

# ***Lower Mississippi River Dispatch No. 298***

***-- Friday, July 24th, 2015 --***

**Upcoming Festivals  
Summer/Fall Paddling  
Middle/Lower Miss and Mizzou**

[www.rivergator.org](http://www.rivergator.org)



LiNKS = Leave No Kid on Shore -- Linking Kids to Mississippi River (John Ruskey)

**in Missouri, Tennessee,  
Mississippi, Arkansas  
and Louisiana (all the way to the Gulf)**



LiNKS = Leave No Kid on Shore -- Linking Kids to Sunflower River (John Ruskey)

## AUGUST

### **Missouri River Paddlers Reunion**

**August 1-8, 2015**

Lower Missouri River/Middle Mississippi River

Columbia Missouri to the Arch (St. Louis)

*(keep reading below for more details!)*

### **Sunflower River Blues and Gospel Festival**

**August 7-8-9**

Clarksdale, Mississippi

*(keep reading below for more details)*

### **Race For Rivers**

**Aug 29, 2015**

St. Charles Missouri

The Mighty Quapaws will be helping out with guided trips in their lovely hand-crafted voyageur canoes for the Annual Race For Rivers, Aug 29, 2015, in St. Charles Missouri.

### **Mississippi River Nature Festival**

August 28-29-30th

Tara Wildlife

(near Eagle Lake, Vicksburg, Mississippi)

<http://www.tarawildlife.com/mississippi-river-canoes-trip-to-willow-island/>

*(keep reading below for more details)*

## **SEPTEMBER**

### **River Soundings at Riverlands**

**Saturday Sept 12th**

Riverlands Center, (near Alton, Illinois)

Greenway Network will sponsor River Soundings at the Audubon Center at Riverlands to highlight our rivers. The program will focus on water trails and the history of the Miss. and Mo. confluence.

## **OCTOBER**

### **Exploring Mindset -- Mississippi River 2015**

**27th Sep - 4th Oct/4th - 11th October**

Adventure Rejuvenation with Dave Cornthwaite and Emily Penn

99 miles on the Mighty Mississippi (Memphis to Clarksdale)

*(keep reading below for more details)*

### **Mighty Mississippi Music Festival**

Oct 2-4th

Greenville, Mississippi

*(keep reading below for more details)*

### **Tennessee Williams Festival**

Oct 2-3rd

Clarksdale, Mississippi

*(keep reading below for more details)*

### **King Biscuit Blues Festival 2015**

October 7th - 10th

Helena Arkansas

Along the banks of the Mighty Mississippi!

*(keep reading below for more details)*

## **NOVEMBER**

### **Baton Rouge - New Orleans - Gulf**

Mon October 19 - Wed, Nov 4, 2015

for the Rivergator: Lower Mississippi River Trail

[www.rivergator.org](http://www.rivergator.org)





Dugout Canoe Project 2015 made possible by Mississippi Arts Commission (John Ruskey)

## **Missouri River Paddlers Reunion**

**August 1-8, 2015**

**Columbia Missouri to the Arch (St. Louis)**

On Saturday August 1st, 2015: Kick-off party at Katfish Katys in Columbia, Missouri for the 1st Missouri River Paddlers Reunion. Anyone that loves the Missouri River is invited.

Paddlers must be self supported with their own food, tents, gear etc. You are in charge of your own journey! We will end at the Gateway Arch in St. Louis about Saturday August 8th, 2015. (Don't feel you have to go all the way to St.Louis....you can stop at many of the ramp options available) You are welcome to paddle ANY or

ALL days...or just come to Katfish Katy's for the big party or the following weekend to Camp Dubois at Alton, Illinois for the final rendezvous. If you cannot make it to the Arch, feel free to stop anywhere in between! Additional options will be posted if you are unfamiliar with the Missouri River. St. Charles, Columbia Bottoms and the Confluence with the Mississippi are other options.

If you cannot make the entire event, maybe at least come to the Paddlers Rendezvous on August 8th and 9th at the Lewis & Clark Reconstructed site of Camp Dubois where we will have music, dancing, story telling and one hell of a good time.

More information will be posted the closer we get. Don't be intimidated by lack of experience. This is about getting to know our growing river paddling community. Many who attend will have paddled the entire river, some only a few miles, and others maybe never. The idea is to share stories, ideas, education, history, safety, river politics issues, exploration, music, dance, laughter, good food and probably a couple of beers tossed in to help embellish a few of the stories.

Note that you might only want to paddle 1-day...so you would need to arrange your own transportation to your vehicles. If you want to join later in the week, feel free to do so at any point such as Herman, Chamois, Coopers Landing, New Haven or St. Charles. (Feel free to start a message thread here with questions about helping with shuttle options with fellow attendees)

We DON'T want this to be regulated or follow a strict guideline or itinerary. It is not going to be an aggressive paddle, but some days we may paddle 30+miles. We don't want to necessarily have to camp each night together. If you need a break from the group, it might be nice to have a night of solitude on your own. Some of us would like to see the sights and explore the history of some of the towns along the way. As this all unfolds more events maybe be added, such as a tour of an historic place along the way. You may want to book a B&B as some of the towns along the way.

You may want to reach out to some of the other paddlers who are at your level and organize with them somewhat for camping and logistics.

It is recommended that if you plan to paddle to the Confluence or the Arch at St. Louis to have your vehicle AT CAMP DUBOIS when you arrive. We will offer a shuttle back on the morning of August 1st from Camp Dubois, Alton Illinois to Katfish Katies,,,,,,,so you would want to drop your canoe or kayak at Katfish BEFORE--early that morning or the night before....its about a 3 hour drive to Alton from there.

