



Youth Paddle Program Guidelines

Youth Program Organization

1. The Delaware River Sojourn Steering Committee (Steering Committee) will form a Youth Paddle Program Sub-Committee (YPP Sub-Committee) comprising several members of the Steering Committee plus, if qualified and available, volunteers external to the Steering Committee.
2. Responsibilities of the YPP Sub-Committee include:
 - a. Funding
 - i. Solicit grants, donations for YPP.
 - ii. Request funds from Steering Committee.
 - iii. Assure that no promises of support are offered without proper funding in place.
 - b. Recruit Leaders who, in turn, will recruit youth paddlers.
 - c. Propose modifications of the YPP guidelines to the Steering Committee for approval or rejection.

Leader

A Leader is one who guides a group of youth paddlers. The Leader must have gone through a clearance process, e.g. state and federal background checks, and must have current approval from a school board or equivalent body. Typically, the Leader will be a teacher or scout leader. The Leader is the interface between the Sojourn and the youth.

Leader Responsibilities

1. Select entrants to the program.
2. Oversee signing of waivers by youth and their parents or guardians.
3. Maintain compliance with Pennsylvania's Child Protective Services Law or equivalent law in New Jersey.
4. Maintain awareness of own need to protect own liability and safety.
5. Provide a mechanism for each youth to contribute to the Sojourn. Suggested forms of contributions:

- a. Prepare a post or real-time presentation that gives comments from students regarding what they enjoyed, found enlightening etc. about the Sojourn.
 - b. Prepare a lunch-time or after dinner presentation for the Sojourn. For example, a 10-minute presentation about: the history of the river section paddled, the flora and fauna seen on the river, or an original song or poem about the river.
6. Ideally, but not a requirement, the Leader will enable youth to obtain on-water paddling experience prior to the Sojourn.
7. Group leaders should ensure students' compliance with school district or scouting group rules and behavior policy – usually found in the student and teacher handbooks. These behaviors include but are not limited to; smoking, drinking, drugs, weapons, bullying etc. In instances where there is an obvious breach of law (underage drinking, drugs, assault) the Sojourn reserves the right to report such suspected breaches to local and school/sponsoring youth group authorities immediately. In instances where youth behavior threatens the safety or enjoyment of paddlers at any time, on or off the river, the Sojourn reserves the right to cancel the remainder of the trip for the group in question; transportation arrangements and additional costs incurred due to cancellation of trip for safety reasons is the sole responsibility of the Leaders/school district/sponsoring youth group.

Group Configurations

1. There should be 1 Leader for each 5 youth in a group.
2. If the group is of mixed genders, and if the group will be staying overnight, then a leader of each gender must accompany the group. This is not necessary for a day only trip.
3. Leaders are welcome to bring a child of their own on the Sojourn. The Sojourn will support only 1 leader's child per group of 5 youth. If more than one youth is a leader's child, that child must pay the daily Sojourn fee for each day paddled.
4. If more than 1 Leader is accompanying a group of 5 youth, the additional leader must pay the daily Sojourn fee for each day paddled.

Youth Requirements

(These requirements are intended to provide guidance to Leaders to help them select students and assemble a group that has the best chance of having a great experience.)

1. Must be at least 12 years of age and less than 18.

2. Must be perceived by the leader to be able to paddle the proposed route. Ideally the youth will receive training in advance of the sojourn.
3. A given youth may be supported for up to two sequential years.
4. If a Leader would like to select a youth who is perceived to have physical or mental disabilities, the Leader should apprise the YPP Sub-Committee of the issues. The sub-committee will determine if accommodations can be made to allow the youth to safely participate and have a good experience on the Sojourn. The Leader in turn should realize that he/she will be responsible for the youth they have selected.
5. At times, a group may wish to contribute a partial payment to offset expense to the Sojourn so that additional youth may be supported. In this circumstance, a \$35/day contribution is suggested. Note that this is entirely optional and at the discretion of the Leader. The Sojourn does not want any youth to feel diminished if they do not participate in this contribution.

Support by Sojourn

Benefits covered by Sojourn

1. Boat, PFD, paddle, optional camping site
2. Typical meals provided for a day only paddle: breakfast and lunch. For an overnight paddle: breakfast, lunch and dinner. There are some evenings, e.g. when a change of campsite is required, when paddlers are required to provide their own dinners.

Benefits Not Covered by Sojourn

1. Transportation to and from registration site.
2. Tents and sleeping equipment for youth or leaders.
3. Some meals will not be provided by the Sojourn. These are indicated on the Day Plans