

PLANNING A PADDLING EVENT

SOME PRELIMINARY QUESTIONS:

1. How much time do you have? Will this be a day trip, a weekend outing, or an extended trip?
2. How many people do you want on this paddle? What do you consider too big and too small?
3. Is this paddle for beginners, intermediate or advanced paddlers? Is this an all women/men's trip or co-ed?
4. Where will you go? A flat water trip or a river trip? River trip with whitewater or without?
5. What safety equipment is essential? What about personal gear and clothing? Will gear be shared by the group?

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ANY PADDLING EVENT:

1. As soon as you have decided on a destination and description, check with the Paddling Coordinator to obtain RMSKC approval for the trip. The Paddling Coordinator will work with the Club editor to have the trip advertised in the Mt. Paddler or by email.
2. Prepare an information sheet to send to prospective participants.
3. Review the *Trip Leader Checklist* on the Club website so no ACA insurance or risk management requirements get overlooked.

SPECIFIC GUIDELINES FOR MULTI-DAY PADDLES:

1. Consider the possible weather and logistical conditions you will encounter on the trip. Are there other considerations for the trip--passports, permits, waste removal requirements, drinking water, or wildlife concerns? Helpful information can be found in library books, magazine articles, and internet trip reports. See *Sources of Information* below.
2. Acquire necessary maps and/or books related to your paddling area.
3. Check the current Membership Roster to ascertain that all prospective participants are PAID Club members.
4. Email participants or schedule a pre-trip meeting to discuss the *Participant Guidelines*, *Human Waste Disposal*, and *On Water Signals - Safety* (all available on the Club website). At the meeting, or by email, finalize trip logistics, costs, how costs will be shared, food arrangements, and necessary gear arrangements. Remind prospective participants who are not Club members that they must complete a Membership Application, sign an ACA Waiver and pay their dues two weeks before the beginning of the trip.
5. Consider scheduling a "shake-down" packing and paddling day at a local reservoir; practice *On Water Signals - Safety* skills.

SPECIFIC GUIDELINES FOR RIVER PADDLES:

1. Ascertain the rating of the portion of the river you will be paddling. Remember that the classification of rapids cannot be predicted by stream flow volume (CFS) alone; knowledge of the river bed depth and width, and the nature of obstructions is also required. Trip Leaders should check with people who know the

area and/or research relevant websites to obtain reliable information. Eddy Flower has rated a number of river sections that you may find helpful: <http://www.eddyflower.com/CountryDetail.aspx>

2. Classifications of rapids, from the *International Scale of River Difficulty from the Safety Code of American Whitewater*.
 - a. Class I Rapids: Fast moving water with riffles and small waves. Few obstructions, all obvious and easily missed with little training. Risk to swimmers is slight; self-rescue is easy.
 - b. Class II Rapids (Novice): Straightforward rapids with wide, clear channels which are evident without scouting. Occasional maneuvering may be required, but rocks and medium-sized waves are easily missed by trained paddlers. Swimmers are seldom injured, and group assistance, while helpful, is seldom needed. (For example, Black Rocks rapids on the frequently paddled Loma to Westwater section of the Colorado River are rated Class II.)
 - c. Class III (Intermediate): Rapids with moderate, irregular waves which may be difficult to avoid. Complex maneuvers in fast current and good boat control in tight passages or around ledges are often required; large waves or strainers may be present but are easily avoided. Strong eddies and powerful current effects can be found, particularly on large-volume rivers. Scouting is advisable for inexperienced parties. Injuries while swimming are rare; self-rescue is usually easy but group assistance may be required to avoid long swims. (Class III rapids are not usually attempted in sea kayaks.)
3. On rivers with Class I and higher whitewater, ACA insurance procedures require that groups of up to ten participants must have at least two throw-ropes and for groups of more than ten participants, there must be one throw-rope for every five participants.
4. ACA insurance guidelines also require that white-water specific (not bicycle) helmets be carried to be worn for Class II and higher rapids.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

1. Check *Past Trips and Leaders* on the RMSKC website to see if the Club has already paddled in your location. Give one of these people a call for their first-hand information on paddle routes, transportation, driving time, put-in and take-out details, parking, permits, camping, and shuttle logistics. They would enjoy helping you plan your trip so that it is successful, safe and enjoyable for all. .
2. Government websites are another great source of information, and several other sites provide topographic maps, air photos, and (sometimes) nautical charts:
 - TerraServer <http://terraserverusa.com/>
 - MapTech <http://mapserver.maptech.com/>
 - GoogleEarth <http://earth.google.com/> will let you “fly” into any place you want to visit and get a 3D view of it, and each view can be printed for use on the trip.
3. Depending on where you want to go, the American Canoe Association Water Trails web site, http://www.americancanoe.org/site/c.lvZlKNZJuE/b.4343521/k.939D/ACA_Water_Trails.htm may have some information. There are currently no Colorado water trails listed but there are a number of Nebraska trails.