The KICK OFF PARTY at Katfish Katie's will be a great event starting around 6PM with intros to all the members as well as some surprises tossed into the event.

Sponsored by Canoe & Kayak Magazine, [Paddling.net](http://Paddling.net), Suspenz, Hennessey Hammock, AquaPac, Old Town/Johnson Outdoors Watercraft, SoloStoves, Chota Outdoor Gear, Seattle Sports, Tilley Endurables, Aquabound Paddles, Drytunes Waterproof Speakers, Gary Leabman & Marsha Nyberg & Spirit Hills B&B, Cliff Jacobson, Dave Miller, Stephenie Ambrose Tubbs, Tom Elpel, and Jared Jellison.

For more information, visit: <https://www.facebook.com/events/791196554268249/>

# Sunflower River Blues and Gospel Festival

August 7-8-9

Clarksdale, Mississippi

*Three-day event remains free, celebrates 28th anniversary August 7-9*

CLARKSDALE — Singer/songwriter William Bell, a pioneer of the classic Stax/Volt "soul" sound along with Otis Redding, Isaac Hayes, Booker T. and the MGs, Albert King, Rufus Thomas, and the Bar-Kays will be headlining the Sunflower River Blues and Gospel Festival August 7-8-9.

Announcing plans for the 28th annual festival, John Sherman, VIP chairman, says Bell's concerts this spring in Tokyo and Krakow, Poland, have rated star reviews, and a high-energy show is forecast for Sunflower's Saturday night finale.

Bell's "Born Under a Bad Sign" became one of the world's most recorded blues songs, and other diverse celebrities ranging from Otis Redding and Eric Clapton to Billy Idol, Lou Rawls, and Rod Stewart have recorded Bell's compositions.

## William Bell

"Sunflower fans have always loved classic soul," continues Sherman. "It reflects Clarksdale legends: Sam Cooke, Ike Turner and John Lee Hooker plus favorite past headliners: Bobby Rush, Latimore, Denise LaSalle, Floyd Taylor and Shirley Brown."

Extolling Bell's multi-talents, Tim Sampson, Stax Museum communications director and former editor of The Memphis Flyer, praises Bell's significant role in the critically acclaimed movie, "Take Me to the River," a Martin Shore production, that debuted last fall in the UK.

Born in Memphis, Bell recorded his first side as a member of the Del Rios before his 1961 solo, "You Don't Miss Your Water," an early Stax hit and others including the Top 20 single, "Everybody loves a Winner."

Moving to Atlanta where he launched Wilbe Records and began producing Top 10 hits in the UK and America, he won Record Label of the Year honors and also continued performing internationally

He has performed at the Montreux Jazz Festival, the Olympic Games, the White House, and in Lincoln Center where recorded "Live in NYC" with the Memphis Symphony Orchestra.

Recipient of the W.C. Handy Heritage Award, Bell is a member of the Memphis Music Hall of Fame and the Georgia Music Hall of Fame.

Norway's "Queen of the Blues", Rita Engedalen, will command a Grammy Award-winning presence on the Sunflower main stage with powerful vocals and original songs reflecting a mix of blues, roots, rock, gospel, and country music.

"My travels to Clarksdale and Mississippi leave a clear mark on my music as well as the Norwegian folk music that I love," says Engedalen.

The latest of her five album, "My Mother's Blues," includes vocalist Ruthie Foster as well as Myra Turner, soloist at Chapel Hill Baptist Church and a cousin of Ike Turner, and two members of Coahoma Community College's Concert Choir: Kiare Robinson and Shanekqua McAbee. The gospel track was recorded at Gary Vincent's Studio in Clarksdale.

## **Rita Engedalen**

Appearing in one segment on stage with Engedalen for their popular "on the road" music project titled "Women in Blues from Norway" will be acclaimed vocalist Margit Bakken.

In a semi-acoustic concert, they play a selection of their own materials and together perform well-known music from "strong blues-singing ladies" including Janis Joplin, Jessie Mae Hemphill, Memphis Minnie, Ida Cox, Big Mama Thornton, and Bessie Smith.

Their first album together, "Broken Soul Blues," was released to top reviews in March 2012.

The 28th Sunflower unofficially kicks off with its traditional Grits, Greens, and Barbecue supper for VIPs at 6 p.m. Thursday, August 6. Entertaining will be Richard "Daddy Rich" Crisman, Bill Abel with Cadillac John, and Anthony Sherrod.

On Friday, Aug. 7, the award-winning Delta Blues Museum Band, that earned standing ovations at the White House in 2014, will open the main stage at 4:30 p.m. followed by guitar phenom Kingfish. Next will be a dazzling lineup of blues greats headed by Nathaniel Kimble and a high-octane dance corps.

Blues masters Eddie Cusic, Pat Thomas, Leo "Bud" Welch and Shardee Turner and the Rising Star Fife and Drum Band perform their magic Saturday morning beneath the VIP acoustic tent from 10 a.m. til 12:45 p.m.

A second acoustic stage will feature Jimmy "Duck" Holmes, L. C. Ulmer, and Terry "Harmonica" Bean from 2 - 4 p.m at 3rd & Sunflower, next to Quapaw Canoe Company.

