

Experiencing this ecological wonderland up close can awaken a sense of adventure and fascination with nature that can help shape our children's and our own approach to nature and conservancy.

Ernest Hemingway once wrote about the Elk River, calling the Elk a great, big two-hearted river challenging both the cold water angler and warm water fisherman and offering both the thrill-seeker and leisurely boater a good day's recreation. For the nature lover, the Elk River is one of West Virginia's true natural treasures.



Come experience the Elk River, a beautiful & rich part of West Virginia History.

"The Elk, because of its geographical location, is the centerpiece of fishing in the state"

Skip Johnson, WV Outdoor Writer & Author



WV's Biological Treasure...The Elk River, often called "the best all-in-one river in West Virginia" is recognized among biologists for its exceptional diversity of fish as well as being home to rare invertebrates, including a crayfish found nowhere else in the world. 🐟

The Elk offers you some of our state's most prized species...

- WV Native Brook Trout
- Golden Trout
- Bass
- Muskie and many others



Welcome to the Elk River...
From a tiny trickle of its headwaters in the heart of West Virginia to its confluence with the Kanawha River at Charleston, the Elk River meanders 180 miles through forests, farmland and small towns. It is the longest river located entirely within the borders of West Virginia.

Who is the Elk River Water Trail Group?

Regional partners from Braxton, Clay and Kanawha Counties with one shared goal: improving the quality of life by making the Elk River more accessible from the Sutton Lake tail waters to its confluence with the Kanawha River in Charleston.

The Elk River Water Trail creates recreational, health and wellness opportunities for all who use it. The Elk River Water Trail Group is committed to promoting and enhancing the ecotourism and recreational opportunities on the Elk River by making the river and our tourism region more attractive to people who like to canoe and kayak. At the same time, encouraging responsible use of the river while being mindful and protective of the natural environment.



Friends of the Elk River...

The Elk River has many “friends” who have worked for years organizing volunteers to clean up litter in the river and keep its banks free of trash. The “Elk River Clean Up” movement has made it possible for the Elk River to gain the designation of a West Virginia Water Trail.

The Elk River Water Trail Group acknowledges their vision, pride, hard work and dedication. We share your vision and the pride you have in the Elk River.

Elk River Water Trail Group:

Braxton County Convention & Visitors Bureau
Central Appalachia Empowerment Zone
Clay County Economic Development
Clay Family Resources Network
Elk River Clean Up
Mountain State Clean Streams, Inc.
Town of Sutton
Wildlife Resources
WV Division of Environmental Protection
Wildlife Resources, WV DNR
West Virginia Department of Transportation

In Partnership with...

Braxton Citizens News ~ Braxton County Rotary Club
Braxton County High School Vocational Technical Class
Cafe Cimino Country Inn ~ Clay County Lions Club
Tamara and Steve Hoffman ~ Beverly and JR Keener
Skidmore Development, Inc. ~ Summit Media
The Coal River Group
West Virginia Army Corps of Engineers, Sutton



Skip Johnson - “The Best Friend the Elk Ever Had”

Ask any West Virginia fishing enthusiast about who they consider the utmost authority on fishing the Elk River and it's likely they'll tell you it was Braxton County native and West Virginia outdoor writer and author, Skip Johnson. A man who spent his life advocating for and promoting his beloved Elk River. He shared his love and deep knowledge of the Elk River in books and articles he wrote for Wonderful West Virginia Magazine. Skip gladly shared fishing tips about when and where to fish the Elk. His advice was, and still is highly regarded.

Thank You Skip Johnson...We will forever be grateful for the contributions you made to promoting the Elk River!



