

# TRR Whitewater Trip Tips

Many of the below tips are common sense but all have been overlooked at one time or another by the most experienced boaters. In addition to paddling skills, TRR encourages both teamwork and personal responsibility in every member.



## Preparation & What to Bring:

1. **We are a TEAM!** Don't be shy about questions or asking for assistance. Everyone in TRR is committed to help other teammates.
2. If new to TRR, assure that your Info/Liability/Media Release Form is filled out, signed and given to leader - before trip. It can be printed from the Documents page of our website.
3. Inform leader of any allergy/injury/symptoms that may affect safety of you or others.
4. Bring extra medication (if needed). Give extra set to instructor in case yours get's wet/lost.
5. Bring lunch/snacks (unless indicated that TRR is supplying). Stick to compact, high energy stuff.
6. Personal items (sunscreen (small tube), toilet tissue/kleenex, etc) sealed in ziplock.
7. Drybag or double-bag large zip-locks to hold your lunch/personal items.
8. (\*) 2-3, 24oz plastic water bottle(s) or sports drinks. No glass!
9. Towel and change of clothes for end of day in a bag. Ask about availability of changing facility or robes.
10. Sunglasses (optional) Use Crookies or strap to prevent loss in river.
11. Camera (optional). Waterproof and assure you have a way to secure to boat.
12. If driving, offer to haul gear. If riding, offer to kick-in \$ for gasoline/tolls.
13. Verify who is bringing/transporting boat/gear (your size). Do not assume it will be there.
14. (\*) Footwear. Bare feet **NOT** allowed on river trips! Booties or water shoes (Sports Auth: \$10-20) are best. Sneakers may not fit well in decked kayaks. Shoelaces can snag on wet-exit. Secure to duct-tape.
15. (\*) Decked Kayakers: Nose-clips (optional). Can purchase swimmers nose clips at sports stores.
16. (\*) Inflatable Kayaks: Small piece of foam may be helpful for back support. Pool noodles work well.
17. (\*) River clothes. Fleece or synthetics for layering. Wind/nylon top or paddling jacket. Wetsuit/neoprene or paddling pants is a good option. Unless temperature is very hot, T-shirts are bad idea (*cotton kills!*). It is always cooler in the mountains and you will likely get wet. Extra river clothes can be placed inside a small trash bag, deflated, twist tied then secured in boat. Keep it compact.

\* Paddling Personal Gear Note: To help new paddlers get started, TRR and volunteers offer a limited number of used paddle jackets, wetsuits, booties, nose-clips, water-bottles to lend. Check with TRR leader on availability. In time, we ask that TRR members acquire personal items and gear to free-up resources for new participants.

## Night (and several days) Before Trip:

1. Gentle stretching of shoulders, arms, wrists, hamstrings and back will pay off.
2. Have everything packed, ready to go for morning of trip.
3. Know/verify who is bringing your boat and paddling gear is as well as sizes.
4. Know where you are meeting, mobile phone# of contact and who will bring what gear.
5. Make a point of eating / sleeping well. Be alert and well rested.
6. Leave house early to allow for travel time.
7. Weather: Unless adverse conditions, we do paddle in rain. *It's a water sport!*

## At Put-In:

1. Arrive at designated put-in location EARLY and already fed - do not cause group to wait for you.
2. **We are a TEAM!** Look for ways to help others (unload/carry boats or gear).
3. Gentle motion stretches while waiting/talking will pay off.
4. Drink water - hydrate before you need it. Your muscles and brain will thank you.
5. Apply sunscreen to all exposed areas Often forgotten: back of neck, cheeks, nose, knees, tops of ankles.
6. If you have a vehicle and are driving, offer help in shuttle.

7. Make a point of checking your boat fit and adjust well before group puts on river.
8. Check water bottles/sports drinks. Open and drink off small amount from top - air bubble will allow bottles to float if they fall in river.
9. We'll be assigning paddle-buddies. Get to know that person and stick with them!
10. Secure water bottle(s) and personal items inside boat. Check ALL gear for problems (PFD/helmet fits, paddle not cracked, boat hull not cracked, airbags inflated, spray-skirt not torn).
11. Place your towel/change of clothes in a vehicle that will be at take-out.
12. Car keys secured/hidden? If electronic key, keep it dry. Vehicle locked?

### On-River:

1. If you fall out of boat, **FEET UP AND DOWNSTREAM** until you can swim/be towed to ankle-deep water.
2. If being rescued and towed by a kayak, take active role - kick feet, follow instructions of rescuer.
3. Drink water often and early in the trip! Boaters easily dehydrate in wind/sun (bad headache at end of day).
4. Cheering and applauding others successes and flubs is encouraged!!
5. River banks are slippery. When getting out of boat, keep helmet and PFD on as they offer impact protection. Use paddle as walking stick.
6. **We are a TEAM!** Check buddies for zipped PFD's, snapped helmets, skirt grab-loops out, drain-plugs in.
7. Understand instructions given before rapids and who to follow.
8. Stay with group, do not get out of boat unless leader is informed.
9. Fishermen: Usually friendly but can be territorial. Courtesy is to quietly paddle well around them.
10. In rapids, maintain spacing/interval between boats to prevent pileup if someone ahead gets hung-up.
11. When group stops to get out, assure that your boat/gear is well secured (out of water).
12. If a buddy falls into rapid/swims, to not attempt rescue if you are not trained for it. Secure yourself in an eddy and alert leaders/blow whistle and point. First rule of rescue: Do not double number of victims.
13. Know paddle signals and echo to those behind you. (Stop, proceed, come right, come left).
14. In rapids, don't get caught in the "pre-flip" position (deer-in-headlights look on face, paddle not moving).
15. Rafters: Select a leader and stern rudder person. Practice voice commands/maneuvering/teamwork in slow or flat water. Will pay off in rapids!

### At Take-Out:

1. Know landmarks and rally area for group before arriving at take-out.
2. Apply extra caution getting out of boat as heavily used take-outs can be wet, muddy and slippery.
3. Secure yourself/boat/equipment, help others out or carry boats/gear. **We are a TEAM!**
4. Where possible, avoid setting gear in dirt that will transfer to vehicles.
5. When changing, be mindful of others. Not everyone admires your naked buns as you do!
6. More gentle stretching will pay off.
7. Offer to help transport, clean, put away boats/gear at day end.

### Lastly...

1. Don't get worked up. Allow yourself to **RELAX!** Everyone experiences some anxiety before a whitewater trip - even experienced boaters and leaders. You are about to embark on an adventure into unknown territory. Go with it!
2. **ENJOY!** Don't take your flubs seriously - learn from them. Revel and celebrate your successes as well as those of your teammates.
3. **HAVE FUN!** Know that you will be experiencing a part of nature that is only accessible by those with the skill and courage to navigate a small boat through whitewater rapids. Gentle flashbacks of natural beauty and good-times will follow you for days, weeks, months and years.

