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Montana Dragon Boat Festival: 2014

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Montana Dragon Boat Festival 2014

Bigfork, Montana

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Case Study Report 2014-21

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Abstract

This study was conducted for the Kalispell Conventions and Visitor Bureau, to provide insight into the characteristics of attendees of the 2014 Montana Dragon Boat Festival. Paper surveys on site and a post-event web survey were completed by 417 attendees and/or participants of the event. Results show that 58% of respondents were residents of Montana and of those Montana residents, 47% were from Flathead County. Out-of-county respondents spent an average of 1.85 nights in Kalispell and 1.49 nights in other Flathead Valley locations (not Kalispell). Hotel/motel/b&b purchases received the highest total dollars spent during the event. Respondents to the survey reported a total spending of \$94,770.00 in the Flathead County area. Results provide event organizers and the Kalispell Chamber of Commerce with useful data for future event planning, making improvements to the event, event marketing/promotion, and understanding the visitor spending associated with the event.

Executive Summary

The Dragon Boat Festival attracted out-of-county Montana residents (11%) and out-of-state (42%) visitors to the Flathead County area. The attendees of the event make important economic contributions to the Flathead County area. The results of the study are worth considering for future planning of the Montana Dragon Boat Festival.

- 91% of visitors who reside outside of Flathead County spent at least one night away from home. The mean number of nights spent in Kalispell was 1.85 nights.
- More money was spent by these out-of-county visitors in hotel/motel/b&b (\$40,878.00), restaurant/bar (\$14,595.00), and retail goods (\$13,379.00) than other spending categories. 64% of respondents reported that they were spending for a travel group size of at least two or more people (including respondent).
- 64% of respondents reported staying in a hotel/motel/b&b, followed by 12% staying in a rental cabin/home.
- Attendees were mostly travelling with an organized group/club (34%) or with business associates (20%). The average travel group size was 2.77 people (travel group spending size).
- Respondents traveled with a variety of age categories in their group – the highest percentages were 45-54 years old (64%), 35-44 years old (60%), and 55-64 years old (59%).
- Attendees heard about the event mostly from the word of mouth (51%), group or club (48%), and the newspaper (19%).
- Overall, attendees of the event were satisfied with the Montana Dragon Boat Festival, and 89% of respondents indicated that they would attend the event next year.

Management Implications

Survey results indicate that Montana Dragon Boat Festival visitors are travelling from outside of Flathead County to attend the event. This event brings both resident and nonresident visitors to the Flathead County area, and the attendees of the event make a variety of monetary contributions while visiting.

A large number of people who attended the Dragon Boat Festival were non-residents from out-of-state, with 37% residing in Canada. Non-resident visitors bring new money into Montana and make valuable economic contributions to the area. Event organizers should continue their efforts to attract non-resident visitors to the Flathead County area for future events.

It is recommended that the organizers review the respondents' comments from Appendix B to gain more insight into people's likes and dislikes of the festival's organization, cost, parking, and other aspects of the event. Changes based on this input could help bring back repeat visitors to Flathead County in the future.

Introduction

The 3rd annual Montana Dragon Boat Festival was hosted on Flathead Lake in Bigfork, MT over two days from September 13th through September 14th, 2014. Dragon Boat racing has a long history that dates back 2,300 years ago to China. The Montana Dragon Boat festival attracts a diverse crowd of participants and spectators from around the region.

This event is organized by the Kalispell Convention and Visitor Bureau and the Kalispell Chamber of Commerce. The Kalispell Chamber of Commerce works to improve the business environment for the Kalispell and Flathead area community. Kalispell's chamber has been around since 1904 and is committed to strengthening the economic opportunities for the greater Kalispell area.

The purpose of this study was to provide the organizers of the 2014 Montana Dragon Boat Festival with an understanding of the characteristics of visitors to the event, visitor spending in Flathead County, and levels of satisfaction with different aspects of the event.

