

HCKC Trip Sponsor Guide for Sea Kayak Events

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The Importance of Trip Sponsors

- The HCKC is a common adventure club – we are about paddling.
- The HCKC is **only** as good as the trips that our trip sponsors lead us on.

Who should be a Sea Kayak Trip Sponsor? You!

- **Requirements**
 - Be an open water kayaker.
 - Be willing to work with and share with other club members.
 - Have an idea for a fun trip – an old favorite or a new adventure that you want to share.
- **Non-Requirements**
 - Experience setting up trips – Ask the Fleet Chairs for help and we can work with you on your first trips if you want or suggest a co-sponsor.
 - Paddling Wizardry - - Recruit an experienced paddler to provide the technical skills you need to safely run the trip. Ask the Fleet Chairs for suggestion on who to ask.

How to get Help for a Trip

- **Ask** if you have a question. That's what the fleet chairs are for.
- **Co-Sponsor your First Trip** -Ask an experienced trip sponsor to “co-sponsor” your first trip. Two minds can only make your trip better and you can learn the ropes this way.
- **Recruit an experienced paddler.** If you don't feel comfortable technically leading a trip, recruit an experienced paddler to the on-water part. This person can work with you during the trip so you begin to learn these skills.

Scheduling your Trip

- **When should your trip be held? - Scheduling**
 - Coordinate with HCKC fleet at Trip Planning Meeting (Late January)
 - Pick a good time of Year
 - Appropriate Water Level (Not as critical for Sea Kayak)
 - Reasonable Weather
 - Special events at Events – e.g., South Bass Rendezvous or dovetailing a paddling trip with a symposium
 - If strong tides in region, what are tide times during the trip
 - Spontaneous trips can be added during the year
- **Trip Considerations**
 - Where you're going to be paddling
 - Attraction of Area – Why would other people want to go there?
 - Travel time (Paddle-to-Drive Ratio)
 - Shuttle Considerations (if take-out not same as put-in)
 - Day Trip or Overnight
 - For Overnight Trips with Camping
 - Camping Accommodations - Number of sites available, people/tents/cars allowed per site, drinking water
 - Reservation Policy – Cost, reservation window, popularity. You may have to reserve a campsite up to 6 months before your event. For example, “good” sites at Indiana Dunes or South Bass Island sell out 4-5 months before the actual date. The same is also true at Little Sand Bay in the Apostles.
 - Consider Contingency Plans -- Options if conditions are not viable. You're bound to have contingencies when you schedule a July trip in January.
 - Consider concerns and their probabilities
 - Weather (Heat/Cold, Wind, Thunder Storms/Lightning, Rain)
 - Water Conditions (water level on rivers, wind-waves on lakes)
 - Think about options for Day Trips (People get frustrated if we cancel too many trips)
 - Rescheduling or Canceling
 - Alternative venues in area
 - Options for Extended Trips
 - If car camping, alternative protected venues near location
 - If kayak camping: shore days plans, bail-out scenarios, and schedule flexibility (i.e., returning a date late)

Publicizing your Trip – Way to Let People know about your Trip

- **HCKC Event Calendar** – Contact one of the HCKC Sea Kayak Chairmen to add your event to the [HCKC club calendar](#) on our web site.
 - SK Chairs should add these automatically after Trip Planning Meeting.
 - Let SK Chairs know if you want people to be able to RSVP using Wild Apricot.

- **Trip Announcement**

Write your Trip Announcement. See the Template on next page. If this is not the club's first trip to this area, you can search for previous trip info from the [Newsletter Archive](#).

Note: For longer trips, you need to let people know your plans 2-4 months in advance so they can schedule vacation.

- **Newsletter** – Mail Trip Announcement to the Newsletter Editor by the 17th of the month that you first want to publicize your trip. Note: You may run your announcement in the newsletter more than one month. The newsletter normally comes out about the 22nd of each month
- [IND TOURING KAYAKS@googlegroups.com](mailto:IND_TOURING_KAYAKS@googlegroups.com) – To give people as much advanced warning as possible, copy your Sea Kayak Trip Announcement into an e-mail and send it to the IND_TOURING_KAYAKS e-mail address above when you submit it to the Newsletter Editor. You must belong to the e-mail list to send message to this list. If you are not a member, contact the Sea Kayak chair.

