



Safety Plan

Objective

Ensure a safe and enjoyable paddlesports event for paddlers, volunteers, and spectators.

Event Overview

More than 400 canoeists and kayakers will paddle the Mississippi River on July 30th and 31st, 2011 in the Mississippi River Challenge. The event begins at the Coon Rapids Dam, RM866 and ends at Lower Grey Cloud Island RM825. Paddlers travel at their own pace in this non-competitive paddlesports event. The Mississippi River Challenge includes scheduled rest stops approximately every 6 river miles, with provisions for drinking water, toilets, and shelter from sun and weather. Event organizers shall arrange non-emergency first aid and on-water motorized safety support craft.

Specific Goals

- All participants comprehend that prevention remains the key to a safe river trip. This message shall be communicated in advance through the event website and printed materials. Paddlers will participate in a pre-launch safety briefing on July 30th.
- Provide first tier on-water safety support (Safety Captains) through a volunteer core of paddler/ participants with the knowledge and training to effectively manage minor river incidents. Their craft shall be identifiable and evenly spaced throughout the flotilla. Safety Captains shall maintain two-way radio contact with motorized support vessels and on-land event organizers.
- Provide motorized support vessels through partnerships with the USCG Auxiliary, Power Squadron, Sheriff's Department Water Patrol Units or other agencies professionally trained in water rescue and first responder. Motorized safety support shall respond to critical river incidents, including evacuations. Motor support craft shall be identifiable to all participants, spaced evenly apart, and serve as lead and sweep craft. Motor support shall have two-way radio contact with paddler/ participants and on-land event organizers.
- On-land, participants and spectators shall find drinking water, toilets, and shelter from sun & weather. Participants may trailer their boat and sag at any designated rest stop. The event organizers shall provide non-critical first aid stations at each scheduled landing. Emergency situations shall be addressed by the agencies responding to a 911 call in the municipality/county where the incident takes place.

Land sites include:

- Coon Rapids Dam, Three Rivers Park, Brooklyn Park, RM866
- Anoka Islands of Peace Park, Fridley, RM861
- West River Parkway, Mouth of Bassett Creek, Minneapolis, RM855

- Minneapolis Rowing Club, Minneapolis, RM850
- Historic Fort Snelling, Minneapolis, RM845
- Harriet Island, St. Paul, RM840
- Kaposia Park, South St. Paul, RM835
- Lions Levee Park, St. Paul Park, RM830
- Lower Grey Cloud Island, Grey Cloud Township, RM825

Event Support Team

- Kristin Nierengarten, Development and Special Events Associate shall be responsible for planning and coordinating safety and emergency procedures, knierengarten@fmr.org or 651.222.2193 x19.
- Christine Lee, Event Marketing and Logistics Coordinator shall be responsible for permitting and event logistics, cleef@fmr.org or 651.222.2193 x30.
- The core support team shall consist of 20+ Friends of the Mississippi River staff, board, and dedicated volunteers.
- Each on-land site shall have a core team member assigned to it and that site manager shall be responsible for a final day-of event site inspection for possible safety hazards.
- The site manager shall also direct volunteers; volunteers shall assist paddlers to ensure safe exit and entry from their craft at the water's edge and help with boat carries.

Paddler / Participant Training

- All participants shall take part in a pre-launch safety briefing. Safety Captains will deliver the briefings. The day-of-event briefings shall at a minimum cover the following:
 - PFDs: required use during the event, proper fit, and USCGS authorized
 - Launching and landing
 - Identification of safety support in the event
 - Personal behavior: alcohol, private property and etiquette on and off the water
 - Paddling in wind, waves, weather, 30/30 lightning rule
 - River hazards: swift water, strainers, sweepers, motorized traffic, barge traffic and other hazards
 - What to do if you capsize
 - Safe swim position
 - Lock procedure
 - Review waiver, assumption of risks
- Safety Captains (paddler/participants providing on-water safety) shall be selected based on prior training, CPR and first aid certifications, etc.. Safety captains shall participate in a clinic offered by event organizers in the final weeks before the Mississippi River Challenge. The clinic will cover:
 - Roles & responsibilities: safety captains, motor support, land-support
 - Lead/sweep craft – position in flotilla, responsibilities
 - Overview event – where the rest stops are, first aid stations
 - Radio use
 - River hazards relevant to the course
 - Rescue Sequence: Reach, Throw, Row Go - Priorities: People, Boats, Gear
 - Boat based rescue, tired swimmer, tow
 - Controlled capsize drills - what to do with a boat-full of water
 - Delivering your safety briefing

