

GSP XXX

[NR: This raft trip has not yet been rated.]



Yes folks, the time is drawing near to once again begin packing up the family truckster with all that camping, hiking, river, and beverage gear so you can hit the road for that annual pilgrimage to the hills of West Virginia.

That's right GSP's, it's time to get yourselves ready for the 30th Annual GSP Raft Trip - The Pearl Anniversary! The first GSP's are expected to start arriving in camp on Sunday June 27th or so with the rest trickling into camp throughout the week, most arriving by Thursday or Friday at the latest. So start warming up those packing skills and we'll see you in Hico!

Camping: Of course we'll be at Ray's Campground again. For those that can't yet find their way to Ray's with their eyes closed or who want to test the accuracy of their new GPS, Ray's address is: 1199 Sunday Rd., Hico, WV 25854, or go to www.rayscampground.com for directions or contact info. Don't forget to stop in at the office and pay Ray (\$8.50/person/night, kids 12 & under are free). We typically set up camp on both sides of the road between the office and the bathhouse, and the group campfire will be between the volleyball court and the picnic shelter (behind the office).



Rafting: Since the GSP's haven't been banned from the New River yet, we'll be doing some rafting. The schedule is as follows:

Upper New: Friday July 2, check-in time 7:40am, hard boat drop-off – see me in camp for instructions

Lower New: Sunday July 4, check-in time 8:00am

Our rafting company, North American River Runners (NARR), has merged with two other outfitters, ACE Adventure Resort and Wildwater, and the combined company has moved all operations to the ACE facility near the town of Oak Hill. This will have some advantages and disadvantages for us. This location is a good bit farther from Ray's than NARR's old facility, so we'll all need to allow more drive time in order to get there by our designated check-in times. Also, since this location is on the south side of the bridge, we'll have to save our traditional "ooh's" and "ah's" until the post-rafting bus ride. On the plus side, I'm told the ACE facility is touted as the most extensive and impressive outfitter facility in the New River Gorge, and GSP's will have the opportunity to take advantage of some of what they have to offer. They have a lake with a swimming beach that sounds like it will put Summersville Lake to shame. It has some giant inflatables for swimmers to climb, jump, and slide on, a zip line to ride into the water, a volleyball court, and various other attractions. I was told that as NARR customers, we'll have use of their facilities from 48hrs. prior to our Upper trip to 48 hrs. after our Lower trip. With this in mind, I'd like to organize a GSP trip to the NARR/ACE beach for those interested, probably to occur on Thursday July 1. This could also serve as a convenient opportunity for hard boat drop-off.

For directions to the new NARR location and a map and additional info. for their facility, please refer to the following links. Note: I was told that GPS units often have trouble finding their actual address, so those wishing to use a GPS should use the linked 'GPS' directions.

<http://www.gsp.org/docs/2010/NARR-driving.pdf>

<http://www.gsp.org/docs/2010/NARR-GPS.pdf>

<http://www.gsp.org/docs/2010/NARRcampus.pdf>

<http://www.gsp.org/docs/2010/NRGAP.pdf>

If you are interested in rafting but haven't yet paid or let me know you intend to raft, please let me know. I can still easily add people up to 48 hrs. before trip time, but the earlier the better.

Food: The famed ‘rambo’ grill will be powered by slush fund charcoal and available for your use while in camp, feel free to utilize it and help lend a hand in maintaining it. Your slush fund fees provide all the ice you’ll need for your cooler. The GSP pot luck dinner will take place on Saturday July 3, so bring a dish! Also, in recent years several of us have participated in a group fajita dinner night. This year, we’ll make it official and announce it in advance so all who want to can plan to participate. Bring your contribution and join us at the picnic shelter for fajita dinner night on Friday 7/2, time TBD.

Libations: Yes, GSP’s have been known to enjoy a beverage or two. The community beer cooler will be set up in a shady spot behind the picnic shelter. GSP’s strive to bring as diverse a selection of local or micro-brews from around the country or world as possible and share what they bring with all. So if you’d like to partake, bring at least as much as you intend to consume and deposit it at the community cooler upon your arrival, then help yourself to any of the available selection.

For many years now GSP’s have held a ‘Tasting’ night to broaden our taste buds’ horizons on a variety of beverage types. On this 30th annual raft trip, this year’s tasting event will take us back to our roots, beer. But not just any beer, this year’s tasting will focus on ‘specialty’ beers, aka ‘craft’ beers. These are typically unique limited production or seasonal beers produced by micro-breweries. Some are found in more traditional beer bottles while others come in specialty bottles up to and including the half-gallon ‘growler’ size. So those interested are encouraged to bring along an entry for this year’s tasting. With so many varieties out there, we probably won’t have problems with duplicates, but if you e-mail your intended contribution to gsp@gsp.org then others will know what’s being brought. We’ll plan the tasting for Friday night 7/2.

