

40th Annual Vermilion River Race
By Rob Hammond

It's that time of year again...no, I am not talking about taking off the snow tires and chains, and I don't care what that rodent in Punxsutawney prognosticates about the coming of spring. The sure sign that spring is near, is the running of the Vermilion River Race! The old gang is back: Hank, Jimmy, Elliott, Cliff, Patty, John, Bob, Jim, Ed, Judy and a bunch of others will be at Birmingham Ohio registering racers, measuring boats, starting the boats, running safety, timing and scoring the runs, feeding hungry racers and all of the other things we need to do to kick off the 40th annual Vermilion River Race!

This year we are celebrating one of the longest running river races. We will be giving away 40th anniversary water bottles to the first 50 registered racers (only one bottle per racer). The race will be Sunday March 30. If the water level is too high, the back up date will be April 6.

The Vermilion River is an easy class II and very scenic run. The race will have 14 different race classes based on age, gender and boat length and type, so there will be a place for everyone. The race can be as much or as little as you want, some people take the race as a leisurely stroll, and other racers... well let's just say that they don't often take prisoners.

Here is a heads up for the guys registering in the men's kayak class. When you see Chuck Singer signing up for the men's class, don't look at his gray hair and think that he is going to be an easy mark. Don't try to correct him and suggest that he sign up for the "ole farts" class. The reason he doesn't sign up with the rest of us ole farts, is that he loves kicking whippersnapper butt! And almost every year he brings home the medals to prove that age really is a state of mind! I like to kick whippersnapper butt to, but since I can't, I have to leave it to Chuck!

Last year we had near perfect conditions with temperatures in the 70s, plenty of water with river gauge showing 6 inches. This brought out a century record-breaking race turnout. We had 148 enthusiastic racers, 113 boats and the best turn-out since 1984.

This year to add a little competition and to reduce the waiting time at the start line, we will be starting boats two or three at a time. So bring your buddy and have your own private grudge match, or maybe you and your bud want to hang together to encourage each other on, or maybe your idea is to have a nice springtime paddle with your buds at your own pace down this beautiful stretch of wilderness in Ohio. If you want to race with your buddy, talk to Hank at the start line and he will put your group together.

Like last year, you will be able to signup at the Keel-Hauler website and pay online. So if you want to be one of the lucky 50 racers that will get the way cool commemorative water bottle with the race anniversary and club logo, sign up early; either online or by snail mail. If you just want to join the excitement without getting wet, let me know, cause we still need volunteers to help out at the race and distribute race publicity.

After the race, there will be hot food for cheap. So come on out for an early spring chance to get in shape for the season, have some fun, and maybe take home some bragging rights! Check out the race application, rules and map in this newsletter. If you still have questions...give me a call or drop me an email!

Rob Hammond, Rob@SCD-corp.com or 216 292-5618.