

**Rivergator Celebratory Expedition Itinerary
March 20 to May 10, 2017 — St. Louis to Gulf of Mexico**

Note: *Itinerary subject to adjustment according to wind, water levels and prevailing weather conditions. For detailed descriptions of route go to www.rivergator.org*

St. Louis

(This section in coordination with Big Muddy Adventures of St. Louis)

Monday, March 20 (Vernal Equinox): Meet 3pm at Columbia Bottoms Boat Ramp (on the Missouri River). Pack your gear into drybags and load the big canoe. Push off around 4pm down the last three miles of the Missouri River. Camp at Missouri/ Mississippi Confluence on Duck Island.

Tuesday, March 21: continue downstream from Duck Island, Route 66 Bridge, City of St. Louis Waterworks, the I-270 Bridge, and Chain of Rocks (portage might be necessary). Camp: Mosenthein Island.

Wed March 22: (World Water Day) Great Arch, LaClede's Landing, the Stan Musial Veteran's Memorial Bridge (newest bridge on the Mississippi), Eads Bridge, the McKinley Bridge, East St. Louis, Anheuser Busch Brewery, Jefferson Barracks, JB I-255 Bridge, Meramec Confluence.

Thurs March 23: Herculaneum, Harlow Island, Fort DeChartres, Calico Island, Osborne Island, Magnolia Hollow Conservation Area

Ste Genevieve

Fri March 24: Ste Genevieve, Moro Island, Kaskaskia River, Chester, Rockwood Island

Sat March 25: Tower Rock, Grand Tower, Trail of Tears State Park, Devil's Island

Sun March 26: Cape Girardeau, Marquette Island, Thebes, Pawnee Hills

Cairo/Ohio River

Mon March 27: Big Bends of the Middle Miss around Dogtooth Island and Missouri Sister Island, Cairo, Fort Defiance, Ohio River Confluence

Tues March 28: Wickliffe, Columbus Belmont, Wolf Island

Wed March 29: Hickman, Is No 8, Reelfoot Lake, Bessie's Bend

New Madrid

Thurs March 30: Bessie's Bend, New Madrid, Kentucky Point

Fri March 31: Tiptonville, Lee Towhead, Hathaway/Island 14, Sandy Hook Bar, Caruthersville

— April 2017 —

Sat April 1: Island 18, Is 20, Is 21, Mouth of the Obion, Tamm Bend

Sun April 2: Chickasaw National Wildlife Refuge, Nebraska Landing, Island 25, Island 26 and Forked Deer Island 27

Mon April 3: Ashport-Keyes Gold Dust, Lower Forked Deer River, Island 30, Osceola

Osceola

Tues April 4: Sans Souci Driver Island, Old Mouth of the Forked Deer, First Chickasaw Bluff, Sunrise Towhead - Island 34

Wed April 5: Hatchie River, Randolph Landing, The Second Chickasaw Bluff (Richardson Bluff), Dean Island

Memphis

Thurs April 6: Denseford Bar and Dikes/Hen and Chicks, Meeman Shelby Forest State Brandywine Island, Hickman Bar, Loosahatchie River, Redman Point Bar, Memphis Upper Waswater Treatment Plant, Wolf River, Mud Island, Memphis "M" Bridge (Hernando De Soto Bridge), 4th Chickasaw Bluff, Memphis

Fri April 7: Meet at 12 noon Mud Island Park Boat Ramp and push off downstream Lower Bridges/Engineer's Bar, President's Island, Entrance to McKellar Lake, Dismal Point, Ensley Bar

Sat April 8: Josie Harry Bar, Cow Island Bend, Cat Island No.50, Starr Landing, Tunica Riverpark Museum, Buck Island (No. 53), Basket Bar

Sun April 9: Commerce Bend, Rabbit Island, Mhoon Landing, Mhoon Bend, Whiskey Chute/Walnut Bend, Whitehall Crevasse, Tunica Runout, Shoo Fly Bar, Stumpy Island

Helena

Mon April 10: Harbert Point, Mouth of the St. Francis River, St. Francis Bar, Buck Island (Prairie Point Towhead), Trotter's Pass, Helena Harbor.

