THANK YOU FOR REGISTERING FOR PADDLEFEST 2025!

We are excited about the work we can do when we come together to help build a thriving community and having fun while we do it!

NEXT STEPS

Registration On Our Website: https://uwdp.org/news-events/paddle-fest.html

- **Sign In & Set Up Your Give Smart Profile: Directions Here**
- **Fundraise or Pay Race Entry Fee on Give Smart Site**
- **Read Through General Information Below**

All participants, even those who are paddling through a company sponsored spot, need to register through Give Smart site. When we see your registration come through, we will update your fundraising Give Smart site to reflect your company's registration donation on the fundraising page.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Big Ole PaddleFest is a two-day competitive paddle event through the iconic waterways of Alexandria, MN. BOP is a charitable adventure paddle on Alexandria's Chain of Lakes and the Long Prairie River. All proceeds benefit local United Way initiatives, fueling real impact in our region.

- **Friday, July 18th | 4.5 Mile BIG OLE | $100**
  - Stand-up paddleboarders, kayakers, and canoeists will race across the Alexandria Chain of Lakes, testing speed, endurance, and strategy.
- **Saturday, July 19th | 8 Mile LENA | $100**
  - The action continues with the Long Prairie River Cruise — a timed paddle down a designated MN State Water Trail, known for its winding turns and natural beauty.
- **Both | BIG OLE (4.5 Miles) & LENA (8 Miles) | $150**
  - We are offering half-off one race if you want to participate in both events!

REGISTRATION FEE & RAISING FUNDS FOR UNITED WAY

Fundraising Details

Big Ole PaddleFest supports the Alexandria Lakes Area by raising funds for the United Way of Douglas & Pope Counties.

Fundraising Deadline
Registration fee must be paid through Give Smart by July 13th.

All donations must be received by **3:30 PM on Thursday, July 17** to count toward prize levels.

Offline Donations

- If you collect cash or check donations, please email the details to **bwood@uwdp.org** so we can update your fundraising page.
- Cash donations may also be turned in at registration on the day of the event.

Fundraising Prize Distribution
We'll do our best to have prizes ready for pickup on race day. If additional items are earned close to race day, they may not be ready for pick up at the event and will be available 2–3 weeks after the event at the United Way office in Alexandria, MN.

Fundraising Levels

- $100 Event Registration & Race T-Shirt - All participants are required to either fundraise or pay the race entry fee. If you don't want to fundraise, you can pay for this on the Give Smart app after you set it up. All registration fee payments must be made by July 17th to ensure entrance into the race on race day.
- $250+ Receive a Long Sleeve Race Shirt
- $500+ Receive a Long Sleeve Race Shirt & Race Sweatshirt & Entrance into Grand Prize Drawing

PADDLER SAFETY

Safety must be everyone's highest priority to sustain the Big Ole PaddleFest. Paddlers should read the rules & regulations, advice and safety tips, and register for the course that best suits their abilities. The Big Ole PaddleFest is insured and regulated through the US Canoe Association and permitted by the Douglas County Sheriff's Office.

WHAT'S INCLUDED IN MY REGISTRATION?

Registered Paddlers receive a safety whistle and event t-shirt.

2025 BIG OLE PADDLEFEST RULES

1. PARTICIPANTS must be 16 or older and complete the waiver form. Minors 16-18 must have their parent sign their waiver.

2. PARTICIPANTS must possess a U.S. Coast Guard approved Personal Flotation Device (PFD) in serviceable condition and suited for their height and weight.

3. PARTICIPANTS must possess the provided clip-on safety whistle.

4. PARTICIPANTS MUST EMPLOY A SAFETY LEASH and wear their PFD.

5. PARTICIPANTS exiting their course prior to finishing must notify a PaddleFest organizer or volunteer.

6. PARTICIPANTS must pass through low culverts while lying face down on their SUP, or crouched low in their craft.

7. PARTICIPANTS must carry a water bottle or hydration pack.

8. No consumption of alcohol is allowed by participants during races.

MN DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES REGULATIONS

1. Nonmotorized watercraft over 10 ft in length must be registered if kept in MN for more than 90 consecutive days and display a valid registration decal. You can register your SUP in Alexandria.

