

A Guide For Ark River Float Leaders And Other River Paddlers.....

Arkansas River Boat Access Points and Landmarks - Great Bend to KS-OK Border

(Revised April, 2021---major revisions regarding mileage, access points and hazards. Note: the opening of a new access ramp on the Arkansas River in Great Bend was above the initial mileage start point at the U.S. 185 highway river bridge, therefore an addition of 7/10ths of a mile has been added to each subsequent mileage reference.)

....This is a guide for persons planning a kayak or canoe float on selected sections of the Arkansas River. The guide provides the following information about the river and its access points.

Included in the guide and associated map sketches:

- >>>Listing of access points for paddlers to launch and exit the river.
- >>>Listing of landmarks along the river including bridges, feeder rivers and creeks, major rural power lines crossing the river, river hazards and other miscellaneous selected features.
- >>>Approximate mileage estimates for each access point and each landmark.
- >>>Approximate mileage between selected access points.
- >>>Tips on obtaining information regarding river water levels and how to determine adequate water levels for paddling the river.
- >>>Recommended day-long river floats.
- >>>Map sketches showing access sites, river mileage and basic rating of sites.

Definitions, Symbols and Explanations.....

A = access point where boats can be landed and launched....generally with parking area for vehicles.

A* = usually an emergency access point; usually limited off-road parking and relatively poor launching and landing areas for boats.

LM = Landmarks such as bridges, rivers and creeks entering Arkansas river, overhead power lines, rocky areas. etc.

The Arkansas River at Great Bend has a relatively narrow bank to bank width. It widens out as more streams feed additional water into its water course and as it flows southerly.

Average bank to bank river width over sections of the river =

Narrow.....river from Great Bend to around Cow Creek floodway canal in Hutchinson.

Medium....river from around Cow Creek floodway canal in Hutchinson to around Mulvane.

Wide.....river from around Mulvane to KS-OK border.

Note: When paddling a boat on the Arkansas River, less water flow, measured in cubic feet per second (CFS), is needed for navigation within the narrow river bank areas while generally more water flow is needed for navigation in the wider river bank areas.

Cubic feet per second (CFS) = rate of the flow, in streams and rivers. It is equal to a volume of water one foot high and one foot wide flowing a distance of one foot in one second. One "cfs" is equal to 7.48 gallons of water flowing each second. As an example, if your car's gas tank is 2 feet by 1 foot by 1 foot (2 cubic feet), then gas flowing at a rate of 1 cubic foot/second would fill the tank in two seconds. (source = USGS website)

River gage info provided at USGS website = waterwatch.usgs.gov/KS/nwis/?current/?type=flow
(Note: view and use the 'CFS' river flow figure, not the 'water level' figure.)

The terms '**river right**' and '**river left**' are used to indicate the river bank location of the access points and landmarks as the paddler navigates the boat down the river. The term 'river right' means the right-bank side, or off the right-hand side of the boat, while 'river left' means the left-bank side, or off the left-hand side of the boat.

Elevations above sea level - measured at the Arkansas river's surface:

<i>Location</i>	<i>Google</i>	<i>USGS</i>	<i>Dept of Interior Quad. Maps</i>
Great Bend river	1845 ft.	1837 ft.	1840 ft.
Wichita river (under John Mack bridge)	1267 ft.	1265 ft.	1278 ft
Arkansas City (under US 77 bridge)	1061 ft.	N/A	1058
KS-OK border	1030 ft.	N/A	1038

Overall drop in elevation of the river from Great Bend to the KS-OK border is about 815 feet.

On this 195-mile-long segment of the Arkansas River, the drop in elevation per mile is about 4.25 feet.

Method of determining mileage between access points and landmarks:

Google Earth was used to obtain the approximate navigation mileage between access points and landmarks. The Google Earth path measuring tool was used by placing points over the water channels along the river course and then drawing lines between the points. The mileage between access points and landmarks was accumulated by this point to point measuring procedure. Google Earth satellite images varied from years 2011 to 2020, so the water channels often varied slightly.