Note: Trip sponsors may elect to only publicize some events using the Sea Kayak mailing list if they feel that the trip requirements would not be appropriate for the entire club membership.
- **Calendar** - Send your Trip Announcement to the SK Co-Chairs when done so it can be added to the Event Description in the Club Calendar. Let the SK Chair know if you want people to RVSP or answer questions using the Wild Apricot site when they register.
- **Trip Announcement Tips** –
 - Get an e-mail response or RSVP via Wild Apricot with a deadline if you may have to modify plans due to weather or water conditions.
 - For privacy reasons, don't post your phone number in the newsletter or on the web site. I only send mine out by e-mail to trip signed-up participants.
 - Clearly specify what times in your announcement mean. Does 10:00 am mean "Ready to Launch Time" or "Time to Arrive at Put-In"?
- **E-Mail Reminder before Event**– The newsletter and your original announcement may go out a month or two before your trip. Send an e-mail reminder with forecasted weather/lake conditions 1-2 weeks to stir up interest since many people wait to see conditions before committing to a trip.

Trip Name

Day, Month DD, YYYY

Trip Sponsor(s): Names

A paragraph or two discussing the trip. Sell your trip! Tell other people why they should be as excited about it as you are. Include a picture if you have one or include links to the URL for an album for past trips.

Meeting Place: Location of meeting place and directions to get there. Since most people have car GPSs now, include an enterable address for the location. It's useful to include approximate driving time from Indianapolis.

Camping Information - If the trip involves camping, specify camping arrangements. That is, are we camping in a campground and day paddling or kayak camping. Water availability. How reservations/costs will be handled.

Schedule:

hh:mm am Gather at the Meeting Place

hh:mm am Ready to Launch

Other possible times: Start Shuttle (if required), Off-Water Time, Intermediate Destinations, ...

Expected Water Conditions: Weather, Waves

Cost: If there are expenses, let people know what they are and how the group will handle them.

Equipment Requirements: Paddling and/or camping equipment requirements for this trip. This usually includes standard safety gear, boat length (>14'), fore/aft flotation, spray skirt, ... If a DNR sticker is required, remind people.

Required Paddling Skills: Specify paddling distance/speed for trip. Rescue training and if combat roll required. Anticipated wind/wave and launch conditions. Specify prerequisite paddling/camping experience that the person should have before this trip for intermediate and advanced trips.

Sign-Up Information: Decide if you want people to register by *e-mailing* you or using the *Wild Apricot registration tool*. Tell the SK Chairs if you want to use Wild Apricot for registration and questions to complete when they register.

If Wild Apricot Registration: Include the URL of its Wild Apricot Event Page in your announcement as well as the registration deadline. Also, be sure to include your e-mail in case people have questions. When having the SK Chairs to set up the event, you can ask respondents to answer questions (e.g., cell phone, boat type, experience). These questions can be added when you send your Trip Announcement to the SK chairs.

If E-Mail Registration: Give people your e-mail address and registration deadline. Ask people to include any information that you want when they RSVP to you.

Trip Change Procedure: In your trip announcement, tell people when and how you will notify them if trip plans have to change. Wild Apricot provides an easy way to e-mail people who have RSVP'd but old school e-mail works well too.

Details to determine for the Trip

- **Camping Arrangements – Needs to be determined quickly (if Required)**
 - Campsite Rules at selected Campground
 - How full the campground is? Some campgrounds sell out 6 months in advance.
 - Reservations
 - Earliest allowed date to make Reservations
 - Number of reservations allowed per person
 - Costs
 - Camping Rules – Tents per site, People per site, Cars per Site
 - If Car Camping, Are trailers allowed?
 - Potable Water availability
- **Communications**
 - If your trip is not full, resend Trip Announcement to IND_TOURING_KAYAKS, 1-2 weeks before the trip with a preliminary weather/water forecast.
 - Send an e-mail to Trip Participants with:
 - Weather Forecast
 - Who is going
 - Your full contact info – the only time that I give out my cell number
 - Info to decide what to wear and gear to bring (e.g., Wet Suit/Dry Suit)
Expected water conditions, air/water temperature, expected wind/waves
 - For extended trips:
 - Everyone's Contact Information – Good to share everyone's cell numbers before leaving just in case.
 - Ride Coordination-Help coordinate rides to/from
 - Travel Plans – When people expect to arrive.
- **Get maps for all potential paddling areas**
 - Paper – Navigation Maps if possible – other maps usually work unless there are shipping channels to contend with.
Pre-measure bearing/distance for potential paddles
 - GPS Maps
- **Printed Tide Tables – For all areas paddled.**