The unpredictable/vibrant Lusious Spiller fires up the main stage at 1 p.m. Saturday followed by a litany of



veteran musicians: David Dunavent & the EVOL Love Band; Heather Crosse: Heavy Suga & the Sweet Tones; Kenny Brown; Terry "Big T" Williams and the Family Band; and James "Super Chikan" Johnson.

Following the awards ceremony, Rita Engedalen weaves a unique Norwegian welcome, and headliner William Bell closes down the house with his spectacular soul show.

Sunday's free gospel festival opens at 4 p.m. with Sarah Metcalf followed by The Singing Echoes, Divine Angels, and the Sons of Wonder before the presentation of the prestigious Julius Guy Award at 6:45 p.m.

At 7 p.m. the Myles Family takes the stage followed by The New Converted and the finale performance by Patrick Hollis & United of Lee Williams and the Spiritual QCs.

For updates, complete lineups, VIP, levels of support, and vendor forms check the festival's website:  
[www.sunflowerfest.org](http://www.sunflowerfest.org)

The Sunflower River Blues Association is a registered non-profit 501 c 3 organization staffed entirely by volunteers. Donations are tax-deductible and are used directly to pay musicians and production costs.

Primary sponsors and partners include State Tourism, the Coahoma County Tourism Commission, Chamber of Commerce, Coahoma Community College, the Delta Blues Museum, the Mississippi Arts Commission, Northwest Mississippi Regional Medical Center, local banks, businesses and individual donors.

Donations and support may be mailed to the Sunflower River Blues Association, P.O. Box 1562, Clarksdale, MS.

### **Thursday, August 6, 2015**

6:00pm – 6:45pm

Richard "Daddy Rich" Crisman

7:00pm – 7:45pm

Anthony "Big A" Sherrod

8:00pm – 9:00pm

Leo "Bub" Welch

### **Friday, August 7, 2015 Main Stage**

4:30pm – 5:15pm

Delta Blues Museum Band

5:30pm – 6:15pm

David Dunavent & The EVOL Love Band

6:30pm – 7:15pm

Joshua "Razorblade" Steward

7:30pm – 8:30pm

Sweet Angel

8:45pm – 10:00pm

Nathaniel Kimble

### **Saturday, August 8, 2015 Acoustic Stage Under ViP Tent**

10:00am – 10:30am

Eddie Cusic

10:45am – 11:15am

Pat Thomas

11:30am – 12:00pm

Bill Abel & Cadillac John

12:15pm – 12:45pm

Sharde Turner & Rising Star Fife & Drums Band

### **Saturday, August 8, 2015 Delta Acoustic Stage**

(3rd & Sunflower, next to Quapaw Canoe Company)

2:00pm – 2:30pm

Jimmy"Duck" Holmes

2:45pm – 3:15pm

LC Ulmer

3:30pm – 4:00pm

Terry "Harmonica" Bean

### **Saturday, August 8, 2015 Main Stage**

1:00pm – 1:45pm

Lusicrous Spiller

2:00pm – 2:45pm

Christone "Kingfish" Ingram

3:00pm – 3:45pm

Heather Crosse: Heavy Suga & The Sweet Tones

4:00pm – 4:45pm

Kenny Brown

5:00pm – 5:45pm

Terry "Big T" Williams & The Family Band

6:00pm – 7:00pm

James "Super Chikan" Johnson

7:00pm – 7:15pm

Awards"

7:15pm – 8:15pm

Rita Engedalen

8:30pm – 10:00pm

William Bell

### **Sunday, August 9. 2015 Gospel Stage**

4:00pm – 4:30pm

Sarah Metcalf

4:45pm – 5:15pm

The Singing Echoes

5:30pm – 6:00pm

Divine Angels

6:15pm – 6:45pm

The Sons of Wonderful

6:45pm – 7:00pm

Award "Presentation of Julius Guy Award"

7:00pm – 7:30pm

The Myles Family

7:45pm – 8:15pm

The New Converted Voices

8:30pm – 9:30pm

Patrick Hollis & United of Lee Williams & The Spiritual QC's

## **Mississippi River Nature Festival**

August 28-29-30th

Tara Wildlife

(near Eagle Lake, Vicksburg, Mississippi)

<http://www.tarawildlife.com/mississippi-river-canoe-trip-to-willow-island/>

### **Canoe Trip at the Mississippi River Nature Weekend – August 28-30th**

At this year's [Mississippi River Nature Weekend](#), you can see the beauty of the Mississippi River on a 2-3 hour canoe excursion with Quapaw Canoe Company.

John Ruskey of Quapaw Canoe Company has been canoeing the lower Mississippi River for nearly 30 years. "It's the most beautiful, wild, energizing, and refreshing place I've ever been," says Ruskey.

John recommends the early morning canoe trip as the best time to see wildlife along the Mississippi River. From deer to coyote, wading birds, songbirds and even river otters, you won't be disappointed with nature's display.

You'll be driven from Tara's main lodge to Tara Landing along the river where the canoes will be loaded. The canoes will travel along the shoreline of the river, which is bordered by layers of forest, fields, and the remnants of older channels, and then cross over the main river channel to reach Willow Island. After a short walk on the sands of Willow Island, you'll paddle back to Tara Landing.

### **Reading the Tracks in the Sand**

Willow Island is a large sandbar island that has an abundance of wildlife. The sand often has animal tracks from the forest to the water's edge. "The sand tells a story," Ruskey says. "We can look at the footprints and learn the story of the animals that were here the night before."

Ruskey 'reads' the prints and interprets the activity of the animals that were on the beach. Some tracks may show evidence of being chased by a predator, some may line up to drink the water, and once, Ruskey saw the tracks of an alligator. There will be an abundance of bird tracks in the sand; the patterns that they make are fascinating to look at.

