TRR VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION – NEW CHAPTER
J.Riley – April 2016

Introductions

How a TRR chapter operates:

- Mission: Build supportive paddling / outdoor lifestyle - teamwork."Butts in boats"
- Chapter jobs - required: Chapter Coordinator, Secretary
- Chapter jobs - optional: Greeter, Boat/Gear Wrangler, Outreach Coordinator(s), Training Coordinator
- Outreach: Publicity (news), presentations, social media- PHOTOS!
- TRR has brochures. Can make your own.
- INCLUSIVE: Male, female, young, old, etc. Reflect this in TRR photos and media.
- Chapter preference of paddling: Flat, moving, whitewater or mix. Kayaks, canoes, SUP's, ect,
- Training Local: Within chapter pool and on-water. Combine team knowledge, turn paddlers into instructors/assistants.
- Training National: National leadership trips and clinics. Chapters cover transportation.
- Funding: Boats/Gear/operations: TRR National helps in beginning, chapter generates funds.
- Honor source of donations - Honor time donated by volunteers.
- Financial: All donations go to TRRN but 90% can be earmarked for chapter use.
- TRRN applies/receives VA grants and extends to chapters.
- Approved expenses are reimbursed by TRRN with receipts.
- Boats/equipment acquired with TRR grants/donations are property of TRR. Secure storage needed.

Managing expectations of chapter, volunteers and participants:

- Chapter events / volunteers: First rule - Don't drive yourself nuts!
- Start slow and low (expectations) and then build based on available help.
- We encourage persons with disability to bring a close friend or (adult) family member to share.
- Volunteers are there for the participants we serve - as are TRR boats and equipment.
- Essential Eligibility Requirements – safety.
- New participants - must have TRR or ACA safety training before attending trips.
- Hauling gear: Borrow / acquire trailer- ask for volunteers to wrangle gear
- Challenges: People will surprise you - encourage experimenting. A different day, a different boat can make a major difference. If everyone leaves a session with a smile, it was a success!
- Being too helpful: Watch and offer, “Let me know what I can do for you” is often a good way to begin.
- Encourage Teamwork: Spread the workload. Some volunteers need direction. Others will jump at every chance to help. Mix them together.

Format of TRR pool / beginner lake sessions (suggested):

- We don’t encourage drop-in’s. Ask for rsvp's before session to know experience and estimate quantities of gear/ volunteers or food (if applicable).

- Provide new participants with a short list of what to bring (towel, water bottle, lunch, suncreen, etc).
- Interview (privately) new participants to gain understanding of challenge.
- Before session, ask for volunteer greeter/paperwork person, photographer, timekeeper.
- Staging: Before the start of a session, buddy-up experienced people with new people to help fit gear/boats. Attempt to match experienced participants with experienced volunteers.
- Decide boat style based on body type and injury. Everything must be "release-able"
- In-water huddle 10-15 minutes: Welcome, introductions, TRR happenings.
- Water-comfort test (newbies) - done with group for observation and encouragement.
- Divide into sub-groups for lessons (basic to advanced) - 1 hour
- Consider two volunteers standing in water for a 1st time student to assist stability.
- Finish with kayak football, race or game (30 minutes)
- Quick wrapup - next session

Adapted instruction methods (see TRRSoutheastPA.org/documents):

- Keep lessons short and memorable.
- Consider safety for both participant and volunteer on getting person in and out of boat -or- in and out of pool.
- SCI / mobility issues; In addition to wet-exit training, consider river or middle of lake flip.
- Observe attention spans while teaching – modify as needed.
- 3-part instruction - No point throwing out 5 points at once if only 3 will be remembered.
- PTSD - consider anxiety triggers - one-on-one instruction where possible.
- TBI - focus / sensory overload - short lessons – quiet setting
- Blindness / Visual Impairment: explicit audible instruction. audible guidance "On me"
- River/lake trips: consider accessibility, sufficient support, medications, water, food, sunscreen.
- Cell phone, first aid kit, tow line, safety gear.

Adapted equipment and boat outfitting (overview):

- See document: Adaptive Paddling Suggestions by Symptom
- Select boat size / style based on mobility, support and stability.
- Adaptive boats: Solara with pontoons, ducky (single), ducky (double), sit-on-top
- Amputees: BK or AK - foam/sockets/support
- Amputees: Hand/arm - paddle adaptations - hammerhead
- Back/SCI: Boat size / stability - add padding. Offer transfer help, back/torso support
- Arm mobility: Paddle pivot device
- Hand grip: Wrist ring, bicycle tire inner-tube, foam block guide on paddle.Hand paddles.
- Blindness / Visual Impairment: Paddle orientation - coffee stirrer taped on right paddle grip and oriented.Hand paddles to feel water.
- Demonstrate BKTG vest

Wrapup:

- Q/A
- Next session - date / coordination of help