Tide times depend and vary greatly on the shape of the coast and where you paddle. There are phone Apps for Tidal Information. Make sure the info is for your location. Check NOAA website for location tidal level and tidal current information.
- **Checklist of Group Equipment (Make sure someone on the Trip will have it)**
 - Safety – Spare Paddles, Multiple Tow Rope, Sponsons (optional), signaling devices
 - Compass/GPS/Maps
 - Water Filters if needed
 - First Aid Kits (and knowledge to use it)
 - Communications: VHF Radio, SPOT, Cell Phone (Cell coverage on Water?)
 - Group Food (if required)

Preparations day(s) before a paddle

- **Don't Panic** – People often wait until the last minute before RSVP'ing. This is one reason to send out a reminder with weather conditions a week before the event.
- **Know before you Go**
 - **Weather** (Temperature, Wind, Rain, Thunderstorms)
I check WeatherUnderground as well as weather.com and NOAA's forecast. Thunderstorms and wind can be the critical factors here.
 - **Sea State** (Wave Height, Wind, Water Temperature for area
Zone Forecast: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/marine/zone/usamz.htm>
This is basically what you get on the weather radio and only includes 2 days.
Point Forecast: Goes out 5 days – generally less severe than zone forecast.
<http://marine.weather.gov/MapClick.php?lon=-87.06665&lat=41.67702#.Wkeh09-nHIU>
Coastal Surf Forecast: Excellent description of shore conditions
<https://magicseaweed.com/Atlantic-Beach-Surf-Report/706/>
Great Lakes Conditions with predictions up to 5 days out:
<http://www.crh.noaa.gov/greatlakes/?l=lm&p=a&m=wh>
Great Lakes Lake Conditions with Surface Temperature:
<https://www.glerl.noaa.gov//res/glcfs/>
 - **Launch Conditions**
 - Type of beach - Dumping (Waves break hard on shore) vs Non-dumping
 - Orientation of Shore and Wave Direction
 - Is there a protected area to launch from (behind break walls or from a channel)
 - Skill of group members with Surf Launching/Landing
 - **Shuttle Route** (If required)
 - **Cell Coverage** where you're going
- **If extended kayak camping:**
 - Look at Forecast for **entire trip** before you launch
Find an alternative if you cannot safely start your trip and if there is a good chance that you're going to have marginal conditions for your return.
 - The lake is boss! Know your options if it may not be safe to paddle.
 - Carry extra food and "entertainment" (e.g., a book or cards). Don't head out in risky conditions because you're hungry or bored.
 - Allow an extra day or two for the trip if not safe to return on last day. Don't feel that "you have to be back" for work. Evaluate returning a day early if bad forecast for return.
 - Know other Options – Examples
Return by Ferry/Water Taxi from North/South Manitou or Apostles (Know cost and if they require cash or card)
Return to different site and pay for someone to shuttle you.

- **Study your Maps**

For each day of paddling, know:

- If base camping, drive time to put-in and parking arrangements.
- Navigation/Paddling issues
 - Shipping channels (usually need Nav. Maps to identify)
 - Other boat traffic using proposed route
 - Tidal Currents – Tide Height, Time of Low/High Tide, Speed
Ask a local if you're not sure.
 - Expected Conditions: Wind Velocity-Direction, Wave Height
 - Launch Conditions (See Launching discussion below)
 - Exposure – Fetch of waves along route for predicted wind
 - Course Bearing from Put-In or land marks to paddle towards
 - Paddling distance/time
 - Places for Rest Breaks

- **Tides and Currents (Should be considered when first setting Date!)**

- Desirable to ride out with the current before Low Tide (nice if low tide in early afternoon) and return with inbound current on rising tide
Can be a real grind to fight tidal current for long time.
- Times shift about 1 hour per day
- In an area, tides may vary by several hours depending on location –
Check available tide tables for where you will be launching. Available on phone and on-line. I print tide tables and carry them with my area map since you may be somewhere where you don't have radio or cell coverage.
- Getting estimates for current is tough– Ask a local and check NOAA.
You may have to use your judgment based on tidal currents in the area and the topography that you will be paddling through.
- If you return at “low tide”, you may have mud flats and long carries to contend with.