### **What to Bring**

Ruskey recommends that you wear clothing that is appropriate for the day's weather: rain jacket (if needed), shoes that you don't mind getting muddy or wet, and appropriate clothing. Be sure to apply a good quality sunscreen (spray sunscreen is not recommended). Life jackets in all sizes are available from Quapaw.

If you'd like to get a better look at the wildlife along the way, bring a pair of binoculars, your camera, or your phone (for photographs). John recommends you bring a large Ziploc bag to put your electronic equipment in if it rains.

## **No Experience Required**

If you've never canoed before or if you are a canoe expert, all ages and skill levels are welcome on this excursion. The Quapaw Canoe Company captains will provide instruction and each boat will have an experienced captain (who steers) and first mate (at the bow, who sets the stroke).

The advice from John Ruskey on canoe safety is simple: "Balance and listen to your captain." He advises that you make yourself comfortable in the canoe and find a good paddling position.

Each participant will be required to sign a waiver. Children 18 and under must have a parent or guardian available to sign the waiver on their behalf.

Space is limited. Each canoe seats about 10 people and there are two canoes per excursion. To ensure a spot on the canoes, register now by calling 601-279-4261 or [register online](#).

## **The Quapaw Canoe Company**

In business since 1988, the company is dedicated to human-empowered adventures on the lower Mississippi River. They hand-build their own canoes out of cypress. The company's mission is to share the beauty of the lower Mississippi River.

Owner John Ruskey is committed to giving back to the community. He has worked with a variety of conservation groups to help protect and preserve the river and its surroundings. He has worked to map the lower Mississippi River and created a 1100-mile water trail from St. Louis through the Gulf of Mexico. The [paddler's guide and map](#) is available online.

He also established a youth leadership program, the [Might Quapaw Apprenticeship Program](#). Through the apprenticeship program, which is run through the Lower Mississippi River Foundation, Ruskey teaches local youth about leadership and life skills through survival training on the Mississippi River. The youth that participate in the program learn the how to turn wood into a canoe, paddle a canoe safely, build a fire, build shelter, and cook on a campfire.

To learn more about the Quapaw Canoe Company, visit their website at <http://www.island63.com>

## **Exploring Mindset -- Mississippi River 2015**



# Two Expeditions:

**1) Sept 27th - Oct 4th**

**2) October 4th - 11th**

*Adventure Rejuvenation with Dave Cornthwaite and Emily Penn, Guided & Outfitted by John Ruskey of the Quapaw Canoe Company. For details please visit <http://exploring-mindset-mississippi.strikingly.com/>*

## **What it's all about:**

### The Journey:

This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to take part in a moving retreat designed for those who are ready for a personal or work-based transition. Join us on the mighty Mississippi River, where we will travel south from Memphis by canoe, camp on sandbars, hold discussions by the campfire beneath the stars, and prepare perfectly for life's next step.

### Workshops

Designed to encourage a rethink of everything we do. From the social and environmental challenges we face, to happiness, efficiency, values, mass-consumption, how we spend our time, career creation, attitude, adventure and, the big one, how do we rebuild society and where should we fit in it as individuals.

### Canoe & Camp

Taking on the Big Muddy is no mean feat, but we're working alongside the Mississippi Riverman, John Ruskey, and his team from Quapaw Canoe Club. And don't forget, Dave himself paddled the full river in 2011. Each night we will make camp on the riverbank, make camp and sling hammocks, then hold structured workshops and campfire chats, soaking up the tranquility of river life and the inspiration that comes with spending time with like-minded people.

### Trip Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive in Memphis at 4pm, meet the team and stay in a local hotel

Day 2: Head down to the river after breakfast, set off for the first day on the river

Days 3-6: Life on the river - paddling & workshops by day, camping by night

Day 7: Final day on the river, arrive into Helena, pack up kit and head to Clarksdale

Day 8: Depart Clarksdale after breakfast for a 1h30 shuttle back to Memphis

## **Workshops**

Before we start

- Setting the Scene: an introduction to the expedition and what to expect
- Why Adventure is Important: why getting out of your comfort zone leads to success
- Getting to know each other

#### First day on the River

- Safety Briefing, paddling instruction and packing up the canoes
- An Insight Into Our Changing World: Environmental (ocean science, degradation and conservation) and Social (consumption, energy, city living and population)

#### Philosophy

- Values: our shifting mindset
- Happiness: what is happiness to you?
- Time: our most precious asset and how we use it
- Discussion: how do we rebuild society?

#### Skills

- Photography & Video Shooting
- Social Media
- Money & Fundraising
- Time Management

#### Personal

- Identifying your passion and expertise
- Creating a Yes List
- One-on-one sessions with mission leaders
- Designing your future

#### Take the Floor

- 30 minute life story from each crew member
- Photographer of the Day

### **Trip Cost**

Each team member is required to contribute \$1,850 / £1,200 towards the expedition.

This cost includes:

- Canoes and SUPs
- Camping Equipment for 5 nights on the river
- Hotel accommodation for 2 nights
- All food provisions while on the river
- Shuttle from Clarksdale back to Memphis

Not included:

- Return flight to Memphis
- Evening meal in Memphis on day 1 and Clarksdale on day 7

## **Mission Leaders**

### **Emily Penn**

[Emily Penn](#) is an oceans advocate, skipper and artist; a Cambridge University architecture graduate; and Director of global organisation [Pangaea Explorations](#). Emily's ability to develop and communicate solutions for challenges facing today's society has been sharpened by a diverse portfolio of unique experiences, including organising mass-waste clean-ups on Pacific islands, trawling for micro plastics in the Arctic, and rounding the planet on the record-breaking biofuelled boat Earthrace.

