

# Lower Eau Claire River Water Trail



The Adventure in Our Own Backyard

# Our Float Plan

- Our Water Trail Vision
- Current Conditions and Amenities
- Future Improvements
- Your Participation

**Lower Eau Claire River Water Trail**



# Our Water Trail Vision

# What is a water trail?

A designated route for paddling or floating along a waterway with strategically located access points; similar to hiking trails and bikeways but with one difference: **the “trail” already exists.**



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# The Lower Eau Claire Water Trail should...

- Expand opportunities for safe, fun paddling and floating
- Include safe, well-marked put-in and take-out spots
- Connect to and enhance destinations along the river
- Grow recreational-based tourism development in the eastern Wausau Metro area
- Advance opportunities for land-based trails, picnic spots, and other activities along the river
- Be identified through consistent and appealing signage and marketing materials

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# The benefits of an enhanced Water Trail include...

- Greater water use and healthy recreational opportunities for area visitors and residents
- Fosters a sense of community and environmental stewardship and pride; pair with water quality initiatives
- Significant positive economic impact (e.g., 1999 study found that canoeists on the Kickapoo spent over \$1.2 million/year)
- Coherent sign and education program can lead to greater water trail use, increased safety, and efficient EMS response

# 15-mile, day trip stretch between...



...Club House Road in Ringle...

...and the Brooks & Ross Dam in Wausau.



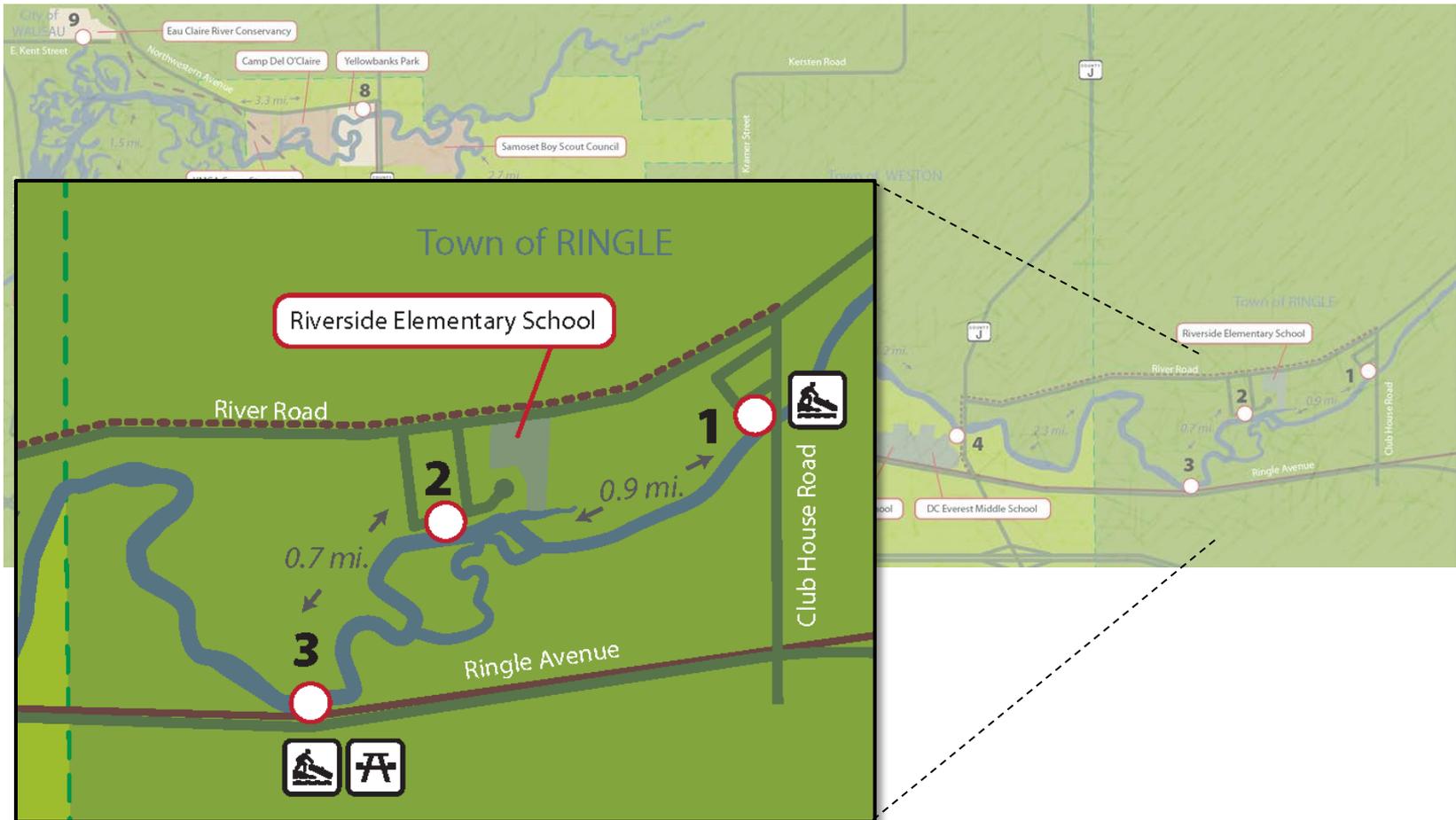
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# A route blessed with varied experiences and amenities