Methods

Data was collected in two ways:

1) Surveyors intercepted participants and spectators 18 years of age or older for on-site completion of the survey during the two day event. Surveys were given to people by random selection in an attempt to represent the event attendee population. People willing to fill out the questionnaire were given a clipboard, pen, and a survey. This resulted in 175 surveys. If a respondent indicated they were solely a spectator but were attending the event with a participant of the Dragon Boat Festival, they were not asked to record their spending in the Kalispell/Flathead Valley Area. This is to eliminate over-representing the amount of money spent in the area since all participants received an invitation to the same questions via a web survey after the event (see data collection method 2). This survey asks them to record all spending for their group (including themselves and any non-participants).

2) An email invitation to a web survey was sent by the Kalispell CVB/Chamber to capture the group characteristics, spending, and satisfaction of the participants of the 2014 Dragon Boat Festival. One reminder email was sent to participants who had not completed the web survey asking them to please do so five days after the initial survey invitation. This resulted in 242 surveys.

No documentation of the number of refusals was recorded.

Limitations

As in all research, there are limitations to the study. Limitations for the Dragon Boat Festival study include the following:

- Data was collected by Kalispell area volunteers who received a short training from ITRR's survey contact person at the Kalispell Chamber/CVB on how to intercept people and how to obtain completed surveys.
- ITRR personnel were not present during the data collection for quality control.

Results

Of the 360 valid responses to the residence questions, 58 percent (207 people) were from Montana and 42 percent (153 people) were from out-of-state or Canada (see Tables 1 and 2). Of all Montana respondents, 47 percent (168 people) were from Flathead County while 11 percent (39 people) were from other Montana counties.

Table 1: Residence of all Respondents

Place of Residence	# of total	% of total
Flathead County	168	47%
Other MT County	39	11%
Montana=207		
U.S. State	17	5%
Canada	133	37%
Non-Montana Unspecified	3	<1%
Total all Residences	360	100%

Table 2: Out-of-State and Canadian Residences

Residence	# of respondents
Alabama	1
Alberta, Canada	116
British Columbia, Canada	9
California	1
Canada (Unspecified)	8
Florida	1
Idaho	3
Minnesota	1
Ohio	1
Oregon	4
Non-Montana Unspecified	3
Texas	1
Washington	3
Washington, D.C.	1

The mean age of respondents was 48 years old. Of those who were from outside Flathead County and responded to the survey, 173 people reported that they spent at least one night away from home. Of those nights spent away from home, the greatest percent of respondents (57 percent) spent two nights in Montana. The mean number of nights spent in Kalispell was 1.85 nights. The mean number of nights spent in other Flathead Valley locations was 1.49 nights. A full breakdown of nights spent as well as results of all other questions in this survey can be found in Appendix A.

Expenditures

Spending information was asked of event attendees (participants and spectators who were not in a travel group with a participant) who reside outside of Flathead County. The survey asked that they report their best estimate of the total amount of money they and their family/travel group (if applicable) spent in the Flathead County area in the following categories: accommodations, restaurant or bar, groceries or snacks, gasoline, transportation, auto rental, retail goods, and entertainment or recreation.

Table 3 presents the expenditure data of only the non-resident respondents (those who reside outside of Flathead County) who reported spending money in the categories. The mean expenditure of those who spent money for each category can be found along with the percentage of people who reported that they spent money in that category. The last column provides the total dollars spent by those respondents in each category. The total reported expenditure for respondents who spent was \$94,770.00.

Table 3 – Expenditure Data: Expenditures calculated using only non-residents (those who live outside of Flathead County) who spent.

Expenditure Category	Mean expenditures of non-residents <u>who reported that they spent money in these categories</u>	% of respondents who reported spending money in each category	Total dollars spent in each category <u>by respondents who spent</u>
Hotel/motel/b&b	\$393.06 (n=104)	25%	\$40,878.00
Restaurant/bar	\$114.92 (n=127)	31%	\$14,595.00
Retail goods	\$159.27 (n=84)	20%	\$13,379.00
Groceries/snacks	\$98.45 (n=100)	24%	\$9,845.00
Gas	\$81.23 (n=117)	28%	\$9,504.00
Entertainment/recreation	\$75.98 (n=46)	11%	\$3,495.00
Campground	\$49.86 (n=29)	7%	\$1,446.00
Local transportation	\$34.37 (n=27)	7%	\$928.00
Auto rental	\$31.82 (n=22)	5%	\$700.00
		TOTAL	\$94,770.00

Appendix A- Results

Q1. Are you a registered participant of the Dragon Boat Festival? n=417

73% Yes (Skip to Q2.) 27% No (answer Q1a.)

