

Fort Edmonton Canoe Brigade

Spring Up-Date
2017 – Mar - 30



Good Morning All;

Once again, or maybe for the first time, you have received this note because you have: entered crew, are with a sponsoring or cooperating agency/group, have expressed an interest in volunteering or have some need to know how this event is coming together. I am pleased to report that the both the Fort Edmonton Canoe Brigade (FECB) and the 2017 CVBS brigades in general are coming together very nicely... some are already full and have closed registration. The FECB can accommodate more canoes and participants than many of the other brigades... we still have participation opportunities! I am pleased to report that our 2017 CVBS Brigades are growing... since my last note we have added a new brigade to, and on Prince Edward Island. Details are all available on the 2017 CVBS web site (here: voyageurbrigade.org)! Read on!

Present Registration and participation

We now have eight big canoe crews (80 + paddlers) that have paid a deposit, and I am aware of two more crews that have formed, have collected paddler fees but have yet to make payment to us, and another three or four crews are kicking “our tires.” At present time we have a limit of 16 big canoes set... but this could be expanded! But we are running out of boats!

I have now opened registration for the two “small boat” events, the **Canada Day Paddle** from Devon to Fort Edmonton, and the **Metis Crossing Camp-out**, dance and Monday morning paddle into Victoria Settlement. This took a wee bit longer than hoped for. If you know folk who would like to participate, or are wondering how to register the best advice is to send them to the [General Plan link for the Fort Edmonton Canoe Brigade](http://voyageurbrigade.org), or the home page for 2017 CVBS [http://voyageurbrigade.org/](http://voyageurbrigade.org).

Canoe Crew leaders, I now have completed the drafting of a final Big Canoe Registration form and payment. This will open in early April... I will send you a notice when. Besides payment, you will need each crew members 2017 CVBS Membership receipt #, each members emergency contact person and the best phone number in an emergency. I would encourage you connect with your crew members and collect this data well in advance of making your final registration and payment. Very final changes to crew membership can be made in Devon on the evening June 29th at check-in. We have managed to hold our brigade fee at approximately \$120 per participant and this will be due with your final registration, either by credit card, or you can send me a cheque.

Schedule

Our schedule is pretty much set... I so suspect there will be some fine tuning over the next month or two.

Route Planning, Park and Campsite booking

No changes to our route or river access points. I am still looking for an access for June 30th about half-way between Genesee and Devon. I have completed further work with both the Fort Edmonton folk (Tom & Sophia) and the City of

Edmonton (Sarah) for our plans at Fort Edmonton and access confirmation at Laurier Park for our Canada Day small boat event.

Leon (from Metis Crossing) and I have shared a phone call this past month and plans are progressing. It looks like we may be sharing Metis Crossing with a Metis crew.

Arrivals, Pipers & Black Powder crew

I have put together a start of a document to support our arrival and departure ceremonies: schedule, staffing, locations, etc. This document can be found on the CVBS web site under the *Resources* menu, here (.).

Tim, from the Edmonton House Brigade, and I met in January during the Historical Society launch of their book: *The Fur Trade in the West*. Tim reports that their crew is keen to go, and even have a few folk who want to get into the boats with us.

I believe we have pipers for both arrival and departures in Devon (Piper Jack), Fort Edmonton (Piper Warren), Ft. Saskatchewan (Piper Tom) and Metis Crossing and Victoria Settlement (Piper Andy).

We have asked the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta to attend our final arrival and wind-up lunch at Victoria Settlement... we await an answer.

Catering and Dance

Catering for supper and breakfast in Devon with the Lions Club is confirmed, though our supper menu has yet to be decided. Similarly arrangements are in place in Fort Saskatchewan for supper by the United Church Ladies, and breakfast by the Fort Saskatchewan Historical Society. And we have Noel from Smoky Lake lined up to our Sunday supper at Metis Crossing and lunch at Victoria Settlement.

Rick Moore who pulled together a musical group for our last Paul Kane Dinner has found a crew for our Saturday night voyageur dance (mostly reels and round dances). We have posted to the 2017 CVBS web site, under the [Resource Index](#) (other files) both a collection of Voyageur Songs, and instructions for Five Period Folk Dances.

“People in Boats”, sometimes termed “butts in boats” is one of the program items we paddlers will contribute to each arrival, except Fort Edmonton due to our schedule and small beach. The plan is to have a few senior paddlers hang out at each arrival site after the ceremony prepared to take local spectators out for a short paddle as a “hands-on” introduction to the Big Canoes. I have made arrangements with the Ceyana Canoe Club for a loan of lifejackets and paddles for this program. These local folk will be asked to sign a short waiver and assumption of risk form.

Canoe Security

In both Devon and Fort Saskatchewan we expect to leave the canoes on the beach at the launches and we have a tentative contract with the Canadian Corps of Commissioner for 12 hours of security each night.

Volunteers

A few of you on this mail out have already volunteered to help with the brigade. I will be looking for a few more volunteers for during the brigade. We will need a Thursday (Jun 29) registration crew, again on the Saturday morning. Each paddling day we will need a few “marshalls” for the departures, for gathering before arrivals and at arrivals, for collecting waivers at the *People in Boats*, at some of the meals, etc. Our *Canada Day Paddle* in particular is going to need: marshalls at Fort Edmonton and Laurier Park, and a sweep/safety boat. Our budget includes funds to support a motorized safety boat for the Canada Day morning paddle from Devon to Fort Edmonton. If anyone can help find such a person, with or without boat. I would be much appreciative.

I would like to call a post supper meeting for our volunteer marshalls, registrars, safety boats for the evening of May 24th location TBA.

Indigenous Youth Crew

The budget also has funds designated to support an indigenous youth crew. So far we've been unable to drum-up a willing volunteer or group to take this part of the brigade on. I've had a couple of folks working on this but nothing so far. I'm sure that if we get a local indigenous crew we have folk who will help to teach them to paddle the Big Canoes this spring and help guide them on the river. I also have a Big Canoe reserved for this crew. If you have suggestions for contacts, or sources of additional support for such a crew please let me know.

Budget

Expenses so far confirmed are coming in on or near budget.

Marketing

We've received some press so far, both the [River Valley Alliance](#), and the [Edmonton Community Foundation](#), both sponsors, have articles about this brigade on their websites. Shortly we'll be putting out both a “media release” to local media, and another national newsletter promoting the brigade and in particular our *Canada Day* and *Metis Crossing Campout & Paddle* opportunities. If there is anything I can do to help our local communities and volunteers with promoting the brigade as a whole, and the local arrival Ceremonies, please ask!

I'm sure I've missed something, and there will be questions. I expect to do “on site” visits in late April and early May and will connect with each community crew about mid-April to schedule these. I'm sure we have much to discuss about parking, traffic control, boat storage, security and access.

Let me close by thanking all of you for your assistance and support in planning for the Fort Edmonton Canoe Brigade. I think we have a grand program in the making... and a fitting celebration for Canada's 150, and for the “cultural cooperation” and “water stewardship” that was, and is so important to our paddlers and all Canadians.

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