Elk River Water Trail Access Locations

Sutton Dam Tailwaters
lat 38.661338 lon -80.696872

Cafe Cimino
lat 38.664010 lon -80.704174

***First Energy**
lat 38.659501 lon -80.769901

Gassaway Dairy Queen
lat 38.676474 lon -80.770031

***Sugar Creek Baptist Church**
lat 38.657321 lon -80.802878

Frametown Bridge
lat 38.635583 lon -80.864857

***Elk River Church**
lat 38.607370 lon -80.866708

***Strange Creek Bridge**
lat 38.566919 lon -80.897900

***Consolidated Coal**
lat 38.586858 lon -80.9364761

Duck
lat 38.582676 lon -80.937581

Mary Chilton Roadside Park
lat 38.499755 lon -81.065908

King Shoals
lat 38.504732 lon -81.232135

Queen Shoals
lat 38.472008 lon -81.283631

Blue Creek
lat 38.449399 lon -81.456232

Clendenin
lat 38.490464 lon -81.330125

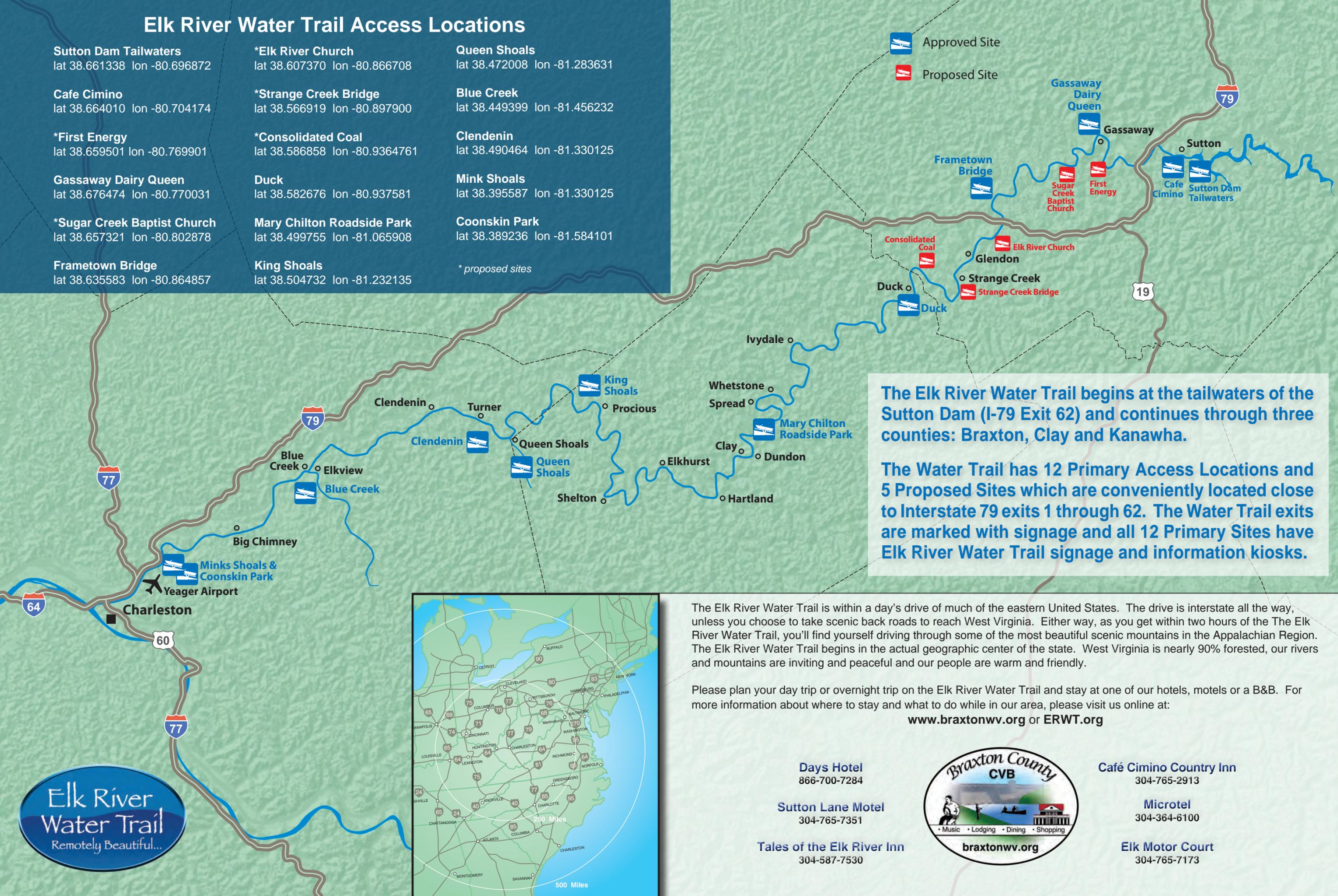
Mink Shoals
lat 38.395587 lon -81.330125