Note: the above measuring technique provides an approximation of the actual length of the navigation path. That is, the navigation path required by a given boat to successfully float in a sufficiently deep water channel. **Persons using the total mileage given for the distance between two access points should add at least 1/2 mile per 10 miles of identified mileage to account for the greater distance of the meandering, navigable water channel.**

Note: How to obtain further information, and, how to offer corrected information:

Should you want additional information, and if you can provide updates to this guide, please contact the following persons:

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Recommended Day Floats and Short Floats:

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Great Bend to Ellinwood = 14 miles (note: usually very low water level)
Ellinwood to Raymond Ave. Q = 10.2 mi. (note: usually very low water level)
Raymond Ave. Q to Alden Ave. U = 9.8 mi. (note: occasionally low water level)

Alden Ave. U to Sterling K-96 = 12.8 mi
Sterling K-96 to Nickerson Rd. = 9.0 mi.
Nickerson Rd. to Hutch. W. 4th = 8.1 mi

Hutch. W. 4th to Yoder Rd. = 9.7 mi.
Yoder Rd. to Worthington Rd. = 9.9 mi.

Ridge Rd. to Wich. Div. Dam = 7.5 mi.
Amidon Ave. to Cowtown = 2.5 mi.
Cowtown to Lincoln Ave./Dam = 2 mi.

Lincoln Ave./Dam to Herman Hill = 2.1 mi.
Herman Hill Park to 47th St. = 5.2 mi.
Garvey Park to 47th St. = 3.7 mi.

47th to 71st = 3.6 mi.
71st to Mulvane = 7.7 mi.
...or, 71st to Old Goat Ranch* = 11.5 mi. * *with permission of landowner...*
...or, Mulvane to Belle Plaine = 10.2 mi.
...or Old Goat Ranch* to Belle Plaine = 6.6 mi.

Belle Plaine to Oxford = 10.4 mi.
Oxford to Rainbow Bend = 9.0 mi
Rainbow Bend to Geuda Spr. = 8.3 mi.

Geuda Spr. to Ark City (Chestnut) = 5.8 mi.
Ark City (Chestnut) to Grouse Cr. = 12.5 mi.
Walnut R. Park to Grouse Creek = 8.5 mi.
Grouse Creek to Traders Bend OK = 9.4 mi.

Note #1: Persons using the total mileage given for the distance between two access points should add at least 1/2 mile per 10 miles of identified mileage to compensate for the usually increased distance of the meandering, navigable water channel.

Note#2 Be Safe On The River! Plan ahead on selecting your river float course! Wear a PFD (personal floatation device), carry drinking water and snacks, and wear appropriate clothing and footwear----watch for river hazards (including high water), and paddle with a friend!

(continued)

Arkansas River Access Sites and Mileage Listing -

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..... Great Bend = 000.0 miles-----miles to Kansas-Oklahoma border = approximately 195 miles

Upper River Section (Great Bend to Wichita) = 114 miles

Middle River Section (Wichita city) = 18 miles

Lower River Section (Wichita to KS-OK Border) =63 miles

(Start)

000.0 miles (A = access point) > Great Bend/Barton County; from U.S. 281 highway, drive west on Railroad Ave. to Washington, then south on Washington to launch ramp.
{14.1 miles to next access} *Note: the first 29 miles or so of this river course usually has insufficient water depth to navigate. One should check the river gage at Great Bend on the waterwatch.usgs.gov website to determine the current water flow.*
Minimum water flow recommended for floating this section should be around 50 to 70 cubic feet per second (CFS).

000.7 miles (LM = landmark) > U.S. 281 highway bridge. USGS river gage site.

006.4 miles (LM = landmark) > Walnut Creek enters on river left.

007.6 (A*) > Dartmouth Road South bridge - river right - *Note: emergency access only.
{6.5 mi. to next access}

010.1 (LM) > Overhead power line crossing.

013.7 (LM) > Little Cheyenne Creek enters river left.

014.0 (LM) > Old Ellinwood bridge.

