



EVERYTHING ABSURD UNDER THE SUN.



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**Boaters Plan Descent of “Non-navigable” River
Los Angeles River Expedition 2008 (July 25-27)**

{This is not a joke.} In support of the Los Angeles River master plans by the city and the county, The LaLa Times (lalatimes.com) and *Surviving LA* (survivingla.com) are doing their part to ensure that the river becomes a clean resource, full of healthy wildlife, and enjoyed by residents and visitors alike — a vision they share with a growing number of Angelenos. To that end, The LA River Expedition will begin an inaugural three-day, 52-mile exploration of the full river, from its source (Canoga Park) to its estuary (Long Beach).

On July 25th, a dirty dozen intrepid Angelenos will begin a hair-raising, obstacle-ridden descent of the notorious waterway, deemed not to be a “traditional navigable water” by the Army Corps of Engineers — and therefore not worthy of clean water standards. The journey is historical in timing, as a controversy has erupted regarding who has jurisdiction over the river and its watershed: The Corps? The Environmental Protection Agency? The County? The City? The People? In short: Whose river is it anyway? The answer will determine who dictates national water quality standards, with recent decisions going all the way to the Supreme Court.

“Kayakers and canoeists like myself are caught in a classic Catch-22,” says LaLa Times’ founder George Wolfe. “They say people can’t go near the river (without facing fines — or being beaten by bureaucracy), then they deny access on grounds that no one is using it. That might be funny in an absurd way, except that it has real environmental effects: Locally, it diminishes the quality of our water supplies and the water we swim in at our beaches. In other cities, people freely use their rivers; here, we have to beg — we’re asked to be quiet and sit at the back of the boat.”



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The objectives of the expedition are to raise consciousness about the river's revitalization efforts, to raise money in support of river-related environmental organizations, to study ways to make access to the river as healthy and safe as possible, and to raise the bar for clean water and grand urban visions that will empower and protect local and national waterways for ourselves and for future generations.

Avid boaters will be joined by an eclectic crew of scientists, urban sociologists, health practitioners, community representatives, and artists who are committed to improving the river's condition.

"The River is a unique asset of Los Angeles," says Surviving LA's blogger Jeffrey Tipton. "and the people should realize they're endowed with the ultimate voice in shaping the river's future as a community unifier and the heart of the city's green-scaping plans. Do the people want to exercise that voice, or are they content to allow others to control it and use that silence to dilute the federal Clean Water Act? We call upon all relevant governmental, legislative and judicial entities to address these rulings with pro-environmental laws and actions."

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