### **Dave Cornthwaite**

[Dave Cornthwaite](#) is an adventurer, bestselling author, motivational speaker and founder of life-fulfilling brand SayYesMore. He has travelled more than 19,000 miles under his own steam since quitting his desperately pathless job as a graphic designer in 2005. His passionate advocacy of the word YES has contributed to the sprouting of countless adventures worldwide, big and small.

### **John Ruskey**

[John Ruskey](#) is a canoe builder, youth leader and has been paddling the Mississippi River since 1982. He operates Quapaw Canoe Company from Clarksdale Mississippi and is writing the [Rivergator: Paddler's Guide to the Lower Mississippi River](#). He runs year-round workshops on canoe building, navigation and survival skills for the youth of the Lower Mississippi Valley.

## **The Route**

99 miles total. 73 miles of the big river from the pyramid city of Memphis to the paddler's oasis Helena Arkansas. 26 miles further to the blues epicenter of the world, Clarksdale, Mississippi.

The Mighty Mississippi flows 99 miles out of Memphis down to Clarksdale in giant meandering loops into the verdant and fantastically fertile Mississippi Delta, the former cotton kingdom that gave birth to the Delta Blues.

The river leaves the city behind, carving elegant S-curves through deep woods as it meanders through Commerce Bend, Mhoon Bend and Walnut Bend, and then wanders down through a floodplain fifteen miles wide to the mouth of the St. Francis River, one of several tributaries that adds to the feeling of wildness.

Hundreds of thousands of acres of protected bottomland hardwood forest rest alongside the Mississippi in an incredible labyrinth of islands, forests, bayous, blue holes and back channels. Its the largest roadless area in the mid-south and where the road ends, the trail begins for paddlers. Giant islands in the river adds to the experience and we will enjoy wild open places, deep forests, hidden back channels, rich wildlife, and spectacular camping throughout.

## **For More Information**

Main website: [www.exploringmindset.com](http://www.exploringmindset.com)

Email: [info@exploringmindset.com](mailto:info@exploringmindset.com)

## **Baton Rouge - New Orleans - Gulf**

**Mon October 19 - Wed, Nov 4, 2015**

*2 weeks on the busiest and most dangerous stretch of the entire Mississippi River. Itinerary subject to change depending on river level and prevailing wind and weather patterns. Primitive camping. \$125/day includes canoes, paddles, lifejackets and all necessary river gear, first aid kits, emergency gear and meals.*

### **Itinerary Summary:**

**Mon Oct 19: Arrival in Baton Rouge; Pre-trip Intro to the Chemical Corridor by Paul and Michael Orr**

**Tue Oct 20: Baton Rouge to Plaquemine Towhead (20 miles)** Put-in at Glass Beach blow I-10 Bridge.

**Wed Oct 21: Plaquemine Towhead to Goula Bayou Towhead (15 miles)**

**Thurs Oct 22: Goula Bayou Towhead to Brigier Point (21 miles)**

**Fri Oct 23: Bringier Point to Magnolia Landing (21 miles)**

**Sat Oct 24: Magnolia Landing to Bonnet Carre (21 miles)**

**Sun Oct 25: Bonnet Carre to Nine Mile Point (23 miles)**

**Mon Oct 26: Nine Mile Point to Industrial Canal (12 miles)**

**Tues Oct 27: Mississippi River Network Annual Meeting (New Orleans)**

**Wed Oct 28: Mississippi River Network Annual Meeting (New Orleans)**

**Thurs Oct 29: Industrial Canal to Poverty Point (31 miles)**

**Fri Oct 30: Poverty Point to Bohemia (27 miles)**

**Sat Oct 31: Bohemia to Head of Passes (33 miles)**

**Sun Nov 1: Head of Passes to Gulf via Southeast Pass (12 miles)**

**Mon Nov 2: Camp on Gulf** in Pass A Loutre Wildlife Management Area

**Tues Nov 3: Southeast Pass to Venice (22 miles)** Takeout at Cypress Cove Marina.

**Wed Nov 4: Baton Rouge -- Return Home**

### **WATER LEVELS ACCORDING TO THE BATON ROUGE GAUGE (BG)**

Low Water = 0 to 12 BG

Medium Water = 12 to 22 BG

High Water = 22 to 35 BG

Bank Full = 30 BG

Flood Stage = 35 BG and above

<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/lmrfc/?n=lmrhc-mississippiandohioriverforecast>

### **WATER LEVELS ACCORDING TO THE NEW ORLEANS GAUGE (NO)**

Low Water = 0 to 5 NO

Medium Water = 5 to 10 NO

High Water = 10 to 17 NO

Bank Full = 12 NO

Flood Stage = 17 NO

Levee Height = 20 NO

<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/lmrfc/?n=lmrhc-mississippiandohioriverforecast>

**Detailed Itinerary:**



**Mon Oct 19:** Meet in Baton Rouge, pre-trip orientation with Paul and Michael Orr, the Lower Mississippi Riverkeepers. **Baton Rouge to Plaquemine Towhead** (20 miles) Put in from downtown Baton Rouge (MM 230), around Red Eye Dikes (possible picnic site) paddle past the noisy Dow Chemical Megaplex West bank, and then into the long forested length of Sardine Crossing and into Manchac Bend, one of two huge cypress-knee shaped bends, so big they can be seen from orbiting satellites. Manchac & Australia Bends make long 10 mile passages each with multiple crossings involved. They are edged by bottomland hardwood forests and at low to med water levels plenty of sandbars to stop on.