014.1 (A) > County road 105 Ave. bridge south (Ellinwood/Barton County) river left.
{10.1 mi. to next access}

024.9 (A) > County Ave. Q bridge west (Raymond/Rice County) river left.
{4.6 mi. to next access}

029.5 (A) > County 4th Rd. bridge south (Raymond/Rice County) river right.
{5.2 mi. to next access}

034.0 (A) > County Ave. U bridge west (Alden/Rice County) river left.
{4.1 mi. to next access}

035.6 (LM) > Salt Creek (also known as Rattlesnake Creek) enters river right.

038.1 (A) > County 9th Rd. bridge south (Alden/Rice County) river right.
{3.6 mi. to next access}

041.7 (A) > County 12th Rd bridge west (Sterling/Rice County) river right.
{5.1 mi. to next access}

045.2 (LM) > Peace Creek enters river right.

046.8 (A) > K-96/K-14 highway bridge **south (Sterling/Rice County)** river left.
{7.0 mi. to next access} - *Note: the next 22 miles or so of this river mile list does not always have sufficient water depth to navigate. One should check the river gage at Nickerson on the waterwatch.usgs.gov Website to see what the water flow is.... minimum water flow recommended is 70 to 80 cubic feet per second (CFS).*

053.8 (A) > K-96/K-14 highway bridge, **west (Nickerson/Reno County)** river right **{river gage}**.
{2.0 mi. to next access}

055.8 (A) > **Nickerson Rd.** county bridge, **south (Nickerson/Reno County)** river left.
{8.6 mi. to next access}

058.5 (LM) > *Power Line Crossing*

059.7 (LM) > *Hazard - partially submerged pipeline across river*

063.9 (LM) > *Salt Creek diversion canal enters on river right.*

064.4 (A) > **W. 4th Street bridge (Hutchinson/Reno Cty)** river right.
{4.7 mi. to next access}

065.0 (LM) > *K-96/K-14 highway bridge (Hutchinson/Reno Cty) - possible emergency access with permission from Hutchinson Archery Group.*

066.2 (LM) > *Cow Creek diversion canal enters on river left - wider river between banks.
Note: One should check the river gage at Hutchinson (actually at Haven) on the waterwatch.usgs.gov Website to see what the water flow is....minimum water flow recommended would be approximately 120 to 140 cubic feet per second (CFS).*

066.4 (LM) > *Old Salt Creek enters on river right.*

066.9 (LM) > *Union Pacific RR bridge.*

067.3 (LM) > *Burlington Northern Santa Fe RR bridge.*

067.9 (LM) > *Woody Seat Freeway bridge.*

068.3 (A*) > *Main St./Poplar St. bridge (Hutchinson-Reno County) - *Note: emergency access below this bridge on river right.*

069.1 (A) > **Kansas & Oklahoma RR bridge** (access from Carey Park, Ball field parking lot) river left. *Note: rough exit---steep bank.*
{5.0 mi. to next access}

070.3 (LM) > *U.S.-50/KS-61 highway twin bridges.*

071.8 (LM) > *Sand Creek enters on river right.*

072.9 (LM) > *Flood control canal enters on river left.*

074.1 (A) > **S. Yoder Rd.** county bridge (Reno County) river left.
{6.4 mi. to next access}

075.7 (LM) > *Cow Creek (original creek bed) enters on river left.*

079.2 (LM) > *creek (unknown name) enters on river right.*

080.5 (A) > Haven-Buhler Rd. county bridge (Reno Cty) river left -
{3.5 mi. to next access} {**'Hutchinson' river gage**}

084.0 (A) > Worthington Rd. county bridge (Reno Cty) river left.
{4.4 mi. to next access}

087.5 (LM) > *Gar Creek enters on river right.*

088.4 (A) > **Mount Hope-Burton N. 279th St W** county road bridge (Sedgwick Cty). river right.
{17.4 long miles to next access---very poor access at Halstead/Bentley 151st Rd bridge}

089.1 (LM) > *Creek enters on river right.*

092.1 (LM) > *power lines cross river.*

097.5 (LM) > *big island with cabin---has small bridge over narrow channel on river right.*

098.5 (LM) > *power lines cross river.*

098.6 (A*) > *Halstead/Bentley N. 151st W county road bridge & adjacent overhead water line.
(Sedgwick County) SE side, *Note:poor access due to fences, bushes, steep banks.*

