
Reviewer's Guide

Managing the Waterway Chart Guides

An Illustrated Cruising Guide to the Great Loop Inland Waterway: Chicago to Mobile

Volume 1: Chicago, IL to Paducah, KY

by

Mark and Diana Doyle

Each time we write a new cruising guide, we can't help but make major revisions and improvements. We always tell ourselves, "This one will be easier," only to create a project larger than the one before. This latest guide, covering Chicago, IL to Paducah, KY, is a perfect example. As always, there was upfront research and physical on-the-water, marina, and town surveys. But this time we also shot over 4,000 photographs, wrote 120 pages on "how to do the trip," and created an entire annotated chart book—and that was before we started the re-design!

The content is rich, in typical MTW style, but it's the new format that sets this guide apart from its peers. Our readers loved our guides but were asking for more. They wanted more photographs and more visual chart references ... and they wanted bigger, bolder, and easier-to-read color.

So our new "illustrated chart guide" includes annotated chart screenshots, icon references, and navigation photos on each mile-by-mile piloting page, presented in the new full-color larger format.

Knowing your review time is limited, below we highlight the new features of our third cruising guide, *An Illustrated Cruising Guide to the Great Loop Inland Waterway: Chicago to Mobile (Vol. 1: Chicago, IL to Paducah, KY)*. [Bracketed page numbers reference sample pages on our website.]

"Guides Within the Guide"

- The larger format (12¾ x 17¾ inches) allows us to include much more content, including resources that would typically require boaters to purchase and carry additional reference books and guides. Within the guide are:
 - The equivalent of 120 pages (30,000+ words!) on planning and preparing for the Inland Waterway route. [p. 12]
 - 200 Interpretive Vignettes on the route's history, attractions, and wildlife. [p. UM-102] Learn why the Ohio River is the only river numbered in reverse, or what a sounder pole is, or what a tow means when they announce they are "coming down light, one whistle."
 - A full-color map [inside cover] overviewing the route and detailing counties, highways, airports, towns, and weather stations. No more wondering if the WX report for Bollinger County severe weather includes you!
 - A collection of tables that serve as a directory for planning and as an index to easily flip to the appropriate river mile. Want to find Hoppie's Marina? Or skim quickly to Paducah? Or get Peoria Lock's telephone number to check on the wicket dam status? Marine facilities, anchorages, cities, and locks are listed opposite the full-color map for easy cross-reference.
 - Chart coverage for every Illinois, Upper Mississippi, and Ohio River mile of the route via Annotated Chart Screenshots.



Annotated Chart Screenshots

- Our signature Mile-by-Mile Column of *piloting* information is supplemented by Annotated Chart Screenshots [pp. 5, IW-78, UM-111]. Readers can now side-by-side reference the Mile-by-Mile Column with full-color chart images.
- Each Annotated Chart Screenshot is a screen capture of our laptop displaying NOAA ENC or U.S. Army Corps of Engineers IENC vector charts using Coastal Explorer™ e-charting software. In other words, you see our electronic display showing all chartmarks and waypoints. For readers, it's as if they are looking over our shoulder during on-the-water surveys, seeing the notations for mile markers, anchorages, marinas, boat ramps, river gages, town and pets ashore access, and so on. It's like taking the trip with us! [pp. IW-78, UM-111]
- Icons reference the corresponding map or chart page from U.S. Army Corps of Engineers paper chart books. [p. UM-111, lower left on chart screenshot]
- The Annotated Chart Screenshots are always north-up. And the scale is a consistent 1:15000 throughout the guide (with the exception of the metropolitan Chicago area). No more confusion with rotating chart pages or changing scales. Set your vessel's chartplotter to north-up display and quickly flip pages knowing that two or three pages cover about ten miles.

Documentary-Style Photographs

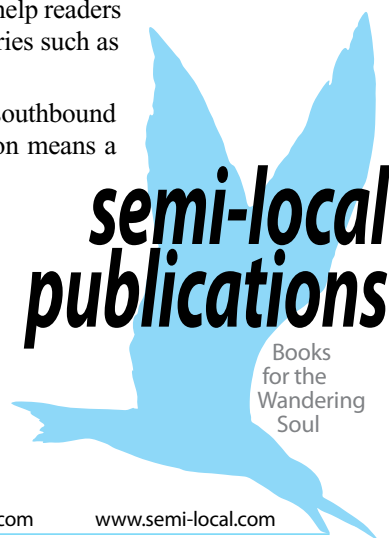
- This guide includes over 500 full-color *documentary-style* photographs. These photographs were taken by us, on the water, showing real-life views of marina approaches, anchorages, DR landmarks, boat ramps, and lock approaches. [p. UM-111]
- To make an illustrated guide, we listened to our readers, who wanted photos that helped them navigate, not photos of sunsets or Tiki bars. The photos are intended to show readers what to expect, reducing stress and helping with piloting. This guide is a workbook not a coffee table book.
- We took over 4,000 photos, each automatically geo-tagged with its latitude, longitude, altitude, and UTC using a camera-mounted GPS sensor. This means we know *precisely* when and where each photo was taken. Camera icons on the Annotated Chart Screenshots show readers the location of each photo. [p. IW-78, A-D] [p. UM-111, A-E]