Coonskin Park
lat 38.389236 lon -81.584101

** proposed sites*

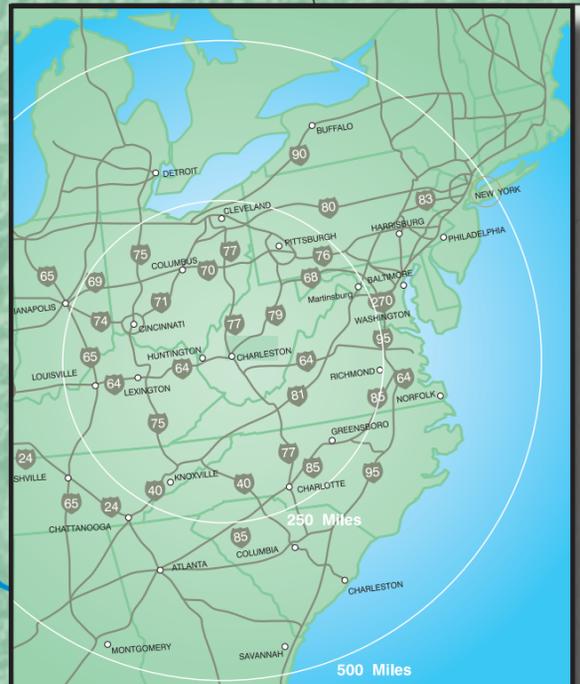
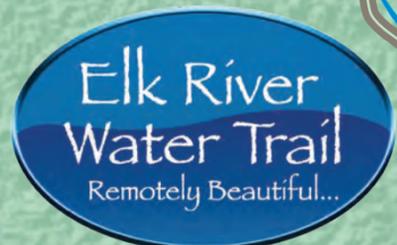
 Approved Site

 Proposed Site



The Elk River Water Trail begins at the tailwaters of the Sutton Dam (I-79 Exit 62) and continues through three counties: Braxton, Clay and Kanawha.

The Water Trail has 12 Primary Access Locations and 5 Proposed Sites which are conveniently located close to Interstate 79 exits 1 through 62. The Water Trail exits are marked with signage and all 12 Primary Sites have Elk River Water Trail signage and information kiosks.



The Elk River Water Trail is within a day's drive of much of the eastern United States. The drive is interstate all the way, unless you choose to take scenic back roads to reach West Virginia. Either way, as you get within two hours of the The Elk River Water Trail, you'll find yourself driving through some of the most beautiful scenic mountains in the Appalachian Region. The Elk River Water Trail begins in the actual geographic center of the state. West Virginia is nearly 90% forested, our rivers and mountains are inviting and peaceful and our people are warm and friendly.

Please plan your day trip or overnight trip on the Elk River Water Trail and stay at one of our hotels, motels or a B&B. For more information about where to stay and what to do while in our area, please visit us online at: www.braxtonwv.org or ERWT.org

Days Hotel
866-700-7284

Sutton Lane Motel
304-765-7351

Tales of the Elk River Inn
304-587-7530



Café Cimino Country Inn
304-765-2913

Microtel
304-364-6100

Elk Motor Court
304-765-7173