100.0 (LM) > *Big Slough enters on river right.*

101.7 (LM) > *power lines cross river.*

102.5 (LM) > *power lines cross river.*

105.8 (A) > Ridge Road (71st St. W) county road bridge (Sedgwick Cty) river right or left.
{7.6 mi. to next access} *Note: limited parking, fence to cross.*

106.2 (LM) > *Wichita/Valley Center Floodway - L. Arkansas River overflow enters on river left.*

106.8 (LM) > *power lines cross river.*

107.4 (LM) > *power lines cross river.*

109.2 (A*) > *53rd St. county road bridge (Sedgwick Cty) *Note: emergency access only {river gage}.*

109.2 (LM) > *power lines cross river downriver side of above bridge.*

111.3 (LM) > *K-96 twin bridges.*

113.1 (LM) > *Wichita/Valley Center Floodway - L. Arkansas River & Chisholm Creek overflow enters
on river left.*

113.4 (A) > Diversion dam on Arkansas River - rough take-out and portage to Big Arkansas River
Park on river right - about .1 mi. to parking lot from takeout over dike/dam, under I-235.
**Note: River Hazards Ahead: do not continue float through diversion dam tubes or
over low-water dam under 21st St. bridge.**

((End Great Bend to Wichita City Section - approximately 113 miles long))

((Start Wichita City Section - approximately 18 miles long))

113.5 (LM) I-235 twin bridges

113.7 (LM) > 21st St. city bridge - **Dangerous low-water dam under bridge** (off limits to boats from the Diversion Dam to Amidon St. bridge according to City of Wichita Parks Dept. website notice, listed in 2015)

115.0 (A) > Amidon/McLean Ave. city bridge (Wichita) river right. Parking/unloading at corner of N. Charles Ave. & 17th streets. {1.8 mi. to next access}

115.7 (A*) > 13th St. city bridge - river right - under bridge - *Note: emergency access - steep bank.

116.3 (LM) > large overhead water pipe crossing.

116.8 (A) > Sim Park red pedestrian bridge & large overhead water pipe---river left and below bridge. {0.7 mi. to next access}

116.8 (A) > Cowtown parking lot (adjacent to Ark River Coalition boat storage facility) river left. {1.5 mi. to next access}

117.5 (A*) > Seneca St. city bridge. *Note: emergency access on river left upstream from bridge. [1.2 mi. to next access]

118.0 (LM) > Keeper of the Plains & L. Ark R. dam on river left; Exploration Place or river right.

118.4 (LM) > 2nd St. city bridge....not an access point.

118.3 (LM) > Douglas Ave. city bridge.....not an access point.

118.9 (LM) > Maple St./Lewis St. city bridge.....not an access point.

119.0 (A) > Gander Mountain floating dock on river left.

119.1 (A) > Kellogg Drive/U.S. 54/400 highway twin bridges' ramp on river left. {0.5 mi. to next access}

119.6 (A) > Lincoln Street bridge/dam - ramp on river left above bridge and dam. {2.1 mi. to next access}

Note #1: boat passage on river left - experienced paddlers only using spray skirts to keep water from splashing into boats....or, otherwise portage below dam.

Note #2: One should check the river gage at Wichita (John Mack Bridge) on the waterwatch.usgs.gov Website to see what the water flow is....minimum water flow recommended is 200+ cubic feet per second (CFS) for next 75 miles.

119.7 (LM) > Kansas & Oklahoma RR bridge.

120.1 (A*) > Harry St. City bridge, river left and below bridge - *Note: emergency access only.

121.0 (A*) > Pawnee St. city bridge, river left and above bridge - *Note: emergency access only.

121.0 (A) > Herman Hill/Water Center river left.

{1.5 mi. to next access}

121.8 (LM) > Broadway/John Mack twin city bridges (**'Wichita's USGS river gage**).

122.2 (LM) > Union Pacific RR bridge.....caution: numerous old pilings in channel.

123.2 (A) > Garvey Park boat launch ramp river left.....or sandbar downriver from ramp.
{3.7 mi. to next access}

123.7 (LM) > U.S. I-135 highway twin bridges.

