



# CCA Trip Leader

February 25, 2017



# What is a Trip Leader?

- A better term is a **Trip Coordinator**
  - Plan and post the event
  - Interview participants
  - Plan transportation logistics
  - Keep things moving
  - Everyone is responsible for themselves
  - Remember, this is supposed to be FUN for you too!

# Some Examples

- Wednesday Night Paddles – Michael Baummer
- Thursday Paddles – Alf Cooley
- I have lead many trips with far better boaters than myself
- We have numerous types of events other than boating
- You don't have to be an Ed Gertler





# What is a Trip/Event?

- CCA has had held a wide variety of trips
  - Whitewater: All river classes of course
  - Flat Water & Coastal: Michael Hoon & Diane Rodum
  - Hiking: Charlie Duffy, Steve Burstein, others
  - Skiing: Alpine & Nordic
  - Charities: WVRC, Racing, etc.
  - Racing: Slalom, Downriver, Md. Chuteout
  - Expeditions
  - Rock climbing (Part of the New River Rendezvous)
  - Events: Picnics, Xmas Party, Rolling, Festivals
  - Training: Safety, Classes, Workouts
  - Creative: The “Rumble”, Tandem-Palooza



# Why Bother?

- Trips are the lifeblood of this club
- This is a great way to meet people
- Leading a trip builds strong boating skills
- May enable you to catch a run that isn't paddled often (Like Passage Creek) – An Ettinger favorite
- Also helps build leadership/planning skills



# Trip Selection Guidelines

- Initially, pick something familiar
- Get familiar with the [AW River Classification Scale](#)
- For local streams, consider [MCC Ranked Rivers](#) or Steve Ettinger's Book: [Capital Canoeing & Kayaking](#)
- Consider the time of the year
  - Spring & Fall are our wet months
  - Summer trips take advantage of proximity to the Potomac & Shenandoah Rivers (dam releases as well)
  - Winter requires cold weather precautions  
Also Dickerson Course
  - Certain weekends have special events:
    - Falls Festival
    - Cheat Festival
    - Gauley Festival
    - Potomac Downriver Race
    - Potomac Whitewater Festival
    - Releases: Stoney, Savage, Bloomington



# Easing Into Trip Leading

- Contact a seasoned leader and offer to help
- Volunteer for **key trip positions** like:
  - Lead
  - Sweep
  - Coordinator
  - Chaperone for a weak paddler
  - Safety
  - Medic with appropriate training
  - Photographer
- Take someone under your wings



# Lets Get Started!

- Notify the CCA Trip Coordinator several weeks in advance – Alf Cooley, Susan Sherrod
- Use the CCA Web Site to post the trip under Scheduled (or pick-up) Trips
- Create an E-Mail Distribution List
- Pros' & Cons' for posting trip details





# Transportation

- Determine put-in and take-out
- Leave on time, no more than 30 minutes late
- Consider providing your cell number (traffic jams and accidents)
- Use guidebooks, [MapQuest](#), [Google Maps](#)
- Delorme Atlas & Gazetteer
- Consider intermediate take-outs
- Consider carpooling, saves gas and is safer
- Hand Radios and/or cell phones for long trips
- GPS for the Tech Weenies ☺
- Start at the Put-in or Take-out – It depends

# The Shuttle

- I like to have everyone show 30 minutes before the shuttle starts
- Make it clear when you plan to leave
- Determine whether to leave cars at the take-out or put-in
- Dry clothes go in the take-out vehicles
- A cell phone should be in a take-out vehicle
- Inspect racks and tie downs
- Some shuttles are for drivers only!
- Try to maintain your schedule
- Consider a shuttle service if available
- Run a community gear check before the shuttle
- Don't forget the Beer & Munchies 😊



# The Shuttle Driver

- If you have one, treat him/her special!
- If possible, find interesting things for him/her to do
  - Photo/video at special rapids
  - Neat hikes in the area
  - Other entertainment like the Frank Lloyd Wright House (Lower Yough) or Shopping
  - Nice music collection
- Be on time! If you are late, they may get a tad concerned