Detailed Mile-by-Mile Piloting

- The foundation of MTW guides is still the extremely popular mile-by-mile format. Piloting information is summarized in a concise, consistent, detailed piloting column intended to be used at the helm. [p. 5, left, "MILE-BY-MILE COLUMN"]
- We've also retained our unique Rolling Header™ design, where information is customized to *roll* with *each* page's mileage coverage. It shows safety and piloting information relevant to this particular route, the Inland Waterway—namely, weather stations, river level gage locations (and their reading during that day's survey), upcoming locks, low clearance bridges, and fuel alerts. [p. 5, top, "ROLLING HEADER"]
- The Heads Up! columns extract the "most important" entries from the Mile-by-Mile Column's "all-inclusive" listing, alerting the reader to what's around the bend, and those things that could impact vessel safety or timing. [p. 5, top, "Heads Up!"]

Color Piloting and Planning Icons

- Color is for piloting, not for pretty. There are multiple uses of color and iconography to help readers stay oriented on the winding rivers, keep track of aid changes, and locate important entries such as locks, fuel, or overnight dockage.
- Boat and navigation aid icons keep readers oriented on winding river passages. For southbound travel, transition to each new page by beginning at the boat icon. A green SB boat icon means a southbound vessel is traveling with the current (red against the current). [p. UM-111]
- Keep track of the right descending bank (RDB) and left descending bank (LDB) and appropriately colored aids using the navigation aid icons. For example, the icon of a red triangle aid with an "L" denotes that red aids will be on the left descending bank for a southbound vessel. [p. 5, top of each chart screenshot]
- The Mile-by-Mile Column is highlighted with marina, anchorage, and lock icons. Scan these icons to quickly find the next fuel opportunity, moorage, or upcoming locking.



Each marina with services is highlighted with a mooring post, marked with an eye-splice line if overnight dockage is available and a “G” or “D” letter if gas or diesel is available. [p. IW-78]

Anchorage show a *protection* compass icon, showing green quadrants for shelter. Scan the anchorage icons to locate upcoming anchorages compatible with that night’s wind forecast. [p. IW-78]

Lock icons summarize whether you will be locking up or down (for southbound travel) and the typical lift or drop in feet. [p. UM-111, right column]

Timely Social Networking Updates

- Our readers anxiously awaited our twice-yearly email updates. But we knew we could do a better job. There were three problems we wanted to solve in our guide series re-design.

The first was boaters only received updates in the fall and in the spring. Obviously, that isn’t frequent enough.

The second was this twice-yearly schedule drove us to only include those changes that were more permanent in nature. So a bridge schedule being temporarily changed or a fun event such as a cruiser’s potluck prior to a shuttle launch were not candidates for the updates.

The third problem had to do with information overload. The updates were for all of our guides as well as the e-charting book and the 2-DVD set of charts and government publications. What if a reader was only interested in the ICW? Or after clearing Miami was no longer interested in the ICW but wanted updates for the Keys?

The solution to this frequency, content, and relevance dilemma is to offer instantaneous updates using social networking tools. [p. 5, upper right, “Notes and Twitter Updates”] Week-ahead or late-breaking updates are forwarded as soon as we receive them using Twitter’s 140-character-or-less format, available by email, Web, SMS text, or RSS feed.

Examples of our recent “tweets” include:

MTW:C2M Starved Rock Lock (IW 231.0) closed for repairs 6/22 & 6/23/10 (0700-1900 hrs). Do not tie up on guidewalls.

MTW:ICW (p 142) Parker Bridge (STM 1013.5) closed 7/8 & 7/29/10 (1000-1800 hrs) for repairs.

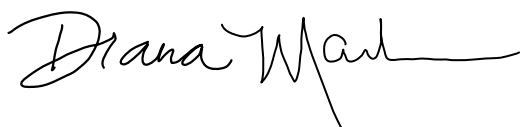
MTW:KEYS (p 87) Boot Key Harbor Bridge scheduled for demolition June-July 2010.

MTW:ECHART New Cuba Charts Available in the U.S. <http://bit.ly/9DuxMg>

We are tweeting updates at:

- @mtwguides An aggregate of the three guide and e-charting topic feeds
- @mtwguidesICW Specific to the Intracoastal Waterway
- @mtwguidesKEYS Specific to the Florida Keys
- @mtwguidesC2M Specific to the Inland Waterway, Chicago to Mobile route
- @mtwguidesECHART Specific to the topic of electronic charting

We hope you’ll agree that our new Managing the Waterway illustrated chart guides are a huge improvement, building off the unique piloting features of the original MTW guides. Advances in electronic charting, computers aboard, print technology, and social networking can now create richly annotated visual cruising *guides* that are almost like taking the trip with the authors.



Mark and Diana Doyle, Authors

An Illustrated Cruising Guide to the Great Loop Inland Waterway: Chicago to Mobile (Vol. 1: Chicago, IL to Paducah, KY) (2010)

Get Onboard With E-Charting: The Complete Reference Guide to Electronic Charting and PC-Based Marine Navigation (2008)

Managing the Waterway: Complete Electronic Chart and Nautical Reference Library 2-DVD Set (annual since 2006)

Managing the Waterway: Biscayne Bay, FL to Dry Tortugas, FL (2006)

Managing the Waterway: Hampton Roads, VA to Biscayne Bay, FL (2005)



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