Tues April 11 (Passover/Full Moon): Re-Supply in Helena

Wed April 12: Re-Supply in Helena

Thurs April 13: Re-Supply in Helena

Fri April 14 (Good Friday): Yazoo Pass, Montezuma Towhead, Friars Point, Kangaroo Point, Dewberry Island 61, Old Town Bend, Island 62

Clarksdale

Sat April 15: Island 63, Quapaw Landing (Clarksdale), Muddy Waters Wilderness, Burke's Point, Mouth of the Mellwood Lake, Mouth of De Soto Lake, Jug Harris Towhead, Island 68, Island 67

Sun April 16 (Easter): Wood Cottage, Knowlton Crevasse, Island 69, Cession's Towhead, Hurricane Pint (Dennis Landing), Island 70, Henrico Sandbar, Scrubgrass Bend, Smith Point Sandbar, Mouth of the White River, White River NWR

Mon April 17: Big Island, Victoria Bend, Old Channel of the White, Wreck of the Victor Great River Road State Park, Rosedale Harbor, Arkansas River

Tues April 18: Prentiss Sandbar, Mouth of Lake Whittington, Caulk Neck Bar, Cypress Bend, Catfish Point Bar, Choctaw Bar Island, Mounds Landing, Arkansas City

Greenville

Wed April 19: Yellow Bend, The Greenville Bends, island 8, Leland Neck Point, Warfield Point State Park, Greenville Harbor, Greenville

Thurs April 20: Sunny Side Landing, Greenville Bridge, Lakeport Towhead, American Bar, Kentucky Bend

Fri April 21: Leota Bar, Cracraft Chute, Worthington Cutoff, Matthews Bend, Grand Lake, Island 88, Bunch's Cutoff, Corregidor Bar, Wilson Point Bar, Mayersville, Tennis Court Landing

Sat April 22 (Earth Day): Baleshead, Stack Island, Ben Lamond, Shipland WMA, Fidler Bend, Arcadia Point Bar, Cottonwood Bar, Chotard Lake, Terrapin Neck Cutoff, Willow Island

Vicksburg

Sun April 23: Eagle Lake Pass, Tara Landing, Madison Parish Port, Paw Paw Chute, Brown's Point, Mouth of the Yazoo River, Vicksburg

Mon April 24: Vicksburg Loess Bluffs, Delta Point, Vicksburg Bridges, Racetrack Towhead, Letourneau, Palmyra, Togo, Middle Ground Island

Tues April 25: Big Black River, Grand Gulf State Park, Yucatan Ditch, Coffee Point Dikes, Diamond Cut-Off, Port of Claiborne County, Bayou Pierre, St. Joseph Boat Ramp Bondurant Towhead

Wed April 26: St. Joseph, Waterproof, Natchez

Natchez

Thurs April 27: Natchez, St Catherine's Wildlife Refuge, Carthage, Warnicott, Homichitto River, Washout Bayou, Artonish, 3 Rivers WMA

Fri April 28: Ft. Adams, Old River (Mouth of the Atchafalaya River), Angola Ferry & State Penitentiary, Shreve's Bar, Hog Point, Tunica Bayou, Polly Creek, Little Island, Iowa Point

Sat April 29: St. Maurice Island, Bayou Sara, St. Francisville, St. Francisville, John James Audubon Bridge, Fancy Point

Sun April 30: Thompson Creek, Profit Island, Devil's Swamp, Istrouma Bluff

— May 2017 —

Baton Rouge

(This section in coordination with the Lower Mississippi Riverkeeper)

Mon May 1: Re-Supply in Baton Rouge

Tues May 2: Baton Rouge, I-10 Bridge, Baton Rouge to Plaquemine Red Eye Dikes Manchac Bend, Plaquemine, Nottoway Plantation, Bayou Goula Towhead

Wed May 3: Point Clair, White Castle, Philadelphia Point, Eighty-One-Mile Point, Donaldson, Bayou Lafourche, Bayou Teche, Bringier Point, Point Houmas, Sunshine Bridge, Oak Alley Plantation, Magnolia Landing, Paulina.

New Orleans

Thurs May 4: Bonnet Carre Spillway, Twenty-Six Mile Point, I-310 Bridge, Huey P. Long Bridge, 9-Mile Point, Audubon Park, Algier's Ferry, French Quarter, Algiers Point.

Fri May 5: Algiers Point, Industrial Canal, Algier's Lock, Poydras Bend, English Turn Bend, Caernarvon Crevasse, Twelve Mile Point, Shingle Point, Belle Chasse Ferry, Jesuit Bend, Will's Point

Sat May 6: Will's Point, Poverty Point, Point Celeste, Pointe A La Hache Bohemia Beach, Mardi Gras Pass, Happy Jack, Sixty Mile Point

Sun May 7: Tropical Bend, Point Pleasant, Ostrica Pass, Buras Landing Boat Ramp, Fort Jackson, Plaquemines Bend/Fort Jackson Point, Baptiste Collette Bayou, Venice, Grand Pass Island, Cubit's Gap, Delta National Wildlife Refuge, Pilottown, Head of Passes, -0- Mile Zero

-0- Mile Zero

Mon May 8: Head of Passes, -0- Mile Zero, Southwest Pass, South Pass, Port Eads Lower South Pass Island, Pass A Loutre, Southeast Pass, Last Camp on Expedition: on the Gulf of Mexico (Full Moon Night!)

Gulf of Mexico

Tues May 9: Paddle back upstream to Venice, Grand Pass Island, Cubit's Gap, Delta National Wildlife Refuge, Pilottown, Head of Passes, -0- Mile Zero, final takeout at Cypress Cove Marina in Venice.