**Tue Oct 20: Plaquemine Towhead to Goula Bayou Towhead** (15 miles) Stop off in historic downtown Plaquemine for a fascinating walking tour of this beautiful village. Historically the flooding river poured over its banks into these arteries of the wetlands and fed the prolific surrounding marshes and created useful shortcuts for the coastal inhabitants who could easily travel east & west through this region in their pirogues without having to negotiate the difficult traverse of the big channels and strong currents of the bird's foot delta. Possible access westward via Bayou Plaquemine and the Lower Grand River into the Atchafalaya River Basin and the Gulf of Mexico. Below Plaquemine paddle past Georgia Gulf Chemicals & Vinyls and swing into St. Gabriel Bend for a river view of Willow Glen Power Plant. Bayou Goula Towhead becomes visible downstream, like a bright green sailboat on a muddy sea. This is the last main channel island of any permanence on the Lower Mississippi and also the last possible island campsite.

**Wed Oct 21: Goula Bayou Towhead to Brigier Point** (21 miles) The river gets exponentially busier coming around Point Clair and into the White Castle reach, a steady increase of freighters will be met with from here on downstream, and the corporate superstars they serve: General Electric, Borden Chemical, OSCA Calcium Chloride, Triad Nitrogen. Giant scrap metal loading docks and Grain Stevedores come into view around Philadelphia Point. A beautiful sandbar at Eighty-One-Mile Point. Possible side trip into the historic town of Donaldson. A thousand years ago the Mississippi River followed a due south course to the Gulf that is today occupied by Bayou Lafourche and Bayou Teche. Bayou Teche was recently designated a National Water Trail, and is the setting for Longfellow's epic poem Evangeline, a romance of the Acadian Exodus.

**Thurs Oct 22: Bringier Point to Magnolia Landing** (21 miles) Downstream from the relative quietness & seclusion of Bringier Point appears noisy River Cement & the giant Ormet Alumina Terminal. Around Point Houmas the river flows under the famous Sunshine Bridge and then down through a gamut of refineries & petrochemical installations including Motiva, Eagle Asphalt, IMC Phosphates and Chevron Phillips. The Port of St James Parish is surprisingly the 2nd largest inland port in North America. Combined with New Orleans & Baton Rouge they make the largest. The megalithic Grain Elevator Zen-Noh appears East Bank around St. Alice. Oak Alley Plantation can be seen at high water levels from the levee at Belmont, and shortly below is the beautiful sandbar/wetlands at Magnolia Landing, safely tucked away off the main channel near Paulina.

**Fri Oct 23: Magnolia Landing to Bonnet Carre** (21 miles) You know you're getting close to the Gulf now as more & more Brown Pelicans fly over, Roseate Spoonbills, and other sub-tropicals, and you get your first whiffs of brackish water floating across the Bonnet Carre Spillway from Lake Ponchartrain. The spillway was built in response to the Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 that inundated much of the Mississippi River basin. It was first opened during the flood of 1937, and nine times thereafter through 2015 to lower river stages at New Orleans. The most recent opening began in May 2011, when river levels in New Orleans approached the flood stage of 17 feet.

**Sat Oct 24: Bonnet Carre to Nine Mile Point** (23 miles) This stretch through Industrial Corridor is so densely packed with industry and so congested that there are very few opportunities for making landings, indeed its non stop action on both sides of the river from here to the city. The docking & installations read like a Fortune 500 list: Union Carbide, Movita, Volero, Shell Chemical (Norco), ARTCO. The river continues on around

Twenty-Six Mile Point and under the main span of the I-310 Bridge, a beautiful 2-tower suspension bridge constructed entire of thick sheet metal, even the pylons, the whole rusting clotted blood red like a piece of modern sculpture. Commercial Jets make their final approaches over the river to the Louis Armstrong International Airport near Kenner. Down past Monsanto and Northrop Grumman Ship works is the famous Huey P. Long Bridge, after which the river dives into a 180 degree bend around 9-Mile Point and flows past 3 giant Entergy Power Plants.

### **Sun Oct 25: Nine Mile Point to Industrial Canal (12 miles)**

You're now the vicinity of Tulane University & neighborhoods, the terminus of the St. Charles Trolley is now just over the levee on the East Bank. Possible landing & respite at Audubon Park before the final push around 6 Mile Point and the miles of wharfing & drydocking at Thalia Street, Erato Street, Napoleon Street. Under the last bridge on the Mississippi River, the greater New Orleans Bridge, downtown New Orleans & the French Quarter are now clearly seen. Paddle past the Canal Street waterfront and the Canal Street Ferry and make a landing at the Moonwalk just below the dock of the Natchez, the last authentic steamboat on the Lower Mississippi. Celebrate your successful journey down America's biggest port on America's biggest river by crossing the levee into Jackson Square and making toasts with cafe au lait & fresh beignets at Cafe du Monde. Stock up for the next stretch of river with fresh meats and cheeses, fruits and veggies at the French Market, and then continue on downstream to camp at the mouth of the Industrial Canal.