Q1a. Does your group include someone who is a registered participant of the Dragon Boat Festival? n=112

51% Yes (Skip to Q14. On back) 49% No

Q2. Are you a resident of Montana? n=360

58% Yes 42% No (skip to Q4.)

Q3. Do you reside in Flathead County? n=207

81% Yes (skip to Q14. on back) 19% No (skip to Q5.)

Q4. In what state, province, or foreign country do you reside?

See Tables 1 and 2.

Q5. Is this your first time visiting Kalispell or the Flathead Valley area? n=191

24% Yes 76% No

Q6. Was attending this event your primary reason for being in the area? n=192

91% Yes 9% No

Q7. For what other reasons are you visiting the area? (Check all that apply.) n=114

18% Vacation/recreation/pleasure 1% Just passing through <1% Business/convention/meeting
5% Visiting friends/relatives 11% Shopping

Q8. For this event, how many nights did you spend away from home? n=191, mean=3.48

9% 0 (skip to Q.12) 1% 1 25% 3 3% 5 2% 7 0% 9
51% 2 6% 4 <1% 6 0% 8 1% 10 or more

Q9. How many of those nights were in Montana? n=172, Mean=3.78

0% 0 57% 2 6% 4 <1% 6 0% 8 2% 10 or more
2% 1 27% 3 4% 5 2% 7 0% 9

Q10. Of your nights in Montana, how many did you stay in Kalispell? n=151, mean=1.85

29% 0 42% 2 5% 4 0% 6 0% 8 0% 10 or more
1% 1 20% 3 2% 5 1% 7 0% 9

Q10a. Of your nights in Montana, how many did you stay in other Flathead Valley locations? n=138, mean=1.49

46% 0 28% 2 4% 4 0% 6 0% 8 0% 10 or more
1% 1 15% 3 4% 5 2% 7 0% 9

Q11. In what type of accommodation(s) did you stay in Kalispell or the Flathead Valley? (Check all that apply.) n=171

64% Hotel/motel/B&B 5% Private campground 4% Resort/condominium
12% Rental cabin/home 10% Home of friend/relative 3% Guest ranch
4% Public land camping 4% Second home/cabin/condo 0% Vehicle in parking lot

Q12. Please enter your best estimate of the TOTAL amount of money in US dollars you (and your family/travel group, if applicable) spent in the Flathead Valley area in each of the following categories. If you did not spend money in a category, please leave it blank. (See Table 3 for expenditures).

ACCOMMODATIONS in Flathead Valley

Hotel/motel/bed & breakfast

Campground

FOOD in Flathead Valley

Restaurant/bar

Groceries/snacks

TRANSPORTATION in Flathead Valley

Gasoline/diesel

Local transportation

Auto rental

RETAIL/SERVICES in Flathead Valley

Retail goods

Entertainment/recreation

Q13. How many people does the above spending represent (including yourself, i.e., your travel group size)? n=176

36% 1	9% 3	2% 5	1% 7	0% 9	9% more than 10
36% 2	7% 4	0% 6	<1% 8	0% 10	

Q14. What option best describes the group with whom you attended this event? n=355

5% Self	7% Immediate family	9% Family/friends	20% Business associates
10% Couple	2% Extended family	14% Friends	34% Organized group/club

Q15. Please select all the ages represented in your group: n=356 for each age category

3% 0-5 yrs.	11% 11-17 yrs.	51% 25-34 yrs.	64% 45-54 yrs.	25% 65-74 yrs.
3% 6-10 yrs.	26% 18-24 yrs.	60% 35-44 yrs.	59% 55-64 yrs.	5% 75 and over

Q16. What best describes your annual household income? (In US dollars) n=305

3% Less than \$20,000	17% \$60,000 to \$79,999	6% \$150,000 to \$199,999
18% \$20,000 to \$39,999	15% \$80,000 to \$99,999	4% \$200,000 and over
17% \$40,000 to \$59,999	21% \$100,000 to \$149,999	