End of the road: Venice

Tues May 10 (Full Rose Moon): Drive back through New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Natchez, Vicksburg, return to Clarksdale. Shuttle back to Memphis, St. Louis, or points in between, as needed.

Contact: John Ruskey, 662-902-7841 or john@island63.com to reserve your seat, and for more information.

Mission: We are celebrating the opening of the Rivergator: Paddler's Guide to the Middle/Lower Mississippi River Water Trail, now live at www.rivergator.org

Route: St. Louis to Gulf of Mexico, 1154 miles of free-flowing river

Dates: March 20 to May 10, 2017

What is the Rivergator Celebratory Expedition?

In Spring of 2017 we'll be paddling the Mississippi River from St. Louis to the Gulf of Mexico in a 45-day expedition to celebrate the completion of the Rivergator: Paddler's Guide to the Lower Mississippi River Water Trail.

Who can Join?

Anyone is welcome to jump on board our voyageur style canoe (Option: if you are an expert paddler you can bring your own vessel). No previous experience necessary, but must enjoy wilderness-style camping and must be willing to paddle!

Journalists on board:

This is all about sharing the story. We are reserving at least 4 seats on every segment for writers, photographers and any journalists who will help us share the story about the beautiful and dynamic Mississippi River and the Rivergator Middle/Lower Mississippi River Water Trail describing it. This includes newspapers, magazines, bloggers, local media, documenters, and any other form of media.

Daily Schedule:

Coffee (or tea) at sunrise, breakfast one hour later. Pack up and get on river around 9am. Paddle and explore 2 hours. 1 hour lunch at noon. Paddle and explore all afternoon. Camp around 5pm. We will probably average about 5 hours/day of paddle time in the canoe. This expedition is all about exploration, discovery, and sharing. We like to stop and explore along the way. So when there are interesting sites to see, we stop a lot, maybe once every hour for a 15 min to 1/2 hour (maybe as long as 2 hour or even half day if schedule allows) walk or hike for documentation, or tracking, bird watching, beachcombing, swim, or whatever. Lunch is usually an hour. Also, a mid-day nap sure feels good on the river! There is room in the itinerary for flexibility... so if the weather is bad, or the crew is worn out, we might stay on shore one full day, and each person will be at leisure to do as they please. On the other hand some days we be "voyageur-style" and stay in the canoe longer (maybe 2-3 hours at a time for a total of 8-12 hours of paddling) to make distance, or because the weather is bad.

Food & Gear:

Outfitter Quapaw Canoe Company provides all necessary river gear & emergency equipment. Normally we prepare all food & refreshments, drinks include water, teas and coffee. Alcoholic beverages BYOB. We will pack all necessary cookware and eating utensils, as well as camp tables and camp chairs. Pack favorite snacks. Vegetarian and vegan options available.

Bring all personal gear and stuff into our waterproof drybags before launching (or use your own). These are backpack-style bags made of tough waterproof material - great for packing on a rainy day! It takes three complete fold to make them water-proof, be sure to lock all four buckles! If you have any questions, check with your guide.

Be prepared for everything from heavy rain to hot days with intense sun UV exposure! Sunlight is surprisingly strong on the river, even in the winter (you get the sun twice – once from above and once reflected from below). Sunburn is our number one complaint and has caused more than one Mississippi River paddler very painful days and sleepless nights. Be forewarned! Sunglasses, sun screen, long sleeve clothing and a wide brim hat are all good ideas, especially for anyone particularly sensitive.

Camping equipment and wetsuits: You will need tent, sleeping bag, pad, wet (or dry) suit and neoprene (or comparable) boots. We can supply to anyone who needs them. Otherwise, bring your own and pack with your gear into our dry bags.

Camping:

Remote islands, sandbars, towheads, usually sandy places, sometimes it's necessary to make a muddy landing. In inclement weather it might be necessary to find shelter within the forest. This is primitive camping on a river island, no services of any sort. Bring everything you need to make yourself comfortable. Bring your own toiletry. Bring a change of warm clothing, including summer months, when mornings can be cool. It's always cooler on the river.

Charge:

\$150/day/person includes canoes, paddles, lifejackets and all necessary river gear, first aid kits and emergency gear; and meals, which include all the food prep, campfire cooking, cookware and eatware, and cleanup. There is a separate shuttle fee of \$200/person which covers transportation of canoes and gear plus our vehicles and drivers. Advance \$500 deposit required to hold seat (refundable if we have to cancel, but not if you cancel). Please make check out to the Lower Mississippi River Foundation.

Lower Mississippi River Foundation: *The Rivergator is overseen by the Lower Mississippi River Foundation which is dedicated to access, education, and the betterment of public outdoor recreation on the Middle & Lower Mississippi River.*