Non-rafting Activities: Of course the New River Gorge area offers all sorts of outdoor activities, many of which GSP’s have been known to partake in. Hiking and swimming at the ‘swimming hole’ are regular favorites. Perhaps we can organize some geo-caching this year too. Every day people head out of camp to do one thing or another, so ask around, maybe others are interested in the same activities you are!

In the first GSP letter I sent this year I also mentioned a new activity starting up this year for the first time, the New River Gorge ‘Bridge Walk’ tour, a chance to walk across the canyon on a 24” wide catwalk just under the bridge’s road surface 850’ above the river. Several of you expressed interest in this trip so I contacted NARR to set up a GSP tour. Unfortunately, NARR informed me that the first Bridge Walk tours won’t occur before ~ 7/14. It seems that because this bridge is considered a major landmark it’s also considered a potential terrorist target by Homeland Security, thus requiring the Nat’l Park Service to apply for a special permit in order to conduct these tours. Apparently getting the needed permit has been taking longer than anticipated, so it looks like a GSP bridge walk tour will have to wait until next year.

Campfire: After dark the group campfire is of course the place to be. Bring your instrument if you play and your ears if you don’t. Silly skits and antics are also a certainty around the campfire late in the week, so start preparing yours now. Various campfire culinary delights are also quite common, so bringing something to share is always welcomed.

Schedule overview:

Thursday 7/1: Time TBD - NARR/ACE lake beach trip
Friday 7/2: 7:40am – Upper New trip check-in at NARR
6:00-ish – Fajita dinner; Specialty beer tasting to follow later (9:00-ish?)
Saturday 7/3: 6:00-ish – Pot-luck dinner
9:00pm – Campfire – skits/songs/raft assignments/cool gift distribution
Sunday 7/4: 8:00am – Lower New trip check-in at NARR
9:00pm – Campfire – skits/songs

Your humble GSP XXX Organizer,
Gene Cowen
H (843)-875-6468
C (843)-875-4390
gene@gsp.org

Your 2010 GSP's - responses received so far (if there are any errors shown in who's rafting, let me know):

(blue = Upper New, red = Lower New, green = Upper & Lower New, black = camp slug)

Di Begley, Gwen Evans, Beth Evans

Darrel & Kim Bourne

Ed Bronson, Eileen Gelblat, Aaron Gelblat-Bronson

Dan, Charlotte, Jackson, & Emory Brunner

Stacey, Cori, Erin, Sean, & Ryan Bucherl, Emily Chavez

Paul Carlile, Sue Strang, Peter & Rita Carlile

Gene & Caleb Cowen, Hudson Barnes

Renee Gelblat

Jim & Cathy Hands

Rich Kulawiec

Kris Meade

Paul, Bronwyn, & Zach Pagram

Jeff Schwab

Deb Smith

Maria Thompson & Shelby Munsterman

Jef Treece & guest (probably rafting)

Don, Roberta, Jimmy, & Annie Wegeng

Air Mattress or Thermarest
Bug Spray
Cooler
Cooking Utensils
Clothesline
Dining Fly
Flashlight and Batteries
Food
Hiking Boots and Socks
Beer
Lawn Chairs
More Beer
Raingear
Sleeping Bag
Sunglasses
Tent
Camera
DuctTape
Groundcloth for Tent

STUFF TO BRING ON THE RIVER!

Swimsuit
Waterproof Sunscreen
Cap with bill
Dry Bag
Nylon Pants/Shirt

STUFF NOT TO BRING ON THE RIVER!

Food
Recreational Drugs

STUFF TO LEAVE AT AMR FOR AFTER THE TRIP!

Shower Stuff Towel Dry
Clothes and Shoes

beer
Canteen/Water Bottles
Cookstove and Fuel
Clothing (optional)
Day Pack
Eating Utensils/Dishes
Stuff to wash Eating Utensils
Hats
Jacket
Lantern
Lawn Ornaments
Personal Hygiene Stuff
Props for campfire hijinks
Beer Again
Sunscreen
Water Jug
Towels
Compass/GPS/Maps
Musical Instruments

Footgear (old sneakers/teva's)
Sunglasses w/ Croakies
Waterproof camera
Medications

Paddle Jacket/Wet Suit

Alcohol