



Phatwater Challenge VIII

What? You haven't heard of the Phatwater? Well, read on, fair citizen, for this is history in the making!

The Phatwater is a 42.5 mile Kayak and Canoe race on the Mississippi River, held each October since 2002. The VIIIth Annual Phatwater Kayak Challenge, 2009, will be held Saturday, October 10, 2009, in Natchez, Mississippi. The Phatwater is open to all classes: Unlimited Kayaks, K-1s, K-2s, K-4s, C-1s, C-2s, Surfskis, Outrigger Canoes, all recreational paddle craft, inflatable, strip-built and kit-boats. Hobie 'Mirage Drive' kayaks are permitted.

The Phatwater does not allow paddle-wheel craft, homemade rafts, or use of an auxiliary motor of any kind, at any time. Participants unable to complete the Phatwater will be escorted to shore by one of our safety/chase boats.

The Phatwater is held the second Saturday of October. Registration for the Phatwater, 2009, will take place all day long, Friday, October 9, at the Under-The-Hill Saloon, on the riverfront, in Natchez. You may pre-register but you will still need to be present on Friday, October 9, at the Under-The-Hill Saloon, to sign your waiver and pick up your registration Package, KayakMississippi T-Shirt, and whatever other cool schwag we scrounge from the bottom of the barrel in the interim.

Registration for 2009 will be \$55 for members of the American Canoe Association, \$65 for non-members.

As with past years, the Phatwater will provide a free shuttle from Natchez to the Put-In at Grand Gulf, the morning of the race. In order to take advantage of this free shuttle, you will need to drop your boat at the Put-In either on your way to Natchez, or after you have finalized your registration at the Under-The-Hill Saloon, on Friday, October 9. Registration will take place from 8 A.M. until 10 P.M., on Friday, October 9.

Once your boat has been pre-staged at the Put-In it will be guarded by heavily armed security, overnight. Fear not. Your precious, one-of-a-kind, never to be equaled, mastered by few though the envy of all, custom lay-up 'Quebecois Zephyr', Signature Mark IV, hand finished by world champion French Canoe builder, Jacques Yuelar, will be cared for as though a babe in diapers. Just be sure you have a cockpit cover to discourage snakes and frogs from taking up residence overnight.

Limited 'Hardship Registration' will be held the morning of the Phatwater, at Grand Gulf, for those who cannot make it to Natchez by 10 P.M. Friday, October 9. Hardship registration must be approved in advance by contacting KayakMississippi.com. PFDs are mandatory for participation in the Phatwater, and must be worn at all times. Failure to comply will result in participants being removed from the course and denied participation in future Phatwater events.

All participants will receive a Phatwater T-Shirt. Other items available for purchase, to help support the Phatwater and KayakMississippi.com can be found on our online store.

At present Kayak Mississippi recognizes approximately 20-21 classes of boats/ participant status. We've been doing this a while, and every year someone contests our categories on the basis of what amounts to whining for the sake of whining. Our categories are what they are. If you feel you are being unfairly categorized, either buy a new boat that fits our mold, or register a protest with the United States Congress. We're sure they will be quick to respond.

This being said, incomparable trophies for every class will be awarded, as in years past. We also anticipate awarding \$4000 in cash prizes for top finishers as follows: First solo men's prize will be \$1000. First solo women's prize will be \$1000. First tandem team will be \$1000. There will also be a \$1000 bonus to the first finisher, whether solo or tandem, to break the existing course record of 3:54:00, set by Steve Woods in 2008. An even split will be presented for any ties.

In the event of a tie, an even split of the whole will be presented.

For other information about prizes, categories, trophies, racing conditions, weather forecasts and river levels, safety, gear lists, Zeuglodon sightings, past Phatwater Results, photo galleries, or any other information, please sign up for the blog. This blog will be the new home for all future Phatwater Updates, and will be adjusted accordingly. Once you've signed up you will receive an email alert every time an update or news item has been added to the blog.

Thanks y'all. See you in October—