

THE RIVER SOJOURN ORGANIZER'S GUIDE

An Introductory Manual to Organizing a Sojourn
Event on Your Waterway

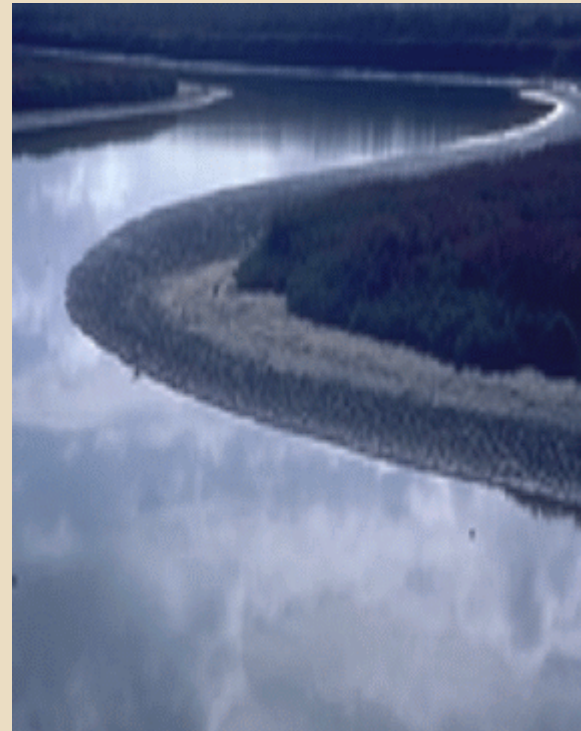


I. Introduction

Spending multiple days on a waterway, learning about its history, environment and threats, and struggling with the physical demands of canoeing away from the context of their normal lives institutes a major change in the way a person views a river. *The River Sojourn Guide Committee*

Organized Float Trip

- Educational programs
- Official ceremonies and dedications
- Meals
- Camping
- Local community events
- Recreation, games & fun!



Typical Sojourns

Each sojourn event can be as unique an experience as the individuals organizing it:

- Usually 2-8 days with overnight component.
- Few dozen to over 100 participants.
- Small streams to mile-wide rivers.
- Educational and entertainment events reflecting locality.

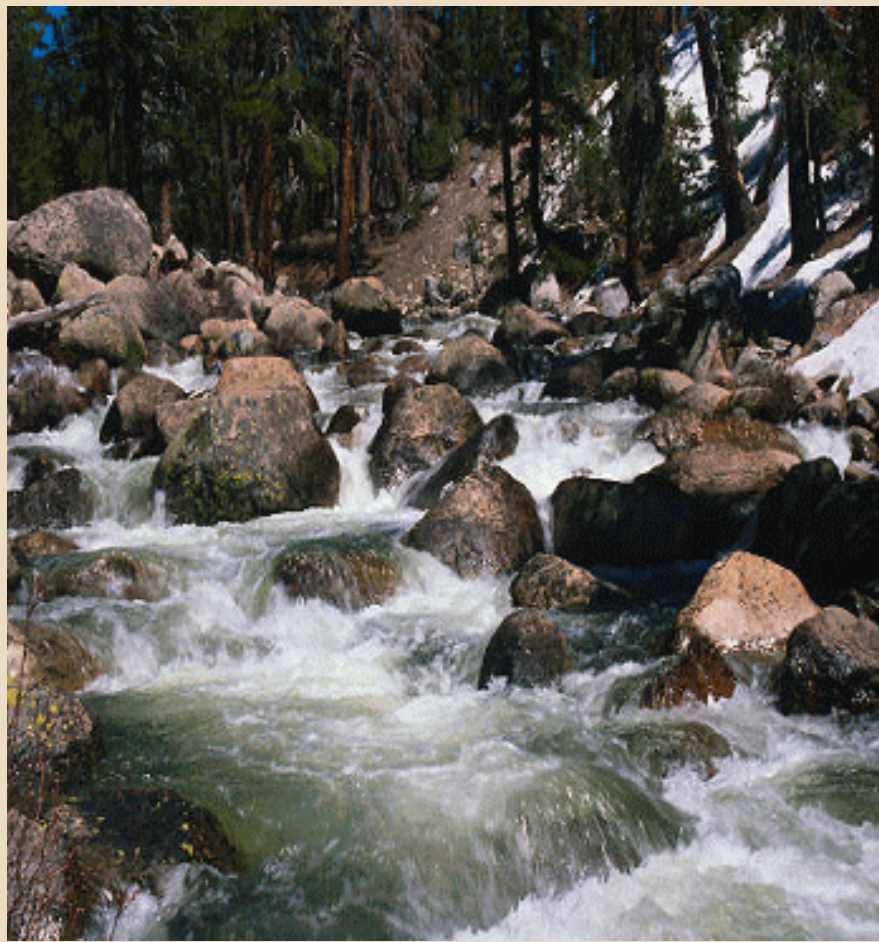
Sojourn Goals

Sojourns are
Effective Tools
for:

- ❑ Raising awareness about the river and its related issues;
- ❑ Educating communities about natural and cultural resources;
- ❑ Promoting public access to the resource;
- ❑ Encouraging political commitment to watershed stewardship; and
- ❑ Enhancing community involvement in river restoration.

PA Sojourns Annual Figures

- 12 to 17 mult-day events
- 500+ water miles
- 50+ on-water days
- Over 4,000 participants
- ~\$60,000 in grants to local organizers
- 1:3 leveraging of state funds



River of the Year

Since 1991, Pennsylvania's DCNR chooses a waterway each June to honor with "River of the Year" status to celebrate its recreational value, scenic beauty, and local conservation successes.