Q17. How long before this event did you make plans to attend? n=411

4% The day of the event	14% 1-4 weeks before the event	33% Over 6 months before the event
9% 1-7 days before the event	39% 1-6 months before the event	

Q18. How did you hear about the Dragon Boat Festival? (Check all that apply.) n=408 per selection

51% Word of mouth 7% Posters 48% Group or club 16% Social media
 19% Newspaper 2% Magazine 0% Retail outlet 2% Other website
 10% Radio 1% Direct Mail 3% Flyer
 5% Television 16% E-mail from event planners 14% Event website

Q19. Please rate your satisfaction with the Dragon Boat Festival:

Satisfaction	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	N/A	Mean	Total respondents
Organization of the event	2%	<1%	3%	27%	68%	0%	4.58	n=406
Event staff	1%	2%	3%	22%	72%	<1%	4.64	n=408
Cost of the event	<1%	<1%	10%	32%	50%	6%	4.49	n=403
Location of the event	<1%	2%	2%	13%	83%	<1%	4.76	n=403
Concessions available	3%	15%	15%	31%	35%	2%	3.85	n=406
Number of people at the event	1%	2%	9%	39%	49%	<1%	4.34	n=405
Parking	3%	7%	11%	32%	45%	3%	4.17	n=409
Sound system	2%	4%	12%	35%	49%	0%	4.25	n=408
Variety of activities	1%	2%	16%	34%	44%	3%	4.27	n=406
Signage/directions	1%	3%	10%	36%	49%	2%	4.32	n=408
Cleanliness	1%	0%	1%	26%	72%	<1%	4.68	n=407
Availability of restrooms	1%	2%	3%	31%	62%	<1%	4.52	n=408

Q20. What is your age? Range=18-89, mean=48.46

Q21. What is your gender? n=407

25% Male 75% Female

Q22. When might you come to the Dragon Boat Festival again?

89% Next Year 11% Within 5 Years <1% Never

Q23. Please tell us what you liked about the Dragon Boat Festival.

See Appendix B

Q24. Please tell us what you did not like about the Dragon Boat Festival.

See Appendix B

Q25. What suggestions do you have for improvements to the event?

See Appendix B

Appendix B: Open-ended Responses

Q23. Please tell us what you liked about the Dragon Boat Festival.

A beautiful venue!
A lot of fun and great for the valley.
A very worthwhile event, lots of fun.
All the activities, people, and boats.
All the different ages
All.
Always a great time! Beautiful weather, beautiful location!
Always a lot of fun meeting other teams and being able to learn different techniques and training.
Amazing location
Amazing location
Amazing location
An awesome event for charities
Atmosphere, locale, event, people
Atmosphere, nice people, and excellent staff.
Atmosphere, weather, lake
Atmosphere. Location. Friendliness. Positive feedback from stereotypes and drummers who were provided. Organization of the races.
Awesome and well organized.
Awesome venue, great people! loved it
Awesome venue, great volunteers, fun time. Food was MUCH, MUCH better at Sat. eve bash. Love the pasta/sauce combos that you could add your own meat to. Loved the fire pits and heaters for pre/post races. Used those a lot!
Awesome, fun, great location
Beautiful day location, well organized, music, and booths.
Beautiful facility
Beautiful grounds, friendly staff, you could drink all over the grounds and not be confined to beer gardens
Beautiful location and friendly people.
Beautiful location and great staff.
Beautiful location, friendly workers and volunteers. Lots of restrooms, and in different locations with a place to wash your hands. My favorite festival that my team goes to by far. The Asian noodle place was super good.
Beautiful location.
Beautiful scenery, Awesome medals, Very organized, Friendly people
Beautiful scenery, Awesome medals, Very organized, Friendly people
Beautiful seating and good people.
Beautiful setting, well organized, fun activity.
Beautiful venue
Beautiful venue, good after hour's social activities, well organized.
Beauty and area.
Best venue I have been to - able to see most of the course from many places throughout the park, and beautiful scenery. Finish line was easily identifiable from the boat and from shore. Great finish view from shore. Heated marshalling area.
Booth variety and location.
Clean, well-organized, and wonderful vendors.
Color and weather.
Community spirit.