124.1 (LM) > Hydraulic St. city bridge.

125.2 (A*) > Chapin City Park. river right - *Note: emergency rocky access only - rocky rapids.

124.9 (LM) > Drainage Canal enters on river left - note: shallow, rocky river bottom from this point to below the McArthur St. bridge.

125.5 (LM) > Kansas Turnpike/I-35 twin bridges - rocky river bottom.

125.7 (LM) > McArthur St. city bridge - rocky river bottom.

126.9 (A) > 47th St. city bridge on river right, upstream from bridge.
{3.6 mi. to next access}

127.8 (LM) > Exposed old sewer pipe on river left and right.

128.0 (LM) > Warning! Cement encased sewer line creating low water dam.....possible passage on river right.

128.3 (LM) > Wichita treated wastewater outlet on river right.

128.8 (A*) > 63rd St. city bridge river left - *Note: emergency access only.

130.5 (A) > 71st St. canoe launch ramp on river right.
{7.7 mi. to next access}

131.5 (LM) > Wichita/Valley Center Floodway/Cowskin Creek diversion enters on river right.

((End Wichita City Section - approximately 18 miles long))

((Start Wichita to Kansas-Oklahoma Border Section - approximately 62 miles))

132.2 (LM) > Derby bridge (Sedgwick County - Market St/E 83rd St. S **{river gage}**).

132.3 (A) **Derby Warren Riverside Park-** ramp access on river left.
{5.9 miles to next access}

135.7 (LM) > Spring Creek (#1 of 5 named 'Spring Creeks' to follow) enters river left.

136.3 (LM) > caution.....river has shallow, rocky bottom for the next 200+ yards.

138.2 (A) Mulvane - K-53 HiWay bridge (Sumner County) river left,downstream bridge - **{river gage}**. {3.8 mi. to Goat Ranch, or 10.2 mi. to Belle Plaine access}

139.5 (LM) Cowskin creek cutoff enters river right.

140.1 (LM) > Burlington Northern Santa Fe RR Bridge (Sumner County).

140.9 (A*) *Rock Rd & 130th St. corner (south of Mulvane) (Sumner County) river left - steep bank -*
**Note: emergency access only.*

142.0 (A*) Old Goat Ranch (Sumner Cty) river left - *Need landowner's permission to use access.
{6.6 mi. to next access}

144.7 (LM) > *Dog Creek enter river left.*

146.9 (LM) > *caution....river has shallow, rocky bottom in this area.*

146.9 (LM) > *Bitter Creek enters river left.*

147.1 (LM) > *Short Creek enters river left.*

147.4 (LM) > *Power lines cross river.*

147.9 (LM) > *Power lines cross river.*

148.4 (A) > K-55 highway bridge - Burley Bend - near Belle Plaine (Sumner Cty) river left,
downstream from bridge. {10.4 mi. to next access}

150.8 (LM) > *Cowskin Creek (old channel) enters river right.*

151.5 (LM) > *Antelope Creek enters river left.*

153.1 (LM) > *Power lines cross river.*

154.4 (LM) > *Ninnescah River enters here - caution: old pilings in channels.*

155.1 (LM) > *old Oxford Dam debris - Note: normal float passage is on river left.*

155.5 (LM) > *Sand Creek enters river left.*

158.8 (A) > Oxford Cave Park (Sumner County) river right.
{9.0 mi. to next access}

159.6 (LM) > *U.S. 160 highway bridge {Oxford river gage}.*

160.0 (LM) > *old RR bridge piers.*

160.6 (LM) > *Spring Creek (#2) enters river left.*

161.8 (LM) > *Power lines cross river.*

167.8 (A) > Rainbow Bend - 202 Rd. Bridge (Cowley County HiWay #4) river left, difficult access
on rocks under bridge {8.3 mi. to next access}

169.2 (LM) > *Power lines cross.*

170.2 (LM) > *Spring Creek (#3) enters river left.*

174.2 (LM) > *Mouth of Slate Creek - river right.*

175.6 (LM) > *Old RR bridge pilings.*

176.4 (LM) > *Mouth of Salt Creek - river right.*

176.1 (A) > Gueda Springs - 252 Rd. Bridge (Sumner County HiWay #10) river left, downstream
from bridge. {5.8 mi. to next access}

