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Canton Canoe Weekend will be May 5-7

Mar 11, 2023



Canton Canoe Weekend will be held May 5-7 at Taylor Park. Tom Graser/Plaindealer

CANTON — The weekend events will kick off on the Grasse River with the Friday afternoon Rushton Tour on May 5. The afternoon paddle will take place between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. with a flexible start time. The recreational paddle begins at the Pyrites boat launch and continues downstream 4.5 miles, concluding at Taylor Park, following along much of the original race course.

On May 6, there will be a variety of activities from 9 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. at Taylor Park. The day begins with recreational races at 9:30 a.m. of one, three, five and eight miles in length on the Grasse River. There will be a special division in the one- and three-mile races for paddlers in Rushton style boats. This 'Rushton Cup' event is sponsored by Slipstream Watercraft and will feature special awards.

The Saturday morning recreational races will be followed at 12:30 p.m. by solo canoe and kayak, amateur and pro races, featuring the C-1 Men's and Women's Pro World Championships held on the Grasse and Little Rivers. NCPR is our media sponsor, DJ Double Dutch will be providing music, and GT's Family Restaurant will be at Taylor Park cooking their famous chicken BBQ from 12:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. or until sold out. The barbecue will be available for picnicking in the park or as takeout.

At 3:30 p.m. the Joe Randi/Rushton Relay Race takes place. This is a two-mile relay race with classes for family and friends, high school, college and open division teams.

On Sunday morning tandem canoe and kayak, amateur and pro races will begin at 10 a.m. Following the tandem races, between 1 and 3 p.m. it's Try Out a Boat — a variety of adult and youth recreational and racing canoes, kayaks and standup paddleboards will be available for a test paddle.

Sunday May 7th is also National Ride A Bike Day. Canton Canoe Weekend is partnering with Grasse River Outfitters to encourage bicyclists to ride to the Park Street boat launch in Canton to watch tandem canoe and kayak racers navigate the Little River, and later, ride to Taylor Park to participate in the Try Out a Boat session!

While recreational races draw many local paddlers, the pro races attract paddlers from across the United States and Canada. The 61st Canton Canoe Weekend promises to be a fun and festive event! Come out and join us!

Registration for all races, the Rushton Tour and the chicken barbecue will open in mid-March. Visit the Canton Canoe Weekend website to register.

For more information, please visit our website: www.cantoncanoeweekend.org.