

Outings Checklist

Outings Leader:

Prepare, bring, start, during, and after the outing.

Prepare

1. Remember, you don't have to do all this alone. You can get Outings Committee, PR Committee, Board, Riverkeeper, or members to help.
 - a. Review the blog post announcement of the outing to be sure the put-in, take-out, and other features are correct and understandable to people who have never been on a WWALS outing before.
2. Other parties:
 - a. Call local emergency management beforehand and tell them about the paddle.
 - b. If there are people or groups who want to see us on the paddle, contact them in advance, organize an approximate time, and keep them advised as we approach them on the paddle.
 - c. If there's some special feature such as a spring or fossil oysters, see if you can get a subject matter expert (cave diver or geologist) to come along and talk.
3. Help prepare outing paddlers:
 - a. If somebody needs a boat, help find a loaner or point them to outfitters: www.wwals.net/blog/water-trails/outfitters/
 - b. Especially if water levels or weather are issues, it's useful to post updates on the outings facebook event and meetup.
 - c. You are responsible for deciding to go to backup or to cancel or postpone an outing due to weather, water levels, etc.
4. If you discover you can't lead the outing, it is your responsibility to find someone to step forward to lead it and to make sure the Outings Committee knows who. Please do this as early as possible; don't wait until the day before or the day of.

Bring

5. Bring [event waiver forms](#) and make sure everybody signs one who hasn't already within the last 12 months (WWALS insurance requires it). Easiest is to use the sign-in sheet with the event waiver at the top: that way everybody is covered, and we know who attended.
6. Bring membership forms and offer to sign up new members.
7. Bring cash for change.
8. Probably also bring the Square for credit card payments.
9. Bring water trail brochure or pamphlet or other information such as WWALS newsletter to distribute.
10. Bring a first aid kit or find out who has one.
11. Bring extras in case somebody is lacking; ask others to help fill in the slack:
 - a. Paddle (yes, sometimes people forget)
 - b. PFD
 - c. Whistle
 - d. Food/Snack
 - e. **Drinking water**
 - f. Warm clothes, including dry clothes in case of inadvertent swimming
 - g. Rope for pulling boat across shoals
 - h. Telephone, and if you have it an extra battery or power bank/charger
 - i. Dry case for telephone and anything else that shouldn't get wet
 - j. Flashlight if it might get dark and extra batteries
 - k. Other?
12. Bring banner (WWALS and/or Suwannee Riverkeeper)
13. Bring trash bags and trash picker. Every outing is a cleanup.
14. Bring tally sheets and t-shirts if the outing is also a Rivers Alive cleanup

Start

15. Organize a shuttle (if needed on the outing).
16. Collect \$10 from each non-member.
17. Sign up anybody who wants to become a member.
18. Organize the cleanup.
 - a. Best cleanup times are during shuttle and while paddling.
 - b. Get a picture with collected trash.
 - c. Organize taking trash bags away. Some counties (Lowndes) will come get them if called to do so, but mostly we need to have somebody carry the trash away and put it in a dumpster or other trash collection.
 - d. If it's a Rivers Alive cleanup, make sure people tally and give them t-shirts.
19. **Make sure nobody starts paddling before everyone hears the safety lecture**, which should include:
 - a. Wear your PFD,
 - b. Required to have a whistle
 - c. Other items to carry (see above under Bring),
 - d. **It's a group paddle**, so we can be sure everyone is safe. Anyone who does not agree can get a refund.
 - e. **Paddle leader:** Outings leader must appoint a paddle leader ahead who will be responsible for saying when we stop for lunch or at other points. The paddle leader must appoint somebody else before not being the paddle leader.
 - f. **Sweep:** Outings leader must appoint a sweep behind, who is responsible for making sure nobody is left behind, and who can, if necessary, say people need to paddle faster. The sweep must appoint somebody else before not being the sweep.
 - g. **Water:** dehydration is a serious risk, especially in the summer for people who are not used to hot sun for hours.
 - i. Sweep and several other paddlers must carry extra gallons of water and offer water to anybody who seems to need it.
 - ii. Extra gallons of water need to be ready at the take out.
 - h. Keep others in sight.
 - i. Advise to not be afraid to ask for assistance
 - j. Watch for hazards: shoals, snags, meanders, snakes, alligators, dehydration, etc.
 - k. Features we will see: how far, and how to recognize them.
 - l. Lunch stop: about where and when and ask everybody to try to be there.
 - m. People or groups we will meet along the way: who, why, where, when.
 - n. Ask if there are any medical issues we need to be aware of.
 - o. Establish who has a first aid kit or medical training.
 - p. Don't pet the alligators.

During

20. Stop for lunch and at any especially remarkable points (springs, sinks, bat bridges, etc.)
21. Get a group picture with the banner(s), before paddling or at lunch stop; people tend to run off at the take out.
22. Have fun and encourage others to do so.
23. Encourage people to post pictures and reports about the outing.