177.9 (LM) > *Spring Creek (#4) enters river left.*

178.9 (LM) > *Chaplin Nature Center (Cowley County) river right (emergency access only).*

179.7 (LM) > *old cement dam control on river sandbar on river left; Negro Creek on river right.*

181.9 (A) > Ark City old Chestnut St. bridge (abandoned)(Arkansas City/Cowley Cty) river left, downstream from bridge - Parking next to ramp; power lines cross river on upstream side of bridge. {12.5 mi. to next access}

182.3 (LM) > Old bridge piers.

182.5 (A) > Ark City US 166 highway bridge) -*

182.9(LM) > Spring Creek (#5) enters river right.

184,5 (A) > Ark City US 77 highway bridge - river left below bridge - *Note: emergency access.
{river gage}.*

184.9 (LM) > Burlington Northern Santa Fe RR bridge.

185.4 (LM) > Power lines cross.

186.4 (A) > LM - Ark City South Levee Area - river left - *Note: emergency access.*

188.2 (LM) > Walnut River enters river left.

194.4 (A) > Grouse Creek (Cowley Cty) river left - a short distance up the creek to ramp.

Note: 1/4th miles from the OK border.

((End Wichita to Kansas-Oklahoma Border Section - approximately 64 miles))

Total miles from Great Bend to OK border = approximately 195

Alternate Float Route in Ark City area....

00.0 (A) > Ark City Walnut Park on Walnut River (Arkansas City) to Grouse Creek - river right.
{8.5 mi. to next access}

00.9 (LM) > old RR bridge pier.

01.5 (A) > boat ramp on river right in Kaw Wildlife area - *Note: emergency access.*

02.1 (LM) > Walnut R. joins the Arkansas River.

08.5 (A) > Grouse Creek landing on river left - a short distance up Grouse Creek to boat ramp.

Alternate Float Route from mouth of Grouse Creek to Traders Bend, OK:

194.4 (A) > Grouse Creek - starting at ramp located a short distance up creek mouth.
{9.5 mi. to next access}

203.9 (A) > Traders Bend, OK - ramp on river right.

Alternate Float Route on the Little Arkansas River in Wichita city:

0.0 mi. (A) North Woodland Park access site - river left - near the intersection of 20th and Shelton Sts.

NOTICE: This access site has been closed! Watch for possible alternate access site to be opened in this general area!

0.24 (LM) 18th Street Bridge

0.88 (LM) 13th Street (Minisa) Bridge & diversion of river around both sides of Meed Island.

1.07 (LM) Bitting Street Bridge

1.13 (A) 12th & Bitting Street bridge access site - river left.

1.81 (LM) 11th Street Bridge

2.40 (LM) Nims Street Bridge (north)

2.82 (LM) Murdock Street Bridge (note: ignore the sign on the bridge reading "unpowered boats not allowed beyond this point")

3.24 (LM) Nims Street Bridge (south)

3.37 (A) South Riverside Park access site- river left.

(Caution: do not paddle beyond the bend in river as the dam is just beyond that point. Also, the Wichita Boat Club has members rowing shells up and down the river between the South Riverside Park and around the 11th Street Bridge. As the rowers are positioned with their backs towards the direction they are rowing, it can be difficult for them to spot boaters coming from the opposite direction. When you are paddling the Little Arkansas River, stay closer to the right shore and allow the passing rowers extra room on the river.)

Note #1: Persons using the total mileage given for the distance between two access points should add at least 1/2 mile per 10 miles of identified mileage to compensate for the commonly increased distance of the meandering, navigable water channel.

Note #2: Be Safe On The River! Plan ahead on selecting your river float course! Wear a PFD (personal floatation device), carry drinking water and snacks, and wear appropriate clothing and footwear----watch for river hazards (including high water), and paddle with a friend!

(information originally researched and assembled by Vince Marshall with assistance from Wally Seibel, May, 2015; with revision in 2021)