

Lower Mississippi River Dispatch No. 299

Monday, Aug 3, 2015

Wild Miles on the Big River



Atchafalaya River/American Pass (David Hanson)

Bitter Southerner: Wild Miles on the Big River
<http://bittersoutherner.com/wild-miles-on-the-big-river>

Boyce Upholt and Rory Doyle joined us in March 2015 for an expedition that started in an un-named farm ditch beside a turn-row in southern Mississippi near Fort Adams and continued down the Atchafalaya to the Gulf of Mexico, exploring the Wax Lake Delta on the paddle back upstream to Morgan City. The Full length story with beautiful photography can be found in the most recent edition of the *Bitter Southerner, Stories from the American South*. For full story please go to: <http://bittersoutherner.com/wild-miles-on-the-big-river>.



Atchafalaya River/Wax Lake Delta (David Hanson)

David Hanson: Atchafalaya

Meanwhile talented video-photographer environmental journalist David Hanson (Modoc Films) tells the Rivergator Atchafalaya story in a seven minute documentary -- which can be seen on the Rivergator home page: www.rivergator.org.



Atchafalaya River/Willow Bayou (David Hanson)

Summer Highwater

High water reminds us of one of our biggest dreams for the Mississippi River: the rejuvenation of the floodplain. High water allows the river to regain all of its lost channels. This in turn allows the land to go wild, transforming the forests into flooded forests and replenishing wetlands. This helps relieve the Gulf from the annual Dead Zone, and also leads to the biggest forestation and carbon sequestration ever. The beauty of it is that the river does most of the work simply by rising high and flooding its nearby forests, fields and sandbars. The river naturally re-seeds the landscape, nourishes the soil, and waters the seedlings. If we continue cutting off the floodplain, as is being attempted at the New Madrid - St. John's/Birdspoint Floodway, we will lose all of the benefits of high water. We will see more flooding, more catastrophic changes in water levels, and bigger dead zones.

Greybeard: Oldest Man to paddle the Mississippi River?

(Quick report from Layne Logue, Quapaw Vicksburg) Dale Sanders continues on from Vicksburg, MS to Natchez, MS. 76 miles. 2 days of 38 miles. Layne Logue joined Dale on his record setting "Oldest person... 80 years old...to solo canoe paddle the Source to Sea Mississippi River".

Highlights include rare north wind, low humidity, whitetail bucks in velvet, raccoons, riding 10 ft towboat waves (that was awesome!), watching 2 buoys go under water and not pop back up,

sunset & sunrise, rock hunting at the gravel bar... And of course paddling with the Grey Beard Adventurer!

You can follow this link on SPOT TRACKER. It shows his position every 10 minutes.
<http://share.findmespot.com/shared/faces/viewspots.jsp...>

Dale Sanders is paddling for his niece, Anna who has Juvenile Type 1 Diabetes.
“Cruising for a Cure” is his driving force.
<http://www.greybeardadventurer.com/the-mississippi-source-t....>

See the DONATE ONLINE link to give some love to a great charity.

**River Gator - Paddler's Guide on the Mississippi River
1,155 miles from St. Louis to Gulf of Mexico**
Website: www.rivergator.org

Facebook Pages:

<http://www.facebook.com/RiverGator>
<http://www.facebook.com/QuapawCanoeCompany>

Special thanks to: www.visitmississippi.org

LiNKS = Leave No Kid on Shore

Kids are the links in the chain to the future. Let's start by Linking Kids to River. LiNKS is also a cat. We are teaching kids to be like a Lynx: quiet, thoughtful, purposeful, connected, resourceful, don't take more than you need, live in hamrony.

LiNKS. A new program being introduced by the Lower Mississippi River Foundation for the health of our future generations.

This Weekend:

28th Sunflower River Blues and Gospel Festival

August 7-8-9

Clarksdale, Mississippi

August 29, 2015

10-year commemoration of Hurricane Katrina

From Mighty Quapaw graduate “Wolfie” Chris Staudinger

My dad and I are building a paper boat for the 10-year commemoration of Hurricane Katrina. It's going to be a 16-foot, fully-functioning vessel. It will have a paper hull, formed by bonded layers of people's written stories from the storm.

In a lot of ways, I've spent ten years trying to understand the flooding - much of it through writing. But despite my own reflections, some of my most intense experiences learning about the storm have come from other people's stories.

