

GCA Trip Coordinator Clinic – Outline

- I. Pre-Trip Planning
 - A. Evaluate your Skills and attributes as a trip coordinator.
 1. Hard skills – padding ability, rescue skills, first aid, CPR, etc.
 2. Soft skills – leadership, organization, communication, group dynamics, etc.
 3. Consider supplementing your skills by specifically inviting someone to assist you that has strengths in areas where your self-evaluation discloses weaknesses
 - B. Resources on the Web site to assist you
 1. Rivers-River Database
 - a) *River length*
 - b) *USGS River Gauges in real time*
 - c) *Minimum Flow Suggestions*
 - d) *Gradient*
 - e) *Hazard Information*
 - f) *Dam release phone numbers or website links*
 - g) *Trip reports*
 - h) *GPS Data to Put-in and Take out*
 - i) *Directions to put in and take out*
 - j) *Parking information*
 - k) *Strainer updates*
 - l) *River Access issue updates*
 2. Main-GCA Information
 - a) *Trip Waiver Package (Available in PDF and DOC formats)*
 - (1) Waiver
 - (2) Pre-Launch meeting check list
 - (3) Incident report
 - b) *Trip Coordinator Information Page*
 - (1) Outlines of all the things we are covering in the clinic
 - (2) Coming Soon
 - (a) Caller sign up check list and sign up for
 - C. Select a location (river, lake, estuary, etc.)
 1. Knowledge of river
 2. Paddling skill level requirements
 3. Season, weather conditions, water levels, winds and tides
 4. Distance/travel time
 5. Length of trip
 - a) *Day trips – available daylight, etc.*
 - b) *Overnight/multi-day – available daylight, campsites, etc.*
 6. Applicable rules/regulations
 - a. *Trip size limitations*
 - b. *Reservations, advance permits required?*
 - c. *On-site registration required?*
 - d. *Equipment/boat type requirements*
 7. Environment/scenery
 8. Accessibility (put-in, take-out, portages)
 9. Available outfitter support
 - D. Choosing a time
 1. Season – likely water levels, weather, wildlife, scenery, insects, etc.
 2. Weekday v. weekend
 3. Day trip v. overnight
 4. Lead time to list in newsletter
 - E. Miscellaneous logistics
 1. Meeting place, shuttle, parking, car pools, etc.
 2. What participants should bring – lunch, water, camping gear, etc.
 3. Know location and phone number of area medical facilities, evacuation routes, etc.
 4. Plan the shuttle now, not on the river bank

- F. Screening trip participants
1. Skills
 - a) *Paddling*
 - b) *Rescue*
 - c) *Special, such as medical*
 2. Experience
 - a) *Paddled this river before?*
 - b) *Years of paddling*
 - c) *How frequently*
 - d) *What rivers*
 - e) *What kind of boat? Change boats lately?*
 - f) *At what water level, season, etc.*
 - g) *How long since you paddled?*
 - h) *Formal training*
 - i) *GCA Member?*
 3. Equipment and clothing
 - a) *Appropriate for season/weather*
 - b) *Appropriate for location (river, lake, etc.)*
 - c) *Throw rope*
 - d) *First aid kit*
 - e) *Spare paddle*
 4. Bringing anyone else along?
 5. Special conditions trip coordinator should know about – medical conditions, allergies, physical limitations or handicaps, etc.
 6. How and when to gently say “no”
 7. What to go over before hanging up after qualifying the caller for the trip
 - a) *Date of Trip*
 - b) *Time of Meeting*
 - c) *Place of meeting*
 - d) *Expected Weather*
 - e) *River condition*
 8. Shuttle information
 - a) *Driving directions if needed*
 - b) *15 minute rule*
- G. At the River
1. Shuttle
 - a) *Get waivers signed before shuttle*
 - b) *How to get to the start point of the shuttle if not meeting there*
 - c) *How to get to the start point of the shuttle if not meeting there*
 - d) *Tell everyone the shuttle plan you have developed*
 - e) *Reliable vehicles*
 - f) *Drivers all know route*
 - g) *Leave most vehicles where most parking exists*
 - h) *Dry clothes, tie-down ropes, drivers license, keys, etc. should be at take-out*
 - i) *Spare keys and location*
 - j) *Permission of land owners to park on private property*
 - k) *Park clear of right of way if parking on highway*
 - l) *Security*
 1. Vehicles visible to traffic and local residents
 2. Stow valuables out of sight
 3. Always lock vehicle
 - m) *Final check before the shuttle departs that everybody has all their gear that belongs in the boat in the boat and what belongs in the shuttle car in the car*
 2. Pre-launch screening
 - a) *Boats-suitability, outfitting*
 - b) *Equipment and clothing*
 - c) *PFDs*
 - d) *Helmets for skirted Kayaks*

