

Little Su Classic

Congratulations and thank you for agreeing to chair Little Su Classic or Service Projects! Here you will find information from past floats to give you some ideas for this year's event. Remember that we have done it a bunch of different ways, and you get to decide what you would like it to look like. I know it's frustrating trying to reinvent the wheel each year. The pchallenge with this event is that it looks a little different every year and sometimes WAY different. It has been a canoe race, a raft parade, a clean-up (of course,) and has started at the gravel pit, at Schrock Rd bridge, Ak Kathy's B&B, and the end of Robin Hood Dr. The first clean-ups in 2006 and 2007 weren't even on the Little Su, but rather at area lakes where we picked up around the boat launches and then paddled out to get trash. We've had BBQs at the gravel pit, we've had stops along the way with food, drink, and music. We've had T-shirts, prizes, and some years entry fees. We've had corporate sponsors and made a fundraiser out of it. I've enjoyed all of them, and I would encourage you to make of it what they like.

Here is a quick checklist that you may want to consider:

- ☐ Decide where / when you want to float
- ☐ Schedule a day to cut out sweepers for safety
- ☐ Do you want a Race? Clean-up? Family Fun Float? River parade?
- ☐ Do you want Prizes? Trophies? Gift bags? Tshirts?
- ☐ What do you want to accomplish?
 - ☐ Service project? River clean-up?
 - ☐ Fund raiser? Sponsors? T-shirts? Float bags?
 - ☐ Fireside? Family Fun Float? Fellowship?
- ☐ Decide how you want to get the word out
- ☐ Involve MatSu Water Rescue early in your planning
- ☐ Reach out to Ak Kayak and other groups
- ☐ Involve Partners:
 - ☐ Denali Refuse for trash pick up
 - ☐ Miller's Market ice cream or coffee?
 - ☐ Houston Lodge for discount?
 - ☐ Gorilla Fireworks for porta potty?
 - ☐ Houston City fire dept / public works, etc
- ☐ Make sure you have plenty of "Alpar" style trash bags from spring clean-up
- ☐ Do you want a BBQ at your event?
 - ☐ Donations?
 - ☐ Potluck?
 - ☐ Soda, BBQ grill, waters?
- ☐ Do you want check points along the way for safety or to drop off trash?
 - ☐ 5944 W Sunrise / Dave Mason call Mason Siding 907-770-6619
 - ☐ 4276 Three Bees Rd / Fisher's gravel pit call Fisher's Fuel 907-892-6706
 - ☐ 7201 Flying Crown Dr / Larry Weisheim
 - ☐ 4252 N Schutt Dr Kathy Thompson (Disney Castle on Little Su)
- ☐ Do you want to arrange for transportation?
 - ☐ Move cars down to Houston bridge?
 - ☐ Move people and boats up to start?
 - ☐ Take folks back to their cars at the end?
- ☐ Arrange to get trash hauled off

2006 Lakes Clean-Up

We toured area lakes with canoes on our trucks and stopped and picked up trash around the public use areas of these lakes. Then we launched our boats and paddled out to pick up trash out in the weeds where folks on foot couldn't reach the stuff.

2007 Lakes Clean-Up

1st annual T-shirt, blue. Even during Founder's Day canoe race

2008 Aug 16th Race

Started at Ak Kathy's B&B finished at Houston bridge with BBQ Brown 2nd annual T-shirts

2009 Founder's Day

White T-shirt with patch in the corner. In conjunction with Founder's Day in August. Frontiersman did this article.

HOUSTON — About two dozen racers launched into the Little Susitna River with plenty of paddles Saturday for the third annual Little Su Float Classic. One of the highlights of Houston Founder's Day, the river race is more of a social networking event than a serious competition. But that didn't stop Tew's Automotive from talking a little good-natured trash before putting into the river at Alaska Kathy's. Garrett Hooper said, "I'm gonna win," expressing optimism for a better showing than last year's last-place finish. Hooper and the Tew's team relaxed with a few cold ones before the race, and he said he had no problem using the large squirt gun he had stowed beneath his life vest. "I'll only use it if I pass somebody," Hooper said. One team out of range was Team Wonders, made up of father and daughter Ray and Mackenzie Wonders. The duo finished with the fastest canoe time in 36 minutes. "It was really fun," Ray said. "At times it felt like we were moving pretty good, at other times it seemed like it was a lot of work." For Mackenzie, the Float Classic was her first canoe race, but not her last. "Her and I are going to do some big long-distance canoe races this next summer," Ray said. "So, this was good practice." Panting hard at the finish behind Miller's Market off the Parks Highway, CJ Rusher said the paddling took its toll. "My arms are Jell-O," he said. "They're done." Along with friends Jeremiah Schachle, Wes McClure and Robbie Schachle, the group loosely estimated the length of the race to be anywhere from 2 to 50 miles. The run down the Little Su is closer to 2 miles, said Nancy Sult, president of the Houston Chamber of Commerce. Off-and-on rain also did little to discourage the 16 teams that signed up. "My racers don't care about the rain," she said. "It's Founder's Day. We usually have rain on Founder's Day. They are a very dedicated group." Official timekeeper Lance Wilson said the racers "are just out for a good time," and that some, like father-son team Fred and Hayden Seltenreich, get downright creative. After winning Best in Show last year with a dune buggy boat, the pair brought a cardboard and Styrofoam float plane — which Hayden dubbed Fast Freddie's Flying Machine — to the race on Saturday. Fred said they spent about two hours putting the plane together and the goal was simply not to sink. "We don't know what it'll do," he said minutes before launching. "We haven't tested it. We got the buckets to sit on, so hopefully our butts will be out of the water. ... I think it's pretty good for two hours' work. We went to the thrift store to look for stuff to throw on our airplane. We found those (plastic lifesavers) for a quarter apiece, and they match." Robbie Schachle finished behind his brother Jeremiah, but joked that his brother handicapped his chances before the race started. "He gave us the slow boat with the skinny paddles," he said. "It's a rigged race. It was fishy." Contact Greg Johnson at greg.johnson@frontiersman.com or 352-2269.

