported and reconstructed here in 1971.

**Havasu Landing Ferry:** Passenger service is provided by Havasu Landing Resort to and from the London Bridge.
Lake Havasu State Park

Lake Havasu State Park is a unit of the Arizona State Parks system. In addition to the launch facilities at Windsor Beach and Cattail Cove, the Park maintains 225 boat-in campsites along the Arizona shoreline. These sites include vault toilets, picnic tables, shade structures and fire pits. Many are isolated. All are accessible by water only.

For a map or more information, contact Park Headquarters at (928) 855-7851.
ARIZONA

Bullhead City Divisions -

• Parks
  1285 Alonias Wy.
  Bullhead City, AZ 86442
  (928) 763-0184
  - Bullhead Community Park
  - Section 30 Recreation Area
  - Section 10 Recreation Area

Recreation
  2047 Commercial Wy.
  Bullhead City, AZ 86442
  (928) 763-0158

Bullhead City Chamber of Commerce
  (928) 754-4121

Lake Havasu Area
  Chamber of Commerce
  (928) 855-4115

Lake Havasu City Parks and Recreation
  • Site 6 – Public Launch
  (928) 453-8686

Lake Havasu State Park
  Headquarters
  1350 West McCulloch Blvd.
  Lake Havasu City, AZ 86403
  (928) 855-7851
  Windsor Beach
  (928) 855-2784
  Cattail Cove
  (928) 855-1223

Mohave Co. Sheriffs Department
  (928) 453-0700

Mohave County Parks Department
  Headquarters
  P.O. Box 7000
  Kingman, AZ 86402
  (928) 757-0915
  Davis Camp
  (928) 754-7250

PRIVATE

5 Mile Landing
  (Concession within Havasu National Wildlife Refuge)
  H.C. 12 Box 84800
  Topock, AZ 86436
  (928) 768-2350

Boundary Cone Road
  (Ft. Mojave Indian Reservation)
  Ft. Mojave Police Department
  1601 Plantation Dr.
  Mojave Valley, AZ 86440
  (928) 768-4521

Crazy Horse Campgrounds
  1534 Beachcomber Blvd.
  Lake Havasu City, AZ 86403
  (928) 855-4033

Golden Shores Marina
  P.O. Box 502
  Topock, AZ 86436
  (928) 768-2325

Havasu Springs Resort
  2581, Hwy 95
  Parker, AZ 85344
  (928) 667-3361

Lake Havasu Marina
  1100 McCulloch Blvd.
  Lake Havasu City, AZ 86403
  (928) 855-2159

River Bend, Sunshine Marina
  2170 Rio Grande Rd.
  Riveria, AZ 86442
  (928) 758-6322

Sand Point Marina
  P.O. Box 1469
  Lake Havasu City, AZ 86405-1469
  (928) 855-0549

Nevada

Clark County Parks and Recreation
  Sportsman Park, Laughlin
  Box 29988
  Laughlin, NV 89028
  (702) 298-3413

Laughlin Chamber of Commerce
  (702) 298-2214

Nevada Department of Wildlife
  4747 Vegas Dr.
  Las Vegas, NV 89108
  (702) 486-5127

Fishermans Access Area, Laughlin

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
  (702) 293-8419

FEDERAL AGENCIES

Havasu National Wildlife Refuge
  Headquarters
  Box 3009
  Needles, CA 92363
  (760) 326-3853

• Castle Rock Bay
• Pintail Slough/North Dike
• Catfish Paradise

U.S. Bureau of Land Management
  2610 Sweetwater Ave.
  Lake Havasu City, AZ 86403
  (928) 505-1200
  • Take Off Point

CALIFORNIA

City of Needles Parks and Recreation
  817 3rd St.
  Needles, CA 92363
  (760) 326-2814
  Jack Smith Memorial Park

Needles Chamber of Commerce
  (760) 326-2050

San Bernardino County
  Regional Parks Department
  Headquarters
  777 E. Riath Ave.
  San Bernardino, CA 92415-0763
  (909) 387-2757

Moabi Regional Park
  Park Moabi Rd.
  Needles, CA 92363
  (760) 326-3831
  Marina: (760) 326-4777

San Bernardino County
  Sheriffs Department
  (909) 790-3105

PRIVATE

Black Meadow Landing
  P.O. Box 98
  Parker Dam, CA 92267
  (760) 663-4901

Havasu Landing Resort
  Chemehuevi Indian Reservation
  Box 1975
  Chemehuevi, Valley, CA 92363
  (760) 556-4593

Needles Marina Park
  100 Marina Dr.
  Needles, CA 92363
  (760) 326-2197

Rainbo Beach Marina
  Route 4, Box 139 River Rd.
  Needles, CA 92363
  (760) 326-3101

PRIVATE

5 Mile Landing
  (Concession within Havasu National Wildlife Refuge)
  H.C. 12 Box 84800
  Topock, AZ 86436
  (928) 768-2350

Boundary Cone Road
  (Ft. Mojave Indian Reservation)
  Ft. Mojave Police Department
  1601 Plantation Dr.
  Mojave Valley, AZ 86440
  (928) 768-4521

Crazy Horse Campgrounds
  1534 Beachcomber Blvd.
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