- e) *No alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs*
- f) *It is not too late here to uninvite someone from a trip if you conclude that he or she will be hazardous to themselves or the trip*
- g) *Confirm that everyone has signed a waiver*
- 3. Pre-launch briefing
 - a) *Introductions of paddlers*
 - b) *Discuss the river*
 - (1) Rapids
 - (a) Scouting
 - (b) Ropes
 - (c) Recovery Conditions
 - (2) Hazards
 - (a) Strainers
 - (3) Evacuation
 - c) *Trip structure*
 - d) *River signals*
 - e) *River Etiquette*
 - f) *Location of ropes and first aid kits*
 - g) *Identify resources – medical, rescue, etc.*
 - h) *Trip plan – expected hazards, scouting portages, lunch stop, campsites, take-out location, etc.*
 - i) *How to swim in the river*
 - j) *Self-rescue*
 - k) *Group rescue*
 - l) *Time schedule for trip – stick to it*
 - (1) Lunch
- 4. Trip structure
 - a) *Lead, sweep designated, maintain contact, spacing, etc.*
 - b) *Be sure sweep boat has rope and first aid kit*
 - c) *Designate a “point person” who will be the first boat down the river – may be trip coordinator or someone else*
 - d) *Sweep boat should be skilled in rescue, first aid etc.*
 - e) *Pre-launch check of river conditions, weather indicators, etc.*
 - f) *Have alternate river in mind if unsure of safe conditions*
 - g) *Wear ribbons or other identifying markers of busy rivers*
- 5. Keep alert for unexpected hazards or bad situations – adopt “what if” attitude – anticipate the unexpected
- 6. Scouting
 - a) *What to scout*
 - (a) Unfamiliar drops
 - (b) All class IV and up drops
 - (c) Any big drop you have not run lately
 - (d) Any drop that one or more of your participant may find challenging
 - b) *Talk over the run, routes, rope placement, what order to run in, etc.*
 - c) *Scout from both sides if possible*
 - d) *Plan your run, in detail, use landmarks*
 - e) *Portage when in doubt – encourage others to portage*
- 7. Identify and deal early and effectively and sensitively with problem paddler
 - a) *Assign river buddy*
 - b) *Put him in a boat with someone else*
 - c) *Get him off the river*
- 8. Changing Conditions
 - a) *Rapidly rising water*
 - b) *Surprise conditions at the scheduled river*
 - c) *Weather*
 - d) *Injury, illness, hypothermia*
 - e) *Equipment failures*
 - f) *PEER PRESSURE:*
 - g) *Hand someone else the keys and leave.*
- H. Post trip and administrative matters
 - 1. Logistics

- a) *Head count – make sure everyone is off the river*
 - b) *Be sure everyone gets his boat and car shuttled and everyone has a ride*
 - c) *Make sure everyone’s car starts before leaving*
 - d) *Talk over with the group any problems that occurred on the trip and how they could be avoided*
 - e) *A group meal is always nice –invite everyone along*
2. Risk Management Plan
- a) *Trip coordinator responsibilities*
 - b) *GCA Trip Guidelines*
 - c) *Waiver*
 - d) *Incident reports*
3. Write a trip report for publication in Eddie Line and on the Web Site
- a) *Entertainment*
 - b) *Description of river for the benefit of whoever may run the river in the future*
 - (a) 1. Water level
 - (b) 2. What other river would you compare it to
 - c) *Problems or challenges encountered*
 - (a) 1. Strainers
 - (b) 2. Hostile land owners
 - (c) 3. Put in/Take out
 - (d) 4. Shuttle
 - d) *Document for posterity that river is run regularly – legal ramifications*
- I. Questions, comments, suggestions and recommendations