# Trip/Group Gear

- 4-3-2-1 – Your basic pin kit
- Safety Whistle & River Knife
- Breakdown Paddle
- Full size Throw rope (2)
- A tow line/tether is nice but not essential (with Quick Release System)
- A rescue vest is nice but not essential
- On a larger trip, someone should have a first aid kit
  - [Paramedic Minimalist Kit](#)
  - [Red Cross First Aid Kit](#)
  - [Another First Aid Kit](#)
  - [Comparison](#)
  - [My First Aid Kit](#)
- Road maps for transportation (off-river)
- A guide book is nice (off-river)
- Cell phone
- Waterproof watch



# Time Management

- Critical task during the trip
- Establish a rough schedule, start at 10, lunch at 1, finish at 4, etc.
- A rough rule of thumb is 2 MPH and an hour for lunch
- Monitor your progress, essential on Cheat River trips
- Beware of boaters that scout forever
- Select a dominant person for sweep
- Keep weak paddlers near the front, don't let them fall behind
- Pair a strong paddler with the weak ones
- Show the intimidated sneak routes
- Take advantage of boat scouting
- Be mindful of when the sun sets





# Scouting & Walking Out

- When possible, break down rapids and boat scout
- When to shore scout?
  - Whenever you can't see your way to the next eddy!
  - Difficult rapids with major consequences
- When to portage?
  - Whenever you don't feel safe running the rapid
- When to walk-out?
  - Whenever the river rises abruptly and is no longer safe
  - Yes, This does happen!
  - If a paddler is totally out-gunned (remember intermediate take-outs)
  - Darkness
- NEVER coax a paddler into running a rapid that frightens them!



## MISTAKES

It could be that the purpose of your life is to serve as a warning to others





# River Rescue

- The CCA Swiftwater Rescue Class is excellent training
- Establish command & control
- Post someone upstream, downstream, Right, Left
- Determine course of action – TTRETHROG
- Post rescue
  - First-aid
  - Walkout/Evac (close by trails/roads)
  - Split party to get rescue
  - Where is the closest hospital?
- These cases are rare but do happen, be prepared



# Post Run

- Before leaving on the post shuttle, verify that all gear has been stowed
- Beverage and munchies are great at this time, paddlers burn a lot of calories
- Plan to meet somewhere for dinner/drinks
- Exchange email addresses/phone #'s



# Plan B

- Sometimes you will have too much rain
  - Any Patty O’Hamlin training class ☺
- Sometimes not enough
- Consider alternate nearby streams as a backup
- Monitor river levels and forecasts
  - [AW River Database](#)
  - [USGS Stage Forecast](#)
  - [Weather](#)
- Calling off a trip
  - Whenever you feel it is no longer safe
  - Insufficient boaters, minimum of three



# Great Alternatives

- Low Water
  - Dam Release runs
    - Lower Yough
    - Gauley
    - New River
    - ASCI
  - Rivers with a wide range
    - Little Falls
    - Cheat Canyon/Gauley
    - Tygart
    - Savage
- High Water
  - Nearby small streams, check your guide book



# Training Courses

- CCA Swiftwater Rescue Class
- First-Aid Class
- CCA Boating Classes – Lots of them
- Mentoring programs – Check with myself, Michael Baummer, etc.
- The CCA is tops when it comes to boating classes



# Flat Water Trips

- Flat Water Trips can be fun!
- Interesting choices:
  - Island Adventures (Dobbins)
  - Fossils (Calvert Cliffs)
  - Historic Landmarks
  - Bird Watching
- Consider water currents and wind direction – resistance leg first
- Tide planning can be crucial
- Trip leaders should be familiar with deep water rescue techniques – Practice!





