



Contact: Wendy Lindsay

Stone Soup Events

[elypebble@gmail.com](mailto:elypebble@gmail.com)

### **The Great American Canoe Race and Festival**

One of America's Coolest Small Towns Celebrates the Canoe in Two-Day Event

**Ely, Minn.—April 14, 2017**—The Ely, Minnesota Chamber of Commerce is excited to announce the second annual Great American Canoe Race and Festival is scheduled for Saturday and Sunday, June 10 and 11, 2017. The festival honors the history and culture of the canoe, resulting in two days filled with races, recreational paddling, music, demonstrations and seminars.

The weekend features two races and a family paddle. The Ely Paddle Battle is a 6-mile race along the shoreline of Shagawa Lake. It will be held on Saturday, with both the race start and finish occurring at Semer's Beach. This race is suitable for paddlers of most experience levels, and is perfect for couples, parents and children or those who want to loosen their muscles in preparation for Sunday's race.

Sunday brings the Mighty Paddle Challenge, a 17 mile paddle, 2.5 mile portage race. The race is a great trip across several lakes within the wild and scenic Superior National Forest. Racers will also traverse portage trails of varying lengths as they move from lake to lake along the course.

For 2017, both races are mixed class with no restrictions on boat sizes.

Recreational paddlers who do not wish to race can join the Family Fun Paddle. There will be five checkpoints around Shagawa Lake—each will offer a treasure, such as a water bottle, lunch, ice cream, etc. This is not a race, so paddlers need not go to every check point. Instead, they can create their own route and choose the checkpoints to which they want to go. This is a perfect family-friendly or youth group activity. The entry fee is \$45.00 and for every entry for the Family Fun Paddle, the Great American Canoe Festival will donate \$5.00 toward the Washington Elementary Playground Project fundraiser.

Registrations are open for all three paddles. Visit [greatamericancanoefest.com](http://greatamericancanoefest.com) to sign up! Area businesses are encouraged to challenge another business to compete against them in one of the races to earn bragging rights for their company.

Racing is just one element of the festival—it is two days filled with everything you need to know about paddling, camping, exploring and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW). There will be seminars on both days where visitors can learn about backcountry cooking, paddling with a toddler, fishing in the BWCAW and more. They can also have a cup of coffee and Crapola parfait and mingle with acclaimed authors at the literary breakfast on Sunday morning. There will be many vendors on hand to showcase their outdoor wares; fest-goers can demo canoes, kayaks and SUP boards!

The Ely Folk School will be on hand to teach basic canoeing, kid's camping skills, portaging and packing, and other outdoor classes and there will be live music throughout both days with a special "Live Music and S'mores Around the Campfire" on Saturday evening. Organizers are also excited to host the Reel Paddling Film Festival World Tour; produced by Rapid Media. The film festival showcases the best of paddling films and is screened in 120 cities around the world. These films inspire people to explore rivers, lakes and oceans, push extremes, embrace the paddling lifestyle and appreciate the heritage of wild places. Held on Saturday, the film festival will feature a selection of the 2017 world's best paddling short films.

Admission to the booths and festivities at Semer's Beach is free. The Reel Paddling Film Festival admission is \$10.00 in advance, or \$12.00 at the door.

Ely, MN, just a four-hour drive from the Twin Cities, was named "Coolest Small Town in America" by Arthur Frommer's Budget Travel in 2010. In 2017, National Geographic named Ely as one of just eight world-wide destinations for "World's Best Towns for Outdoor Thrills" and Expedia name Ely as one of "20 Places to Find America's Best Sunsets." This gateway to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness is known for its miles and miles of pure, unspoiled beauty.

The Great American Canoe Race and Festival is made possible by the Events Coordinator Bureau—a collaboration of the Ely Chamber of Commerce, City of Ely, Ely Area Tourism Bureau, Merchant Committee and Incredible Ely. It is produced by Stone Soup Events, an event planning company in Ely, MN.

For more information about Ely, visit [www.ely.org](http://www.ely.org), or at Facebook/[VisitElyMN](https://www.facebook.com/VisitElyMN).

For more information about the Great American Canoe Race and Festival, visit [www.greatamericancanoefest.com](http://www.greatamericancanoefest.com) or at Facebook/[greatamericancanoefest](https://www.facebook.com/greatamericancanoefest).

###