



Arkansas River Paddling

Great Bend is located almost in the center of Kansas at the apex of a giant northward bend of the Arkansas River. The waters flow north then turn south and east toward Wichita. The Santa Fe Trail ran through the point where Great Bend is now located, bringing early Americans, Mexicans, Native Americans and settlers together for trade.

Consider entering the Arkansas at Stone Lake and take out at either Dartmouth (app. 7 miles) or the Ellinwood access (app. 10 miles).

Stone Lake Access

River mile 873

GPS: N38.3522 W-98.7679

Directions: From Railroad Avenue and Washington Street, drive south to the parking lot north of the dike. Follow the trail to the Hike/Bike Path over the dike and down to the river.

Dartmouth Access

River mile 866

GPS: N38.3553 W-98.6641

Directions: From US Hwy 56 and 60th Avenue (the

Scenic Byway) drive south one-half mile. Cross the bridge and park on the east side of the road.

Ellinwood Access

River mile 859

GPS: N38.3403 W-98.5822

Directions: From US Hwy 56 and Main Street in Ellinwood drive one mile south. Park on the west side of the road before you cross the bridge. Follow the trail next to the bridge.



Kansas Property Rights

Kansas property owners own the riverbeds, not the water itself! There are three "public" rivers in the state: the Kansas, the **Arkansas**, and the Missouri. Only those three rivers, are considered open for your use without the permission of the landowners.

According to the high court's decision, on those three "public" rivers, the riverbed and banks, up to the usual high-water mark, are public property. The "usual high-water mark" includes the land up to the line along the top of the riverbank above where the largest trees (if any) regularly grow, the upper line below which the signs of the river's erosion are visible, and the line below which river debris has been deposited ("trash line") along the banks and in the trees and brush within the river channel.