II. Is a Sojourn Right for Us?

Key Questions

- Will the waterway and surrounding resources physically support a sojourn?
- What is the sojourn's purpose, goals and objectives?
- Who will help organize and execute a sojourn?
- How much funding is needed and where will it come from?



Assemble a diverse group

- ❑ Local outfitters
- ❑ Canoe and trail clubs
- ❑ Environmental groups
- ❑ Municipal offices
- ❑ Business and tourism groups
- ❑ Sporting and recreation organizations
- ❑ Civic clubs



Planning Task List

- Access permissions
- Theme/Promotions
- Execution logistics
- Funding
- Education and entertainment
- Safety
- Insurance
- Food



Planning the Trip

- Try to involve riverside communities in all activities
- But be aware of potential side effects that dozens of participants may bring upon local resources.
- Consider logistical needs such as shelter, electricity, projectors screens, amplifications, etc.
- Be careful not to over schedule and leave adequate downtime for participants who have been paddling all day.



V. Programs and Education

“A true sojourn is not just a floating vacation; it is a watershed awareness journey.”

Planning Educational Events

Keep educational programs educational and entertaining.

- ❑ Service projects such as river cleanups or water monitoring activities
- ❑ Botany and wildlife lectures
- ❑ Local music and entertainment
- ❑ Alternative programming for young children
- ❑ Historical tours
- ❑ Opening and closing ceremonies



VI. Safety and Risk Management

Take Safety Seriously!

Safety Principles

This is the most important aspect of any sojourn, and the full Sojourn Guide should be consulted for additional considerations.

- ❑ Leadership and Safety Personnel: Recruit professional paddlers and medical crews who have appropriate training and experience.
- ❑ Identify/Eliminate Risk: Be aware of specific concerns such as dehydration, hypothermia, environmental hazards, site specific hazards, and participant wellness.
- ❑ Risk Management Plan: Develop a written plan and make it easily accessible to everyone on the sojourn.
- ❑ Participant Responsibility: Cooperation and teamwork should be stressed as a working ideal between organizers and participants throughout the sojourn.

Safety Precautions

- Wear Coast Guard approved PFD's (personal flotation devices)
- Obtain necessary insurance
- Conduct mandatory daily safety briefings
- Obtain adequate medical info and signed waivers from participants



VII. The Sojourn Budget

Budgeting

Aside from registration fees, consider applying for grants and foundation awards, as well as looking to local businesses for sponsorship of the sojourn. Keep in mind the following budget categories when planning:

- ❑ Personnel and benefits
- ❑ Supplies and Equipment (canoe/kayak rentals, food, program costs)
- ❑ Marketing and Publicity (brochures, registration packets, flyers, TV and radio ads, etc.)
- ❑ Travel (consider mileage, van or bus rentals, cost to hire shuttle drivers)
- ❑ Contractual (safety officers, drivers, catering, pavilion & campground rentals)
- ❑ Postage and Printing



VIII. Sojourn Promotion

Effective promotion can help draw donors and political support, as well as participants

Marketing

- Identify target audience such as community organizations, schools, or the general public
- Share mailing lists from planning team members
- Assign a lead person to develop press releases and relationships
- Save the date email and/postcard
- Facebook and other social media

Sponsorship requests must consider

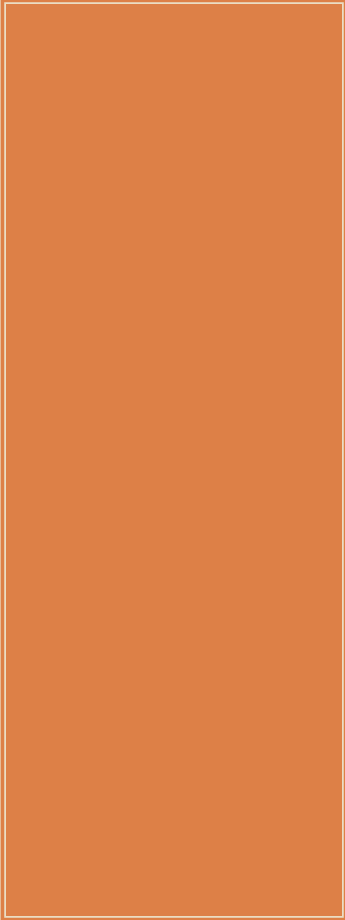
Measurable Outcomes

- Attendance
- Number of sponsors
- Legislature Participation
- Increase in River Access
- Behavior Change

Sponsor Benefits

- Name and Logo on Printed Materials such as brochures and T-shirts
- Mention in paid ads
- Complimentary Registrations
- Product Placement

Collateral Materials

- 
- T-shirts
 - Posters
 - Brochure
 - Hats
 - Paddles

The Brochure

A brochure can be quite simple, as long as it contains the right information:

- ❑ Contact Information for participant
- ❑ Description of events
- ❑ Fees
- ❑ Participant instructions
- ❑ Boat rental information



Appendices

- Sojourn Planning Checklist
- Sample Meeting Agenda
- Sustainable Sojourn Tips
- Campsite Planning Table
- Sample Evaluation Form
- Risk Management Plan Form
- Example Waiver of Liability
- Sample Proclamation
- Sample Press Release







VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT PLANNING YOUR SOJOURN

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