- **Trip Execution**

- **Sign HCKC Waiver** - Protects you and the club. You can get a copy of the waiver and print it from the HCKC Web Site:
<https://hoosiercanoeandkayakclub.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/Club%20Documents/TripWaver2017.pdfv>
- **Float Plan** – If possible, file a float plan with someone not on the trip: let them know who is on the trip, where you intend to go, and when to panic/who to contact if you don't show up. Need redundant communications tools to make this work since any given device may fail.
- **Last minute weather check**
 - Real-time radar available via Smart Phone
 - Latest VHF radio report otherwise (Often only updates twice per day)
 - Use your eyes. Is the sky consistent with the forecast? Conditions can change quickly or be wrong. Throughout the paddle, watch the sky for changing weather conditions.
- **Group Rules**
 - Go / No Go Decisions – Technical Leader listens and makes recommendation. Anyone can veto if the conditions don't feel safe.
 - Paddle as a group Lead – Sweep –Stay with the Group.
 - PFDs worn at all time when on the water
 - 120 rule recommended for wet suit/dry suit use
(Wear a wet/dry suit if water temp. + air temp. is less than 120.)
- **Pre-paddle talk:**
 - Review rules
 - Disclose medical concerns to trip leader or another-paddler
 - Discuss route, breaks, expected paddle time, hazards
 - On-water assignments (Lead, Sweep, Tech Lead)
- **Required Equipment**
 - Individual paddling gear
Paddling Gear: Whistle, Boat - Length, Fore/Aft Floatation, Spray Skirt (Depending on Conditions), Energy Bar/Food, Paddle, PFD, Spray Skirt, Safety: Pump, spare paddle, paddle float
 - If overnight camping:
Camping Gear, Food in dry bags, Cockpit Cover, Rope to secure boat, clothes line
 - Group Gear
 - Small boat repair kit (and knowledge to use it)
 - Safety Gear: First Aid Kit (and knowledge to use), Tow Ropes (More than 1), Spare Paddles (One for every 2-3 boats), Sponsons (Optional), Emergency Signaling Gear (Whistles, horn, flares, mirrors, ...), Food if someone bonks while on the water

- Navigation: Compass, GPS with extra Batteries, Maps
- Cover (Tarp)
- Communications: VHF Radio, Cell Phone if available, SPOT
- **Launching / Landing Procedures**
Normally not required – Required if tricky dumping or breaking surf or awkward launch spot where people may capsize when launching.
Launch Procedures
 - One experienced paddler launches first to shepherd group on water
 - 1-2 experienced paddlers help other. Hold boats into the waves, paddler puts on spray skirt, and push paddler into the wave. Nothing slows the group down like emptying boats,
 - As group is launched, it stays beyond break but near launch location
 - Last person solo launches – group must stay close since last person may need to pump out after going through break.**Landing Procedure:** If touchy, 1-2 experienced people go in first and help others land. One experienced paddlers stays on-water and coordinates with people on shore to shepherd group on the water to act as safety boat (rescue).
- **On-Water Group Discipline**
 - Tech Leader – Makes nav. decisions, assigns lead/sweep, monitors state of group, coaching on water if needed
 - Lead –Rotate this person. Get navigation direction from Tech Leader
Keep group together – must be able to look behind themselves.
Should paddle with front of the group not way out in front.
I rotate the lead through all paddlers in the group – it gives them experience and having newer paddlers lead tend to keep the group together.
 - Sweep - Rotate this person during the day.
Requires experienced paddler with speed and boat handling/rescue skills.
Sweep should NOT paddle behind group since they could flip too.
Sweep should yell at lead to keep the group together. If they can't hear you, they are too far away. (Consider VHF radio between Lead and Sweep for large groups)
 - Everyone – Monitor other paddlers to make sure they are okay.
- **Campsite Functions**
 - Campsite selection – Consider wind exposure, camping rules
 - Dinner arrangements (if everyone not on your own)
 - Drinking Water
 - Shelter (Tarps)
 - Checking on next day's Weather/Water Conditions
 - Deciding on time/destination for next day's paddling plans

Trip Reporting

- Send Waiver to HCKC Yeoman
- Trip Report (Optional)
 - To document and improve future trips. This could be posted to the HCKC Forums in the HCKC Bulletin Board as a record of trip information for future trip leaders.
 - Trip Summary for Newsletter to generate interest within the club.