### **Tues Oct 27: Mississippi River Network Annual Meeting (New Orleans)**

### **Wed Oct 28: Mississippi River Network Annual Meeting (New Orleans)**

### **Thurs Oct 29: Industrial Canal to Poverty Point (31 miles)**

### **Fri Oct 30: Poverty Point to Bohemia (27 miles) Bohemia State Wildlife Management Area.**

### **Sat Oct 31: Bohemia to Head of Passes (33 miles)**

### **Sun Nov 1: Head of Passes to Gulf via Southeast Pass (12 miles)**

### **Mon Nov 2: Camp on Gulf Pass A Loutre Wildlife Management Area**

### **Tues Nov 3: Southeast Pass to Venice (22 miles) Takeout at Cypress Cove Marina.**

### **Wed Nov 4: Baton Rouge Return Home**

## **BATON ROUGE TO NEW ORLEANS TO VENICE**

The last 225 miles of the Lower Mississippi River are also the most dangerous and most demanding in North America. Warning: for expert paddlers only. The fecund wilderness of the sprawling Mississippi River floodplain disappears above Baton Rouge and is replaced by a chaotic global shipping lane. You will have to paddle several hundred miles of choppy crowded water sharing the main channel with sea-going freighters, cargo boats, re-supply vessels, and endless fields of barges as they fleet up for the long distance journey back up the river. Commonly known as the “Industrial Corridor.” You will be camping next to refineries and chemical plants, and lots of coal-fired power plants. More toxins are dumped in the river here than any other piece of river in America. No more remote camping, no more swimming, no more quiet sections of river teeming with wildlife. This is a section of the Mississippi you paddle just to get through it. But there are surprising scenes of great beauty, architectural elegance, and historical significance. Some highlights include the towns of Plaquemine, Donaldsonville, Reserve, and a possible pull-out for fresh chickory coffee and powder-sugar dusted beignets at the Moonwalk in Jackson Square (mile 95). While you’re at it, resupply with Po-Boys and fresh fruit & veggies in the French Market. And then head on downstream towards Venice, Pilot’s Town, and then the Head of Passes, where the Mighty Mississippi splits into a maze of channels through the birdsfoot Mississippi Delta. Paddle down one of the channels to the Gulf and camp with a view towards South America. The next day turn around and paddle back upstream to Venice, or hire a fishing boat for a shuttle.

The Mississippi connects the two big river cities of Louisiana in a lyrical curving passage of heavy industry, commercial traffic, ancient trade routes and colorful history. Put in below the State Capitol in downtown Baton Rouge and embark on this epic journey downstream through proud parishes and storied places like Bayou Manchac, Bayou Lafourche, Saint James, La Place, Audubon Park, and Algiers, passing by old channels that the Mississippi used to follow to the Gulf of Mexico, camping on the very last mid-channel islands on the main stem Mississippi River (Plaquemine & Bayou Goula Towheads), alongside the busiest concentration of graineries & refineries in North America, lots of scrap steel operations and stinky plastics production plants, more strange repulsive smells than you’ll ever paddle through anywhere else in the world, except maybe the German Ruhr, or the Chinese Yangtze. The industrial wasteland is fortunately broken up with views of old catholic church steeples rising razor sharp over the levee, and by architectural wonders in bridges like the Huey P. Long, and the Greater New Orleans Bridge (last Bridge on the Mississippi River). You will paddle along the ancient routes of the great tribes of North America, whose rumored riches were later pursued by Cabeza de Vaca & Hernando DeSoto, little did they know that the wealth was contained in the land itself and the omnipotent river meandering through. The Cajuns journeyed by big canoe along these waters after being expelled from Acadia and found their new homeland in the bayous & prairies of South Louisiana and made a cultural paradise and music almost equal to the excitement & tragic beauty of the river. Nothing will match the romance of a river arrival into New Orleans. Imagine making a landing directly into the French Quarter on the levee at the Moonwalk, with the St. Louis Chapel projecting heavenward from Jackson Square, Jax Brewery on one side and the French Market on the other. The campsites can be creative & challenging, sometimes in the proximity of power plants, sometimes on the levee, sometimes on muddy riverbanks.

Contrary to all expectations, the river seems to get younger as it approaches its final destination, getting deeper, more mysterious, more mystical, and more playful, allowing industry and commercial transportation only on its surface all the while remaining aloof and keeping its power and beauty hidden down deep just beyond the complete ambitions of humanity. Oftentimes paddlers are challenged by abrupt right-angle bends and a fast moving freighter nearby, paddlers beware at Forty-Eight Point, Bringier Point, Point Houmas, Helvetia Point, Brilliant Point, College Point, Magnolia Point, and Forty-Eight Mile Point. The river is deep at these bends, over 200 feet in places. The natural deepest hole in the entire Mississippi Drainage is off Algier’s Point (opposite Jackson Square), where it dives to 250 feet deep.

## **VENICE TO THE GULF:**

20-30 miles. Depends on your route. The choices include South Pass, Southwest Pass and Pass LaOutre. What a joy to paddle the last ten miles of the Mighty Mississippi past Pilot Town to the legendary Head of Passes, mile -0- of the Lower Mississippi River. For through-paddlers, reaching the Gulf is like reaching the South Pole. Months of planning, paddling, long hot days and cold windy nights, weeks of rain and headwinds, millions of paddle strokes and countless muddy campsites have brought you to the end of a significant pilgrimage spanning several distinct geographic regions. Your stamina and hard paddling have brought you down the longest and largest river in North America. Your quickest and quietest route to the Gulf is to take the South Pass and make landing on one of the muddy beaches past the lighthouse. Celebrate your expedition as appropriate, and if the weather is good make camp and stay for the night to fully relish the experience. Hitch a ride back with a friendly fisherman, or paddle back under your own steam. After completing thousands of miles of river, the upstream paddle will be a breeze! Best practice: before leaving Venice check the weather first and make note of wind speed and direction. In a south wind you might want to avoid the South Pass and instead opt for the Pass LaOutre or SW Pass. In strong west winds avoid the Southwest Pass. In South winds over 25mph stay in Venice until it calms.