# From a cozy, winding segment in Ringle



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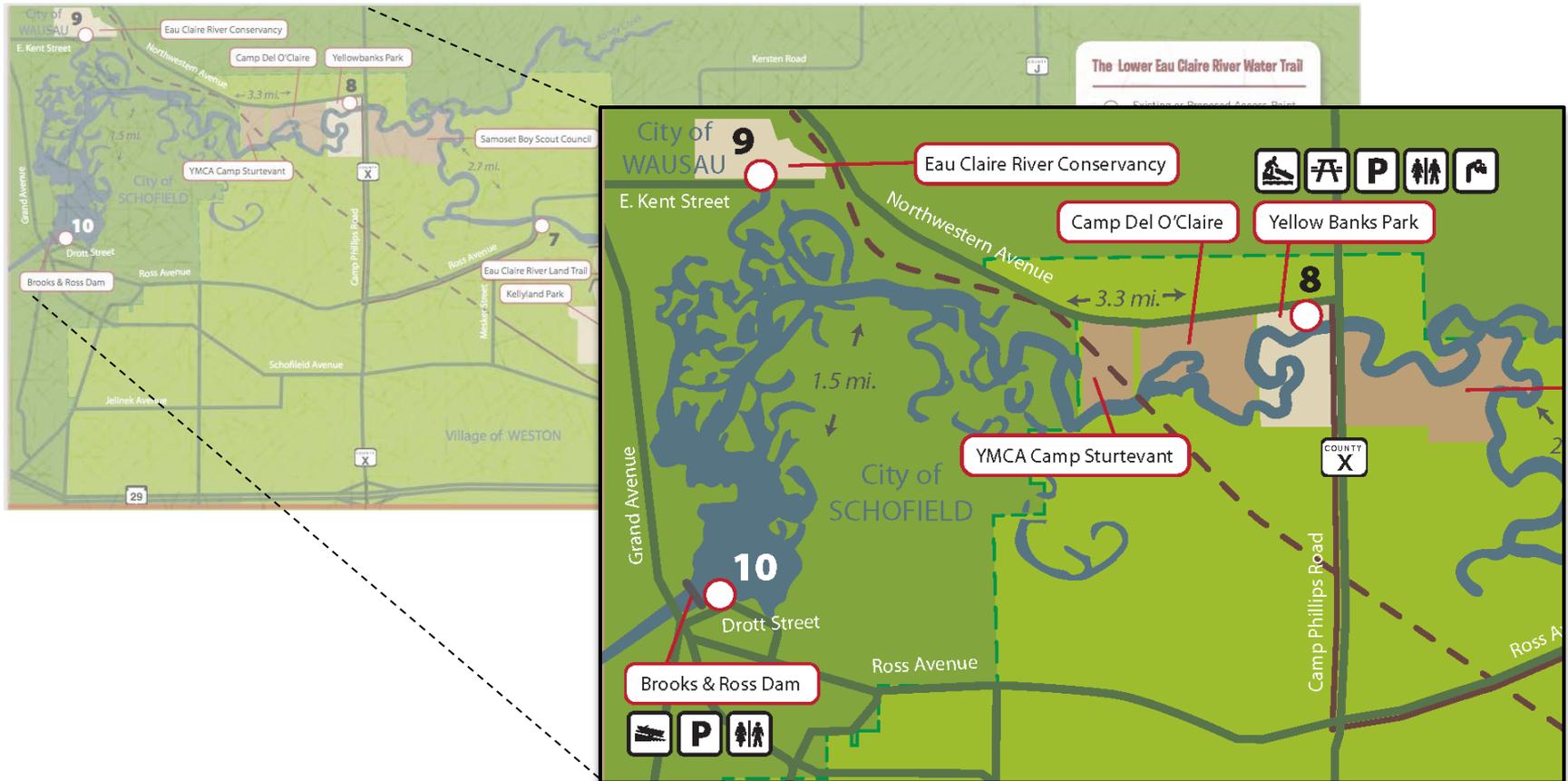
# To the wider, scenic Weston segment