When I came back to New Orleans after Katrina, I was sixteen. I can remember that my friend Santi told me about carrying sick patients on sheets and mattresses up the stairs to the roof of Tulane Hospital, over and over, until he got taken out of the flooding on a military truck. At that time, our chief concerns in life were how to buy beer and where we would drink it.

It wasn't until last year that my friend Phil told me his own story of Katrina, when he was separated from his mother and roamed the evacuated streets of New Orleans by himself, trying to find a way out (also as a fifteen years old). I couldn't believe that we'd been friends for thirteen years, but only then, in the Friendly Bar, was I learning about this backbone experience that altered him, somehow, over the last ten years into the person sitting in front of me.

As I've asked people about Katrina for this boat project, it's the same thing over and over. I get the feeling that?I thought I knew this person, but then, there they are in front of me, suddenly carrying something I never knew they had. I'm amazed at what they say, the details in the moments of someone's life in an emergency, an emergency we all happened to have at the exact same moment in our lives.

Over one million people lived through that storm. Even more felt its effects, and everyone is dragging around their own emotional debris from the storm. Beneath layers of material rebuilding and a decade of time, this stuff is still here.

What do we do with it?

The late artist David Wojnarowicz said, “Each public disclosure of a private reality becomes something of a magnet that can attract others with a similar frame of reference.” I'm hoping that this boat can act as that magnet. I know that if boats were a salvation from the storm ten years

ago, they can faithfully hold our experiences 10 years later, because Hurricane Katrina and its debris are still a valuable frame of reference for people in New Orleans and others dispersed across the country. Through Katrina, we came to know each other a tiny bit better. You could feel that unity in New Orleans after the storm, despite all of the ugliness that the storm revealed about the city and despite the depression. Most of us wanted to come home because we love it, this island, even with the water, the danger, the dysfunction, the problems. There was a shared realization that we live in this place together as a community -- or maybe a shared joy in the realization that we're here, period.

The boat will be floated somewhere in the city on August 29 of this year for the 10th anniversary of the storm. I'll send emails about times and places. And please send me emails or call me about stories. The more stories, the more layers of paper, the stronger the boat becomes. Please consider writing something - by hand or typed. Don't worry about grammar or making your story "good" or "dramatic." Every experience can carry its own chapter in the book of Katrina. I realize that most people have told this story a thousand times, but writing it out is different. I think that the written word has a special power to squeeze the puss out of a situation. It grants special access to difficult places. Sometimes it makes things better, and sometimes it makes things worse. But usually, things look more clear. There are more details and more questions. In the end, there's something to show. There's something for the writer to hold on to, and there's something for other people to hold on to, as well.

If you would rather talk it out, we can record your story and I'll transcribe it. If you want it to be anonymous, it can stay anonymous. People have asked, "What about the layers that won't be seen?" I'd like to accompany the boat with an online and printed volume of the stories as well.

I know that a lot of people don't want to reopen the wounds of Katrina. It's a time of loss that is hellish to revisit and almost impossible to describe. I don't ask for participation lightly. I ask with a mutual respect and as someone who is slowly coming to realize the depth of my community's suffering (and hope) after the storm.

The amazing thing about a boat is that it can carry an incredible amount of weight and still slide gracefully across the water.

Here are some prompts if you don't know where to start:

? Who were you with? Where were you? What did you see?

? When did you first realize that things were not the same as other storms? ? Did the Hurricane force you to evacuate? Where did you go? How did you get there? Did you like it? Did you hate it? What did you miss about home?

? Did you meet someone who made a strong impact on you?

? When were you most scared during the storm?

? Did you lose anyone during the storm? Did any loved ones move away for good? ? Sometimes photos carry vivid memories. Do you have any photos from during or after the storm that have stuck with you? Where were you? What does it show? What was happening? ? Did a boat help you to safety?

? Do you remember any dreams or nightmares you've had about the hurricane? ? Did the storm present you with any unexpected opportunities?

? Are there any songs that remind you of the hurricane or that time in your life? ? What was it like when you first got back after evacuating?

? Was there a time when you felt like you couldn't deal with it anymore? Felt like moving away?

? After the storm, were there decisions made that got you angry? Added insult to injury?

? Who was your best friend during that time?

? What was your neighborhood like in the days / months/ years after the storm?

Contact: Chris Staudinger staudinc@gmail.com

Upcoming Festivals and Great Paddling along the Middle and Lower Mississippi River for Summer/Fall 2015 -- in Missouri, Tennessee, Mississippi, Arkansas and Louisiana!

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-canoe-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

This Weekend: 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 Lusicous 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

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

Lusicous 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 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 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 thr