

## BMP: Education

### Arkansas River Coalition

#### Free Kayak & Canoe Rental at Wichita RiverFest



In 2007, the Arkansas River Coalition (ARC) began offering free kayaking to the public during the annual RiverFest celebration in Wichita, typically on one weekend (1-3 days) during the festival. Boats, staff and planning are provided by volunteer members of the Arkansas River coalition, and boats are launched from a floating dock located on the east bank of the river near the Douglas street bridge in the heart of RiverFest. The event is staffed by a minimum of nine volunteers: 2 at check-in, 2 fitting PFDs, 3 helping boaters launch and a minimum of 2 roaming rangers on the water. In nine years, nearly 5000 adults and children have been introduced to kayaking at this event, with as many as 50 boaters per hour participating. While this event has seen a few challenges with weather and the large number of volunteers required, the ARC plans to continue this event at RiverFest as long as it remains feasible.

Participation in this event is free, and open to everyone. Boaters are required to sign a legal waiver, and are assisted with fitting a PFD before launch. Kayaks and a small number of canoes are available for use, and the boaters are given brief instructions and safety warnings before volunteers assist them in launching their boat. There is no specific time limit, but boaters are limited to paddling in a certain area of the river, while experienced members of the coalition act as rangers in the event of a capsized boat.



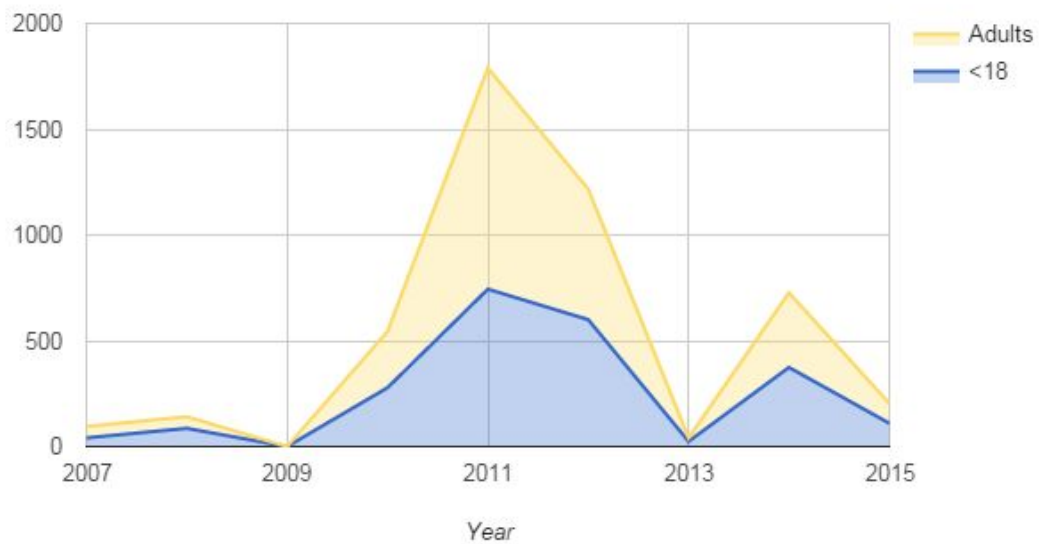


### Yearly Participation Summaries:

- In 2007, a total of 95 boaters participated over a 2-day period, the event running for approximately 4 hours each day, for a mean participation of 12 boaters per hour.
- In 2008, more than 141 boaters attended in one 4-hour event - an increase to 35 boaters per hour.
- The event in 2009 was cancelled due to a recent rain and subsequent increase in the bacterial (E.Coli) levels in the water, which limited primary contact with the river.
- In 2010, severe weather and rain shortened the event, which was held over 3 days. Even with the weather issues, participation in the event reached 544 total boaters that year.
- 2011 saw a record number of participation, with 1789 total boaters, an average of 33 boaters per hour, over the course of 5 days. Although a 5-day event produced a large number of participants, it was determined that staffing demands of a 5 day event was more than the coalition could support, and the event was reduced to a 3-day weekend in 2012.
- While participation dropped to 1217 with the decreased total event time, the average boaters per hour grew to 51 during the 3 day event in 2012.
- 2013's event ended early due to weather and high winds, with only 41 participants.
- In 2014, a 2-day event was held, with 727 participants, or about 35 boaters per hour.
- 204 total participants, or 41 boaters per hour were recorded during the one-day event in 2015.



**Arkansas River Coalition at RiverFest: Total Boaters**



**Arkansas River Coalition: Kayaking at RiverFest**

Year	Total Boaters	<18	Adults	Volunteer Hours	Event Length (Days)	Event Length (Hours)	Comments
2007	95	41	54	72	2	8	
2008	141	86	55	40	1	4	
2009	---	---	---	30	---	---	Event cancelled due to weather, volunteer hours were planning, etc.
2010	544	278	266	176	3	20	Ended early due to weather.
2011	1789	744	1045	482	5	54	
2012	1217	600	617	212	3	24	
2013	41	24	17	40	1	4	Ended early due to weather/wind.
2014	727	374	353	189	2	21	
2015	204	110	94	50	1	5	
<b>Total</b>	<b>4758</b>	<b>2257</b>	<b>2501</b>	<b>1291</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>140</b>	