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# And finally the serpentine and expansive Wausau/Schofield segment



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# Current Conditions and Amenities

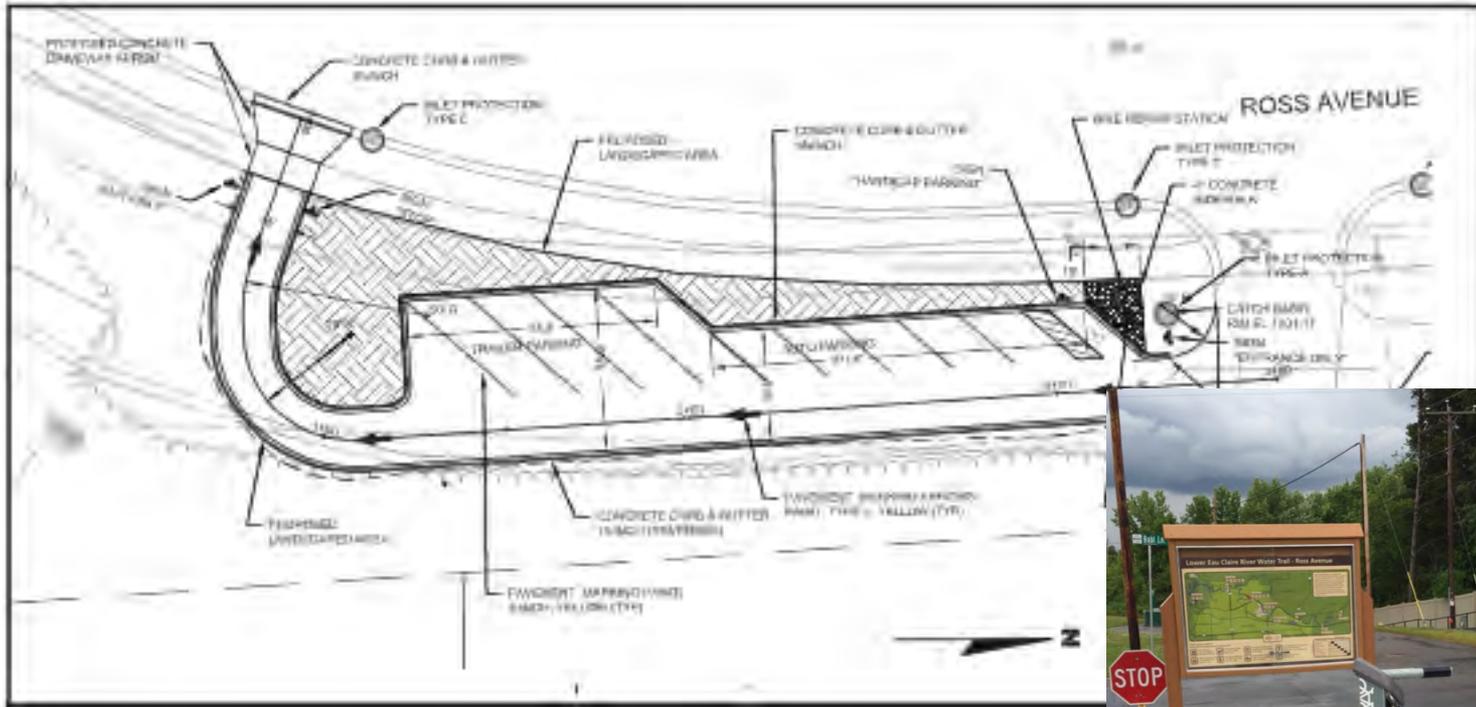
# 7 existing accesses of varying quality

