

TRIP GUIDELINES

A guide for Trip Coordinators

2/18/2004

West Florida Canoe Club trips are fun and relaxing for all.... But these fun times do not happen by magic. A Trip Coordinator has generously volunteered to coordinate the trip; and has gone to a lot of trouble to see that things go smoothly. All club members are responsible for themselves and their gear. However, there are a few things the club expects of a Trip Coordinator. A well-coordinated trip enhances the enjoyment of the participants, and it "speaks well" of our club to guests, new members and others observing us.

The club's goal is uniformity in trip mechanics. Sometimes circumstances will dictate that you do things differently; however, try to follow the guidelines below. Of course, everyone's help and advice is appreciated, but decisions in matters of safety, personal liability and Club liability must ultimately rest with the individual under the guidance and organization of the Trip Coordinator.

TRIP PREVIEW

Preview the river as close to the actual trip date as possible. On your preview run, check out the roads, select a suitable lunch spot (if applicable), and note distance, time or a marker to locate it. Also, note any hazards and their approaches, so you will recognize them on the group trip. If a trial run on the river is not possible, do your best to learn all you can about the river conditions, access, trip length and ratings. Information is available on-line for water levels at <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis> . You can also check guide books and the Club trips book for more information.

TRIP COORDINATOR

Obtain a standard sign-up sheet from the Trips Chair-person or download one from our website, www.wflcc.com . Determine which kind of a trip yours is going to be; Easy, Moderate or Strenuous. The Trip Coordinator, who acts as a guide in the organization and determines the location of the trip, will maintain the right to refuse a person or persons interested in making the trip. The Trip Coordinator's decision to limit the number of participants, or to refuse an interested party may be based on individual skill level, equipment, health conditions, safety factors or any other reason which may be pertinent to the well-being and enjoyment of the individual or the group as a whole. **THE TRIP COORDINATOR'S DECISION IS FINAL ON THESE MATTERS.**

PUBLICITY

Present all details, especially the trip rating and skill level required, at the club meeting preceding your trip. Give your itinerary to the Newsletter Editor. If your trip date falls close to the meeting date, give details at the meeting one-month earlier.

THE SHUTTLE

Learn shuttle mechanics and organize the shuttle. Experienced Trip Coordinators and the Trips Chair can advise you. Advise all drivers of details at the meeting place before the shuttle begins. All necessary parking arrangement should be made before the day of the trip. Assign a lead and sweep vehicle, who should drive with headlights on. Advise all to drive at a reasonable speed, refrain from passing and always keep the vehicle behind you in sight. Start the shuttle on time and be sure everyone knows the shuttle is leaving. Find out in advance if anyone wants to do their own shuttle, and arrange to meet them.. Before anyone embarks in canoes, check to see that all drivers have their car keys.

DEALING WITH RENTALS

Trip Coordinators are not required to make rental arrangements with liveries. Get information about available rentals and include these details in the newsletter. Renters must contact the livery themselves and coordinate meeting times with the Trip Coordinator.

ATTENDANCE

Know who is expected to attend the trip. The sign-up sheet (with waiver) must be passed around at the meeting before the trip, so you'll have everyone's name, home phone number and emergency contact name and phone number. Take the sign-up sheet on the trip to allow for last minute joiners to sign it, providing you with accurate numbers and complete waiver protection. Place the sign-in sheet in the first aid kit. Ensure non-members sign the sheet/waiver, and that all minor children have a waiver signed by a parent or legal guardian (signature of a non-parent/guardian is not acceptable.) **ALL MEMBERS WHO HAVE SIGNED UP FOR THE TRIP ARE EXPECTED TO ADVISE THE TRIP COORDINATOR IF THEY WILL NOT BE ATTENDING.** Likewise, any members who have not signed up are expected to contact the Trip Coordinator if they decide to participate. When feasible, the Trip Coordinator will contact all known parties if changes occur.

TRIP ELIGIBILITY

The Trip Coordinator shall pre-screen all paddlers they are not familiar with. The following are some suggested methods for screening:

- Check with Membership Chairperson for the information on their membership questionnaire
- Talk to the paddler and ask the same type of questions that are on the questionnaire (Available at www.wflcc.com)
- Check with other WFLCC members that have paddled with them.
- If you have doubts about the paddler's skill level, ask the paddler to paddle UP STREAM from the put-in and demonstrate the skills that may be needed for your trip. Maneuvers such as draws, pries and ferries may be necessary for their safety

The Trip Coordinator will then decide if they are eligible to paddle THAT DAY'S Trip. Coordinators may assign conditions... such as staying in sight of the coordinator or another strong paddler. If the Coordinator decides they are not eligible to paddle after demonstrating, arrangements must be made to return them to their vehicles. This may be time consuming, so you will want to pre-screen as much as possible. A SECOND SHUTTLE WILL BE SHORTER THAN A MAJOR RIVER RESCUE!

THE TRIP COORDINATOR'S DECISION IN THESE MATTERS IS FINAL!!!

FIRST AID

Bring the Club's first aid kit on your trip. Be aware of the kit's contents and who knows how to use them properly. The Trips Chairperson can assist you in obtaining the kit and a throw rope. After the trip, make sure that you turn in your club first aid kit, throw ropes and sign up sheet to the Trip's Coordinator.

THE PRE-TRIP BRIEFING

This all-important briefing may be held at the meeting place or put-in.. Get EVERYONE together and discuss the trip, covering:

- Trip Length
- Hazards
- Points of Interest
- Location of and paddling time to lunch stop (if appropriate)
- Location of closest phone (cell phone or otherwise)
- Assign Lead and Sweep canoes (With appropriate First Aid kit and throw rope)
- Point out members with special skills, i.e. ACA Instructors, CPR Certified, Naturalists, etc

LEAD AND SWEEP CANOES

Both lead and sweep canoes should carry a throw rope and know how to use it. Select your sweep carefully... they should be an experienced paddler. Advise everyone to try to stay together, between the sweep and the lead canoes, within reason. Those who desire to paddle faster, slower or apart from the group should advise the Trip Coordinator at the beginning of the trip. The first aid kit should be in the sweep boat.

LAST MINUTE DETAILS

Consider guests and new members. Remind everyone to tie in their equipment, tie on sunglasses, take life jackets and spare paddles, put wallets in something waterproof, and if cold weather prevails, take extra clothes in a dry bag. At the put-in, get a head count and a boat count.

AFTER THE FUN

At the end of the trip, check around to be sure nobody has lost their keys or cannot get their vehicle started. Arrange transportation for shuttle drivers to get back to their vehicles. Be prepared to tell all about the fun at the next club meeting and in writing for the newsletter and web-site!