2. Zebra Mussels infest all waterbodies. Out-of-town paddlers should take necessary steps to prevent their spread.

3. Participants are on *public waters* and must obey Minnesota's boating laws and rules.

4. Consumption of alcohol at public accesses and county parks is prohibited.
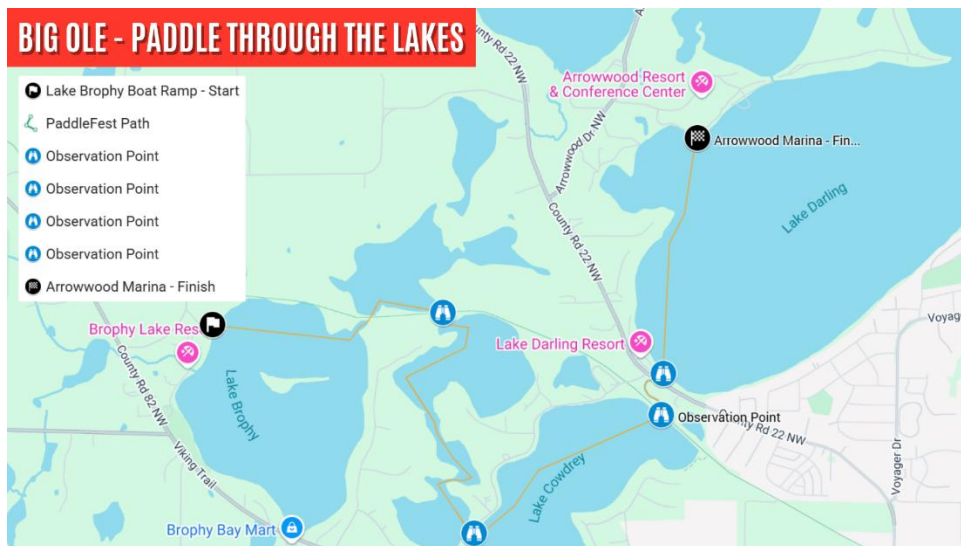
INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

In the event of a weather-related cancellation, the event will not be rescheduled. We truly appreciate your understanding, as organizing PaddleFest requires months of planning and the support of many dedicated volunteers.
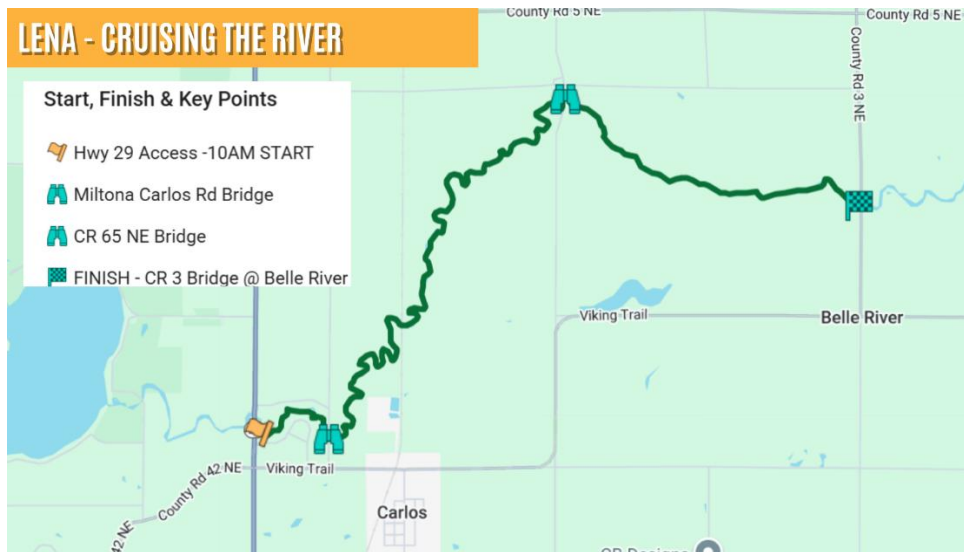
SPONSORSHIP

The Big Ole PaddleFest donates all profits to the United Way of Douglas & Pope Counties (UWDP). Businesses or individuals can become an event sponsor by making a tax-deductible donation to the UWDP by July 1st! BOP organizers gratuitously thank all our sponsors on social media and recognize them at the post-paddle party!

EVENT ROUTE MAPS
BIG OLE **<-- Link to Google Map of Course, works great w/ your Google Maps phone app!**

8 mi Long Prairie River Cruise **<-- Link to Google Map of Course, works great w/ your Google Maps phone app!**

LENA - CRUISING THE RIVER

Start, Finish & Key Points

- Hwy 29 Access -10AM START
- Miltona Carlos Rd Bridge
- CR 65 NE Bridge
- FINISH - CR 3 Bridge @ Belle River

ADVICE & SAFETY TIPS

- Participants should bring a dry bag for keys & phone. Hats, sunglasses, sunscreen & shoes or sandals recommended.
- Print and bring the event waiver.
- Hazards in interlake channels and culverts include currents, eddys, wave trains, rocks & woody debris.
- Participants are paddling on *public waters* and must remain aware of their surroundings, especially around boaters.
- Participants should wear their PFD if paddling in adverse weather.
- Friday paddlers should bring cash or credit card for a post-paddle meal at Arrowwood's Deck Bar (menu).