Farthest navigable extension of the Mississippi River, the mouth of the river at the Southwest Pass. The Southwest Pass is the busiest out of all major river passes. But it also has the best flow (hence less paddling). As the river approaches the Gulf (and is drained off by its passes and other smaller openings to the Caribbean) it slows down and becomes sluggish. The mud and wastes of 41% of America are deposited and become the Louisiana Delta. At least this is how it's supposed to work. This is what happens in the parallel drainage of the Atchafalaya, where the water is allowed to flow naturally as an alluvial delta into the shallow Gulf. Entirely within Plaquemines Parish, the present day birdsfoot delta is a marshy, swampy land rich in oil, natural gas, mosquitoes, seafood and wildlife. And it's also disappearing. In 1908 the Southwest pass was made navigable year-round with a 40 foot channel by the placement of a series of jetties (placed perpendicular to the river current). Captain James B. Eads had previously opened the South Pass by this method (1875), and the Army Corps of Engineers copied his method in 1908 with the Southwest Pass, and then diverted most of the flow down this route. Eads' jetty method opened the passes to the seven seas, and led to the development of the Mississippi River system as the longest and heaviest used inland waterway system in the world. New Orleans (which previously was only accessible during high water) became America's second busiest port. There are plans afoot to increase the depth to 60 feet to accommodate supertankers. Meanwhile the oceans are rising with great concern for the entire Gulf Coast which would be inundated by the end of the century according to modest estimates.

Put in at Venice, and quickly float past "the jump," which was created when flood waters poured through a small canal dug by Venice fisherman in 1840. (The jump leads into Grand Pass and Tiger Pass). Ocean-going freighters, oil dock crew boats and fishing boats will be your companions as we paddle along past Cubits gap (opened by the Union Army during the Civil War) and Pilot Town. Pilot Town is an interesting water-bound enclave of Mississippi River Pilots. Here river pilots are taken aboard freighters to navigate them up the tricky channels of the Mississippi to New Orleans, Baton Rouge, and points in between. Immediately below Pilot Town is the "Head of Passes," the zero marker of the Lower Mississippi River. Here the river splits into three major channels or "passes" leading to the Gulf. Best route: South Pass to the Gulf. From here the lines of trees on either bank descend into muddy marshes and shorelines, the lines of land diminishing, and the expanse of the gulf becoming more and more a reality until the entire horizon becomes the gulf at the end of the jetties. This section can be challenging in high wind. In severe weather there is no choice but to take shelter and wait out the storm. (Note: in the event of any oncoming hurricanes it would be best to stay put in Venice, or better yet New Orleans or Baton Rouge, and await its passing). There might be passing fishing boats and other local traffic, but all commercial vessels stay in the Southwest Pass.

Near here LaSalle claimed the Mississippi and all its contiguous lands for France after becoming the first European to float its length (1682). In the early 1800s an adventurous English traveler by the name Mrs. Trollope entered the Mississippi estuary and described the river "pouring forth its muddy mass of waters and mingling with the deep blue of the Mexican Gulf." She declared that she had never beheld a scene so utterly

desolate. “Had Dante seen it he might have drawn images from its horrors.” This vision might still hold true!

Most Quapaw Canoe Company expeditions are at least 90% wilderness and no more than 10% industry. In this section of river, the converse is true, its at least 90% heavy industry and maybe 10% woods & wetlands. Any journey down the Mississippi is a journey filled with superlatives, the biggest, the widest, the greatest, and etc -- this section of river is no different, except instead of just being the biggest & best of nature, it is also the biggest & the most gargantuan of post-industrial America. While not for everyone, this section of river, if approached with a good measure of precaution & careful planning, can be the education of a lifetime and an exciting adventure that truly can't be equaled anywhere on earth.

**Warning:** this stretch is for expert paddlers only. (If you have successfully paddled from the headwaters, you are now expert by light of the fact you got this far.) Still, exercise extreme caution and patience. Paddle wisely. Use sailor's sixth sense. Avoid during hurricane season. Go to shore and stay there in any bad weather or troubling situations.

To help safeguard the Baton Rouge to New Orleans Lower Mississippi River Water Trail for future generations of paddlers, 10% of our guiding & outfitting fees from any expeditions of any length in this section of river are donated to the Lower Mississippi Riverkeeper, Paul Orr.

## **Rivergator:**

### **Baton Rouge - New Orleans - Gulf**

**Food & Gear:** Quapaw provides all necessary river gear & emergency equipment. Normally we prepare all food & refreshments, drinks include spring water, juices and milk. Alcoholic beverages BYOB. We will pack all necessary cookware and eating utensils, as well as camp tables and camp chairs.

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 rain or intense sun UV exposure! Sunlight is surprisingly intense 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.

We can supply tents & sleeping bags to anyone who needs them, \$35ea/person/trip regardless of length. 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:** is \$125/day which 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 to and from Baton Rouge and New Orleans for drop-off and pickup.

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.



LiNKS = Leave No Kid on Shore -- Linking Kids to Missouri River (John Ruskey)

The Lower Mississippi River Dispatch

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