# on map	Access Point Name	Current Condition of River Access				
		Parking	Ramp	Picnic	Restrooms	Signs / Wayfinding
①	Club House	on shoulder	unimproved	no	no	no
②	Riverside School Area	on street	unimproved	no	no	no
③	Mountain Bay Trail	on shoulder of Ringle Ave	unimproved	yes	no	no
④	Highway J	on shoulder of County HWY J	unimproved	no	no	no
5	Planned Park	no current public access	---	---	---	---
⑥	Ross Ave	yes	recently improved	no	porto-let	yes
⑦	Yellow Banks Park	yes	recently improved	yes	yes	no
8	Eau Claire Conservancy	yes	no	yes	no	no
⑨	Brooks & Ross Dam	yes	yes	yes	porto-let	no

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# Ross Avenue access finished in 2016



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# Other current conditions...

- Improving launches/parking at County J and Yellow Banks Park is a priority
- Several schools, parks, and camps along river provide education and respite
- Different times of year provide different experiences, including some mild whitewater
- River navigation generally good, but some wayfinding and regular maintenance required

# Future Improvements

# Bring all existing and new launch sites to a similar standard

- 10+ vehicle parking lot or safe pull-off area (inc. trailers)
- Adequate paddler launch with a firm, accessible surface
- An area with a picnic table and bench
- A restroom, where practical
- Wayfinding signage and a “you are here” map



# Consistently sign and brand the trail

- Wayfinding signage to get to each parking area, and then from there to the launch
- Display near the put-in spot with “you are here” map, distances, other destinations, and navigation tips
- Minimal on-river signage to provide a navigational aid, while maintaining the natural experience
- Each bridge signed, including location and distance to the next take-out spot



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# Consistently sign and brand the trail

