Rivergator 2017
Celebratory Expedition:
St. Louis to the Gulf

Celebrating the opening of the Rivergator:
Middle/Lower Mississippi River Water Trail
Now live at www.rivergator.org

March 20 to May 10, 2017
St. Louis to Gulf
What are **The Rivergator Celebratory Expeditions?**

**Intro:** 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. Participants welcome to join in voyageur style canoe. No previous experience necessary, but must enjoy wilderness-style camping and must be willing to paddle! 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!

**Contact:** John Ruskey, 662-902-7841 john@island63.com — or Lena von Machui lena@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! The charge is $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.
Journalists:

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:

Outfitting & Meals: 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.

Drybags: 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.
Sun Exposure: 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 and Deposit:

$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.