2010 July 3rd Race / Clean-Up

4th annual T-shirts orange. Schrock Rd to Houston. Trophies for racers, prizes for most trash, most unusual, etc. Frontiersman floated with us and did great news article.

2011 June 11

5th annual green T-shirt. Started at Schrock Rd bridge, picked up trash and had prizes for most trash, trophies for fastest finish in all categories. Stan and Trudy tipped over his little river boat.

2012 June 2

Printed 6th annual T-shirts pink for Tew's. Started at Schrock Rd, picked up trash. Used Tew's buses to move people up. Mat Su Water Rescue joined us.

2013 June 8th

Schrock Rd start, trash clean-up. Red 7th annual t-shirt, Denali Refuse sponsored. Water Rescue

2014 May 31st

8th annual blue T-shirt. Schrock Rd to Houston. Prizes and trophies for most trash, fastest, etc
Mat Su Water Rescue joins us

2015 June 6th

Navy blue t-shirt with Susitna Rotary in gold. Trash clean up from Schrock Rd to Houston
No Water Rescue available

2016 June 4th

Float from Schrock Rd bridge to Houston

No t-shirt, floated from Schrock Rd bridge. Water Rescue not available. Phil and Lolly tipped over and had a close call which prompted pres Chuck Foster's letter:

Rotarians,

I'd like to thank all the Rotarians and guests who came together to make a successful Little Su Classic 2016. We scaled down the event, focused on cleaning sweepers and trash from the river to make it safe and attractive for recreation, followed by an enjoyable fireside at the Gravel Pit Sand Bar. Mission accomplished.

The cleaning took significantly longer than planned. The crew encountered some large jams and endured more than one upset, which made good use of our decision to have Marty and Cheryl operate the Mason's Siding checkpoint. We gathered less trash than in previous years, which is actually a good indicator. For future events, we will need a significant review of our safety measures. In more than one case, we were lucky, and we cannot rely on luck.

Moving the cars from Schrock Bridge to the gravel pit was smooth, though it didn't feel smooth all the time. For future events, we should continue the practice, but be more deliberate in keeping track of keys. Though no keys were lost, we spent time and worry trying to locate keys that were safe and sound. Thanks, Catherine for making it work!

The Porta-Potty and dumpster worked splendidly. Thanks Robert and Phil!

At the Sand Bar, we had a pretty well run site. The weather was perfect until about 1:00 pm when we got intermittent rain showers. The four canopies Kim brought were perfect. If we had wind, we would have needed tiedowns, but that did not materialize. We had plenty of food, for which we can thank Eddie, the grillmeister, and Rylee who supplied and marinated the beef patties. The Salmon Phil and Claire brought turned out perfectly as well. (Honorable mention goes to Kim's peach cobbler and homemade ice cream – make a note, ya'll: ALWAYS make sure Kim can attend.)

The brief reviews I received at the end of the day at the Sand Bar varied. Some thought the Classic had run its course and suggested we look for a new, dirtier river. Another thought the river was too risky for the payoff. Everybody thought the social part at the Sand Bar was wonderful.

Drop me a line to give me your impressions of the 2016 Classic. What went well and should be repeated. What should be changed or improved?

The normal schedule puts the Classic on the Saturday after Memorial Day. In 2017, that's June 3. Do you have suggestions for the 2017 Classic? Here are some ideas to get you thinking...

1. Make it more social and less service by inviting area Rotarians and their guests to a social at the Sand Bar and then float to the hiway. Perhaps find ways to involve Rotaract and Interact.
2. Set a maximum time for the work party. After reaching that time, knock it off and go to the gravel bar.
3. Find a new river.
4. Conduct a joint project with the MatSu rescue team. That is, both they and we clean the river together, then they are our guests at the Sand Bar. Or adopt a different partner with significant river skills.
5. On the Friday before, a couple of skilled water pilots run the river and select the sweepers and other hazards to be removed.

Thanks again everyone,

Chuck Foster

2017 June 10th

No t-shirts, clean up from Schrock Rd to Houston. Rest stops at Mason Siding, Larry Weisheim's, and Robin Hood Dr. Marty & Cheryl tipped over pedal boat. This was the last time we floated from Schrock Rd since our board decided that since we are the “water safety” club, we shouldn't have a drowning at one of our events. Water Rescue not available.

2018 June 9th

No t-shirts, Gentle, family fun float with trash clean-up from Three Bees gravel pit to Houston. No checkpoints. We still go out and cut the sweepers from Schrock rd to Houston. MatSu Water Rescue is back with us.

2019 June 1st

No t-shirts, floated from Three Bees gravel pit to Houston for BBQ. Some trash clean-up. MatSu Water Rescue joins us as usual.

2020 June 13th

Float from Three Bees to gravel pit. Water Rescue is on board to be there.