



Check-In and Other Event Details

VERY IMPORTANT! PLEASE READ CAREFULLY*

*This document will likely be updated before the event with the most accurate information, please check back in July to make sure you have the most up-to-date version of this document.

The Mississippi River Challenge is a fully supported paddling event to support a cleaner, healthier river. Shuttles, snacks, meals and admission to Historic Fort Snelling are all included in your registration fee. Over the weekend, you will encounter Voyageurs and historic characters, experience live music, connect with other paddlers and enjoy the Twin Cities from the perspective of the river. Plus, you'll have an opportunity to talk with Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) staff and volunteers about river conservation projects and river history, as well as with National Park Service rangers about the Twin Cities stretch of the river and its designation as a National Park.

Check-In

Check-in for the Mississippi River Challenge is at Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park on the west side of the river (see directions), Friday, July 29th, 4 to 8pm and resumes on Saturday, July 30th at 7am. **All paddlers are required to check in and we encourage you to check in on Friday.** At check-in you will:

- Drop off your canoe or kayak *or* receive your rented boat assignment. Boats will be guarded overnight.
- Drop off your camping gear—you do not have to paddle with it! It will be stowed in a secure enclosed truck and shuttled to Fort Snelling for the overnight. For two-day paddlers, gear will be re-stowed on Sunday morning and taken to Grey Cloud Island.
- Turn in offline pledges, along with pledge forms. *Each paddler must turn in a minimum of \$250 (\$50 for those 16-18) before participating in the event.*
- Turn in ACA & FMR waivers and Photo Release waive if you didn't register online. *Waivers must be signed and turned in before getting on the water.*
- Pick up your event t-shirt, water bottle, paddler bag of goodies, and a wristband that you must wear throughout the event (it will serve as your meal ticket and admission to Historic Fort Snelling).
- Boat launch begins at 9am on Saturday morning and everyone must be on the water by 9:45. Sunday morning boat launch starts at 8am and everyone must be on the water by 9.

Shuttles

You may choose to have someone drop you off at Coon Rapids Dam on Saturday morning or you may take one of our shuttles. Shuttles for the Mississippi River Challenge pick you up at the **end of the route on Saturday morning and shuttle you to the starting point**. This means that you leave your car at the take-out point on Saturday morning, so that it is waiting for you when you complete your adventure (Historic Fort Snelling if you are paddling one day; Grey Cloud Island if you are paddling both days).

Event shuttles will leave approximately every 15 minutes from Grey Cloud Island from 7:30 to 8:15am and there will be two shuttles leaving at approximately 7:45 and 8:15am from Historic Fort Snelling on Saturday, July 30th. You may park and leave your car at either one of these points. ***Parking at Coon Rapids Dam for the weekend is not allowed and there will be no return shuttle from either take-out point.***

If you check in on Saturday morning and intend to take a shuttle, you must first go to Coon Rapids Dam to complete the check-in process and drop off your gear and boat (unless renting) before driving to one of the shuttle pick-up points. ***We are only able to shuttle people—all camping gear and boats must be dropped off at Coon Rapids Dam prior to boarding the shuttle. If you intend to catch the shuttle from Grey Cloud Island, you must check in by 7:30am on Saturday morning.***

If you choose to be dropped off, please be sure to arrange pick up that can accommodate both your gear and your boat. *We will not be shuttling people at the end of the event.*

Parking

Vehicles parked at the Grey Cloud Island take-out will be in a secure area at Aggregate Industries. **Please note that vehicles at Grey Cloud Island will not be accessible until after 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, even if you choose to sag.** Vehicles parked at the Fort Snelling take-out will be in the Historic Fort Snelling parking lot, and valuables should not be left in your cars.

Be sure to leave tie-down straps with your vehicle and know where your keys are. ***You cannot leave your car at Coon Rapids Dam during the Mississippi River Challenge.***

Safety

All paddlers will take part in a brief orientation and safety review before putting on the water. This will be done on the shuttle buses or, for those who do not take the shuttle, at Coon Rapids Dam near the check-in area at 8:30am.

There will be motorized safety craft on the route, including the Coast Guard and Water Patrol Units. Additionally, there will be Safety Captains paddling with you who will have radios and basic safety training. The Safety Captains can be identified by the florescent orange flags on their craft. These people are also good resources for paddling tips and other suggestions to help you get through the physical challenge that this event presents.

Water coolers will be available at each rest stop allowing you to refill your water bottles. Friends of the Mississippi River will be providing water bottles to each paddler in lieu of cups at the rest stops due to our efforts to eliminate unnecessary waste. ***Be sure to carry a reusable bottle with you***

throughout the Mississippi River Challenge—staying hydrated is a key part of successfully completing this event. For safety reasons, *you may not bring any alcohol in your boat or consume it at any time on this trip except during the Saturday evening festivities at Historic Fort Snelling* (where it is provided).

