

TRISTATE RAMBLERS

PADDLE PARTICIPANT GUIDELINES

Both experienced and new paddlers are welcome and valued.

Summary

In Advance of the Trip

1. Choose a paddle event that matches your interests and abilities. Contact the leader if you have any questions.
2. Register for the event using SignUpGenius, unless the event is posted as a Show and Go.
3. Be mindful of how long the event could take. Realize that any planned appointments after the event could be in jeopardy due to unforeseen circumstances.
4. Check your boat and make sure you have your gear, PFD (Personal Flotation Device), and ECC (TSR Emergency Contact Card).

Just Before the Trip

1. Check your email for any updates, changes, or cancellations.
2. If you are a late/last-minute cancellation, notify the leader by phone or text of your change in plans.
3. Check your travel time; allow 30 minutes to launch your boat for an on-time start.
4. Consult with the leader if you have questions about your preparedness or any other concerns or issues.

During the Trip

1. Wear your PFD.
2. Stay between the leader and the sweep.
3. When necessary, ask the leader for separations (bio breaks) and stops for rest, drink, and food.
4. Notify the leader of any issues that impact your ability to stay with the group.
5. Be flexible in dealing with unanticipated situations.
6. Be helpful to your fellow paddlers.

After the Trip

1. Check out with the leader.

Details

In Advance of the Trip

1. **Study the trip description and choose an event you can enjoy with the group:** Confirming compatibility with your ability is important, including distance, duration, and weather. The trip may be too easy or too strenuous. Contact the leader directly with any questions.
2. **Make sure that you are clear regarding the starting location:** Refer to the [TSR Directions document](#) and read the trip description for any specific instructions. There can

be multiple meeting locations for the same park, so make sure you are at the right one. The TSR Calendar has the location helpfully pinned for your GPS reference.

3. **Register for the trip:** Advance registration is required. Remember that members who are not registered cannot participate (unless it is a Show and Go). Follow the rules for signing up. Helpful links are in the weekly email and on the Members Only page of the website.
4. **Be mindful of your personal schedule:** At times a trip may take longer than planned. It is wise not to schedule an appointment too close to the expected finish time.
5. **Check your equipment and be prepared for possible emergencies:** A PFD is REQUIRED. A TriState Ramblers Emergency Contact Card is required (available online at www.tristateramblers.org/forms). Consider a personal first aid kit and whistle.
6. **Consider other equipment:** Food, hat, additional clothing, dry bag, cell phone, extra paddle, sunscreen, insect repellent.

Just Before the Trip:

1. **Don't forget to pack your PFD, ECC, and paddles:** These are required.
2. **Change of schedule:** Check your email for updates (such as on a different day, at a different location, or with a different leader) or cancellations.
3. **Your change of schedule:** Notify the leader by phone or text of your change in plans, especially for late or last-minute cancellations, even if you take your name off the registration list.
4. **Leave early to arrive early:** Allow extra time for traffic delays. Add approximately 30 minutes to check that you have the required equipment and to launch your boat. Have the leader's phone number accessible and communicate if you are delayed, though the leader is not obligated to wait. Be aware that cell service in some locations is poor or non-existent.
5. **Assess your ability:** Listen to the leader's description of the day's activity, including the level of difficulty. Common problems are wind and a fast group pace. Check with the leader if you have any doubt if the trip will be comfortable for you or if there are future trips that would be better. TSR wants trips to be safe and enjoyable for everyone. The leader has full discretion in not allowing a participant to join the group for safety reasons.
6. **Communicate with the leader:** If you have questions or concerns, discuss them with the leader.
7. **Be ready to start on time:** While the leader has some discretion, he or she is encouraged to start on time out of courtesy to paddlers who are ready. The leader is responsible only for paddlers in the group.

During the Trip:

1. **Enjoy the trip:** If you are having a good time, others will, too! Going together has a substantial advantage in terms of safety and friendship.
2. **Stay with the group:** Stay between the leader and the sweep. If you need to temporarily drop behind or go ahead, communicate with the leader or sweep. Leaders should be permitted to lead, followers are expected to follow, and explorers should plot their own trips. The leader is responsible only for paddlers in the group between him/her and the sweep.
3. **Compatibility:** Early in the trip (possibly in the first 10 minutes), gauge your compatibility with the group's pace and abilities. Express any concerns to the leader, who may be able to allay them or may judge it appropriate for you to drop out. If you need to leave the group, you are no longer the leader's responsibility.

4. **Breaks:** The leader will plan stops for rest, separation, points of interest, or other breaks. Participants can also ask for stops. Be sure to properly hydrate.
5. **Enjoy lunch breaks:** For breaks during the trip, clean up and check for items that might be left behind (trash, clothing, PFDs, etc.). Listen for the 5-minute warning and be ready to depart with the group. Occasionally, a group may plan to dine together after the trip.
6. **Other considerations:** If interested in becoming a leader, join the leader “at the front of the line” for a real-time introduction to leading. Keep phone calls to a minimum. Don’t text and paddle. Don’t smoke.
7. **Listen for options:** The leader may point out options to shorten the trip (early out). If you leave the group, you are no longer the leader’s responsibility. There may also be unexpected changes or modifications (for example, due to bad weather or lightning).
8. **Leaving early:** If you leave the group (by going ahead or departing early), let the leader and sweep know. You are no longer the leader’s responsibility.
9. **Accidents:** Club members who volunteer to lead claim no special qualifications. Each participant assumes full responsibility for his or her own safety. Basic first aid is often sufficient. If there is a more serious situation, listen to the leader’s instructions and assist as able. The safety of the group is the leader’s primary responsibility.

After the Trip:

1. Check out with the leader. Thanks for participating!