After

24. Help review the outing, both on the Outings Committee list, and in public postings.
25. Update this checklist with any changes needed; discuss with Outings Committee.

Alapaha Quest additional items:

1. Distribute Alapaha Quest segment checklists.
2. Plant ARWT sign at put in, unless there's one there already.

Outings Committee:

On the WWALS Website (About -> Committees -> Outings):

<http://www.wwals.net/about/committees/#wwals-outings>

The mission of the outings committee is to plan and organize paddles, hikes, clean-ups and other outdoor activities to encourage use of public waterways and lands, which will promote enjoyment, stewardship, awareness and conservation of the waters and lands within the WWALS watersheds.

Strategies to implement in order to fulfill the committee's mission:

- *Schedule outings with enough advance notice so people can make arrangements to attend; preferably 3 months in advance.*
- *Have all outings details logged onto the [WWALS site \(spreadsheet\)](#) in a timely manner for the PR and Membership committees to be able to get the word out about the upcoming outings [see [WWALS calendar](#)].*
- *Each outing will have a designated leader responsible for/in charge of each trip.*
- *Each outing will have a back up location in case water levels/conditions are not conducive for an outing at the original location.*
- *Short notice outings may be planned to take advantage of special conditions.*
- *Actively pursue new participants for both outings and the committee.*
- *Share knowledge of the waterways and lands with other interested groups or individuals.*

Other items derived from previous discussions by the Outings Committee:

1. Committee members please speak up. Each knows and has done things others have not.
2. Propose outings.
3. Discuss outings.
4. Think about outside circumstances such as:
 - a. water levels
 - b. Weather
 - c. hunting season
 - d. events by other groups
 - e. Other
5. Think about how each outing can mesh with other WWALS activities (cleanups, water quality monitoring, membership recruitment, meeting with other groups, etc.)
 - a. Esp. in the fall, coordinate with Rivers Alive, Waterkeeper Alliance, KLVB, Keep Tift Beautiful, Current Problems, Spring Hunters, or other cleanup organizations
6. Outings leader may do things like this, but it helps PR if the committee already helped organize them so they can be included in the outing announcement:

- a. Contact in advance any people or groups who want to see us on the paddle,, organize an approximate time, and keep them advised as we approach them.
 - b. If there's some special feature such as a spring or fossil oysters, see if you can get a subject matter expert (cave diver or geologist) to come along and talk it.
7. Occasionally the backup will be there is none because if the weather's too bad for the main location, nowhere else will work, but that needs to be decided and explicitly stated.
8. We realize that we all don't always know what our availability will be three months out nor do we know what the weather will be. Scheduling of the outing is not all about us on the committee. We schedule and make these available for anyone who can participate.
 - a. Indeed, no one wants to suggest a date if they don't plan to be available to support it, but there are ways to support an outing other than actually paddling, such as telling your friends, posting on social media, etc.
 - b. There are enough people qualified to lead outings now that it should be possible to discuss where and when and then figure out who should lead it.
9. Remember, a suggestion of an outing is not a decision.
 - a. The committee should discuss any outings suggestion before making a decision.
 - b. Sometimes the discussion may be very brief because of special conditions, but usually there's no big rush because we schedule in advance.
 - c. An outing is only a WWALS outing when the Outings Committee Chair declares it so and puts it in the Outings spreadsheet.
<http://www.wwals.net/events-2/outings-events/>
 - d. Theoretically any of the WWALS board, executive committee, executive director, president, or Suwannee Riverkeeper could overrule the Outings Committee, but this has never happened, although outings suggestions often come from such sources, and sometimes informal unofficial outings do, as well.
10. If you do volunteer to lead an outing and discover you can't, it is your responsibility to find someone to step forward to lead it and to make sure the committee knows who.
11. If you can, post pictures or other report on each outing you paddle.
12. Try to schedule some outings we've never done before. WWALS has so many rivers, lakes, swamps, and springs that we're never going to run out of outings possibilities.
13. Some outings are so popular it wouldn't hurt to schedule them repeatedly, such as:
 - a. Nankin to State Line, Withlacoochee River (McIntyre & Arnold Springs & shoals)
 - b. Staten Road to Langdale Park, Withlacoochee River
 - c. Naylor Boat Ramp site to Mayday, Alapaha River
 - d. Sinks on Alapaha and Dead Rivers
 - e. Turket Creek waterfall on Alapahoochee River (often combined with the sinks)
 - f. Fargo to Roline, Suwannee River
 - g. Okefenokee Swamp (we already seem to be doing that one every December)
14. People sometimes go on scouting expeditions that aren't formal outings, yet may get into the outings spreadsheet for reference (water levels, conditions, etc.).
15. Have fun.