Please note: dogs and other pets are not allowed on this trip.

Sagging

If you cannot complete the full paddle, you may take out at any designated rest stop and be transported, along with your vessel, to the next rest stop or the day's ending point. Depending on the availability of support vehicles you will have to wait and ride along with staff for some time.

If you have not left the Saturday afternoon rest stop at the Minneapolis Rowing Club by 4:45pm, you will need to put your boat on the trailer and take a shuttle van to Fort Snelling. This ensures a hot meal and safe paddling conditions for all paddlers.

Camping at the Fort

Most Mississippi River Challenge participants choose to camp at Historic Fort Snelling—it's fun and easy to do because we shuttle your gear. There will be great food and live music and the sunrise over the bluffs is amazing. Both one and two-day paddlers are welcome and encouraged to camp. *FMR does not provide or rent out camping gear, however, so you will need to provide your own or rent it elsewhere.*

If you have friends or family (non-participants) who will be coming to the Saturday night celebration at Historic Fort Snelling, please have them register online or with the paper form as early as possible, so that we can get accurate counts for food and beverages. *Guests intending to eat dinner at Historic Fort Snelling must register by July 20th.*

Please note that there is no smoking and no pets allowed inside the Historic Fort Snelling grounds.

Interpretive Information

Friends of the Mississippi River is committed to making the Mississippi River Challenge more than just a paddle—the stretch of the river that you are paddling is a significant ecological, historical, cultural, and recreational resource. Each stop along the route will feature information about the different aspects of the river and FMR's work. Minnesota National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA) rangers and FMR staff will be there to provide you with more information and answer all of your questions.

Pledges

This is a fundraising event to support Friends of the Mississippi River's work to protect and enhance the Twin Cities stretch of the river—the very stretch you will be paddling! **All adult paddlers over age 18 must raise and turn in a minimum of \$250 by the morning of July 30th.** **Paddlers ages 16 to 18 must raise and turn in a minimum of \$50 by the morning of July 30th.** **Paddlers under the age of 16 are encouraged, but not required, to raise pledges.** Fundraising tips are available on the website to help you with your pledge-raising efforts. Please call Heather at 651.222.2193 x20 with questions.

- Pledge checks should be made out to “Friends of the Mississippi River” or “FMR” and must be accompanied by a completed pledge form. To ensure that each pledger gets the proper tax receipt, be sure to fill out the pledge form completely for each pledge. *Please include the paddler’s name on the memo line of all checks.* Pledge forms can be downloaded from our website at <http://mississippiriverchallenge.org/pdf/2011/11PledgeForm.pdf>. You can also call us at 651.222.2193 x19 to have blank copies mailed to you.
- If you are mailing in pledges, please mail them with completed pledge form(s) to Friends of the Mississippi River, Attn: Kristin Nierengarten, 360 North Robert St., Suite 400, St. Paul, MN 55101.
- **Online pledges must be made by 7am on Friday, July 29th to count toward the pledge minimum.** We do not have internet access at the check-in point and as such, will be unable to verify pledges made after that time.
- We have many great premiums available on the website for paddlers who raise \$300 or more in pledges, and we’ll keep updating the premium webpage as we get closer to the event. As you begin maximizing your internal fundraiser potential for the good of the river, visit the Mississippi River Challenge web site at <http://www.mississippiriverchallenge.org/premia> to see what you can receive with our thanks.

*Please Note: For every \$500 in pledges you raise, your name will go into a drawing for either a Wenonah Canoe or a Current Designs kayak! The drawing will be held the week after the Mississippi River Challenge, but **only pledges received as of 9am Saturday, July 30th will be considered eligible for the drawings.** If you have not yet specified which drawing you would like to enter, you may do so before July 30th by emailing knierengarten@fmr.org.*

Online Paddler Pages

Even if you registered by mail, you can set up an online paddler page to help with pledge raising. It’s an easy and simple way to reach your pledge donors that you can’t reach face-to-face! To have a page set up for you, contact Kristin at knierengarten@fmr.org or 651.222.21293 x19.

If you have a personal fundraising page and would like your offline pledges to be added to your online total, mail them (along with completed pledge forms) to Friends of the Mississippi River, Attn: Kristin Nierengarten, 360 North Robert St, Suite 400, St. Paul, MN 55101, **at least one week before the event.**



Thanks for being a part of the 2011 Mississippi River Challenge—See you on the river!

www.MississippiRiverChallenge.org ■ 651.222.2193 x19 ■ 360 N. Robert St., Suite 400, Saint Paul, MN 55101

Friends of the Mississippi River ■ www.fmr.org