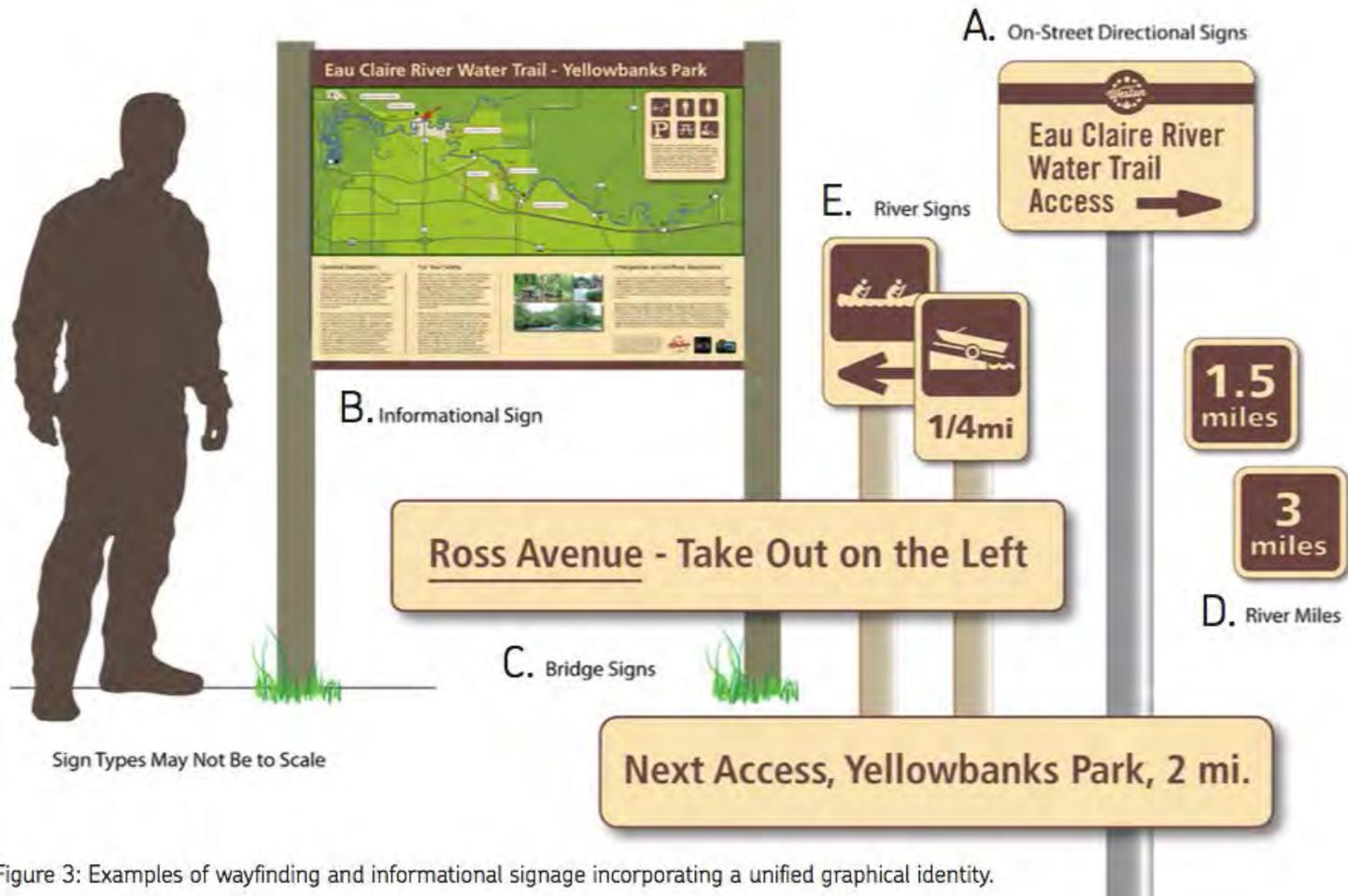


Figure 3: Examples of wayfinding and informational signage incorporating a unified graphical identity.

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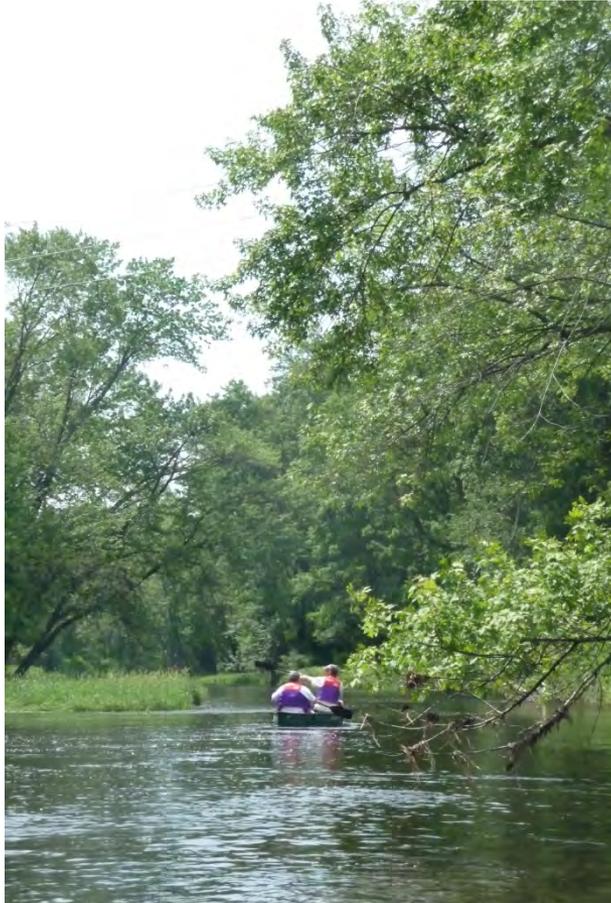


# Expand related opportunities

- Grow outfitters, transporters, and other complementary business opportunities
- Get on the tourist “map” through chambers, hoteliers, etc.
- Improve linkages with adjacent land-based recreational offerings
- “Riverfest” event, including introductions to the river and fun activities like a rubber ducky race
- Educational and promotional programming, such as YouTube video, on river use and skills

# Your Participation

# Steps to enhance the Water Trail



- Build partnerships; “friends” group?
- Enhance brochure and other marketing
- Refine signage plan
- Further design and develop put-in, take-out points
- Fundraising
- Your ideas!!!

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# Your Thoughts

- Recommendations for the Water Trail?
- How can we ensure that this is a successful endeavor and increase safe use of the Water Trail?
- Any additional comments or questions?