# Flat Water Safety

- Special Gear:
  - Boats that track well
  - Hand pumps
  - Sound devices
  - Paddle Floats & Slings
  - Tow line
- Boat Traffic, Busy Channels
  - Kayak are tiny, use a diamond formation to increase visibility
  - Don't dillydally when crossing a busy channel
  - Stay outside normal shipping lanes
  - Discuss visual & sound communications at the put in
  - Float Plans are valuable



# Classes/Training Trips

- ACA Insurance coverage may be available – CCA is an ACA PAC
- Typically requires a written waiver for each participant
- Age restrictions may be applicable
- Alternatively, call it a Work Out – Informal Mentoring
- The ACA has great certification programs
- If interested in ACA Instructor Certification, let me know: [instruction@canoecruisers.org](mailto:instruction@canoecruisers.org)

# Legal Ramifications

- Each club member is required to sign a [release form](#) when paying dues for the year
- The ACA provides a great document on [Risk Mananagement](#)
- JPE Article on Risk Management: [Risk Management – JPE](#)
- [Risk Management in Six Steps \(AW Article\)](#)
- Participant Requirements
  - Each participant is 100% responsible for themselves
  - Everyone should have flotation and safety gear
  - In large groups, form smaller sub-groups that can stay in contact with each other
  - Keep an eye out for your buddies
- Minimizing liability risk and exercising good judgment are the same thing
- Lawyers sue only to get money, and most of the people who lead trips do not have leviabile assets sufficient to justify a lawsuit
- I haven't heard of ANY successful lawsuit against a trip leader to date



# Novice Trips – Special Considerations

- Novice trips may require special handling
- Do an equipment safety check
  - Helmet fit, use the finger rock test
  - Decent PFD that fits
  - Flotation
  - Proper clothing
  - Spray Skirt Loop – Critical!
  - Drain Plug (At all breaks)
- Wait for warmer weather
- Ensure adequate experienced boater support
- Leaders on water before participants
- Set Safety Boaters below rapids
- Consider shorter runs
- Intermediate takeout's are very helpful



# First-Timer Trips – Special Considerations

- Qualify your participants
- Ensure you have adequate support boaters
- A strong sweep person/team is essential
- Make First-Timers lead on easier rapids
- Check gear for suitability
- Check for proper flotation, a common issue
- Intermediate take-out points are very useful





# Spare Gear

- This is helpful on any trip, especially novice trips
  - Extra decent helmets
  - Extra throw ropes
  - Flotation
  - Extra warm clothing/gear, skull cap
  - Don't carry on the river, if they need it – they can carry it
- I always bring a second paddle for weekend trips
- Don't forget to retrieve at the end of the trip
- Extra food/energy: Clif Bar, Chocolate, Honey Packets (in First Aid Kit)



# The Interview

- Prior to the trip, you will need to interview paddlers you don't know
- See if they are ready, compare their experience against the river rating for your stream
- Some paddlers may over-embellish their skills. Ask them which rapids they enjoyed.
- If you feel they are not ready, let them know you are not comfortable leading on this trip
- Beware of paddlers that just show-up

# Trip Finance

- Some trips have expenses associated with them
- In general, make each participant responsible for themselves
- Sad but true, some people bug out at the last minute
- If necessary, get money up front
- Lower Yough
  - Launch reservation fee
  - Monitor starting one month prior – [PA DNR](#)
- Group Breakfast
  - Some trips are some distance from restaurants
  - More important for very large groups
  - A group breakfast can save significant time
  - See if you can get someone else to manage – split responsibilities



# Post Trip

- During the run, consider having a person or two take pictures/videos
- Write a trip report and send to [Joan Goodbody](#) our Newsletter Editor
- Add a Facebook status with pictures
- Everyone likes these extra touches
- Also consider sending interesting photos to [Susan Sherrod](#) for the CCA Roster





# Wrap-up

- Trip Leaders are this club's most valuable asset
- Trip leading builds great leadership and boating skills
- Trip leading is the best way to meet other paddlers and long time friends
- ANYONE can be a trip leader
- Soft copies of this PPT are available on our website: [Trip Leader Presentation](#)
- [ACA Trip Leader Assessment Class](#)

**Thanks!**