Community spirit; focus on cancer survivors; excitement of participation
competing
Competition
Comradery.
Costumes, general festive air.
Costumes.
Did not attend
Dragon Boat racing is a fun activity and it's very accessible. It's interesting to see that many who have little or no experience can compete.
Dragon boating.
Dragon boating and team bonding
Easily accessible family event.
Energy of the event, staff was great with the maintaining the flow of races, comradeship and fun
Event location. Friendly volunteers. Experienced steerspersons.
Event mgrs. did a great job of keeping so many teams on schedule. The location is fantastic and gorgeous. Nicest dragon boat race location I've seen.
Everyone coming together.
Everyone getting along and having a good time. Even the kids were having fun as it should be.
Everyone is happy.
Everyone's spirit and helpfulness.
everything
everything
Everything
Everything from the Friday lesson to volunteers who jumped in and drummed and paddled and to the racing. I loved that my grandchildren also got to race. I am hooked. Can't wait till next year.
Everything!
Everything! It was such an amazing event!
Everything! Great experience so much fun all around. Well organized and on time!!
Everything, very friendly.
Excellent location.
Excellent venue, great volunteers, organized very well.
Excellent venue, vendors, volunteers/staff
Exciting location for races. Good accommodations
Fabulous fun and beautiful venue.
Festive atmosphere.
Fortunately, I had a parking pass. Can't imagine having to be bussed. It's a great sport and I'll keep doing it
Friendliness and community.
Friendly atmosphere.
Friendly competition on beautiful Flathead Lake.
Friendly event by a beautiful lake.
Friendly people, great competition.
Friendship.
Fun and festive. Everyone is friendly and having a good time.
Fun event and beautiful spot.
Fun for the family.
Fun
Fun group activity that brings community together, challenges individuals to go beyond their norm, and builds

relationships based on success of competing together.
Fun time, great organization.
Fun to watch.
Fun, great cause and beautiful location
Fun, Great People, Great Cause!!
Fun, nice area.
fun; location;
Good cause.
Good event, well organized. Nice to see kids volunteering and doing such a good job.
Good sense of regional community in events that are both physical and social.
good team building activity
Good viewing, good venue,
Gorgeous location, nice staff, big event with a lot of teams.
Great activity, great people, great cause!
Great competition
Great event for family, friends and team building.
Great event overall! Very well organized and a lot of fun. Vendors were wonderful and event venue was awesome, as always! Staff were great too!
Great event, loved it.
Great event... Beautiful venue and friendly people!
Great fun and well organized.
Great Location
Great location and fun to watch.
Great location and lots to do.
Great location and people.
Great location and the hula dancers.
Great location, great volunteers, well organized. Great touch to have outdoor heaters and fire pits.
Great location, lots of fun and getting better with organization of the day.
Great location, lots of fun and getting better with organization of the day.
Great people, activity, and cause.
Great staff and events.
Great time, beautiful location, and well organized.
Great vendors, beautiful space, and friendly volunteers.
Great venue, scenery, and friendly people.
Great venue, very well organized, great Bash mean and band was fabulous, band on festival site Saturday was great, good entertainment
Great volunteers, great music, and beautiful weather.
Great weather, great people, great cause and great event!
Great weather, great people, great cause and great event!
Great weather.
Had a great time
Hawaiian dancers and music.
Hawaiian dancers, vendors, and the jewelry.
I absolutely loved the festival! Great job and kudos to all organizers, volunteers and anyone else involved! I will be back next year.
I absolutely loved the festival! Great job and kudos to all organizers, volunteers and anyone else involved! I will be back next year.

I am on a team from cranbrook Abreast in the Rockies one the best festival that I have been too
I belong to a BCS team in St. Paul, MN. We attend several festivals, and have found the flathead festival to be very well run. Timely, organized and prepared. The location is wonderful, and the views outstanding.
I compete DB in Texas and will see about bring a team to compete in the future. Just happened to be in Montana visiting family.
I enjoy the rowing, meeting new people etc.
I enjoyed the excitement of the races and of course the people who I was with, we had a great time.
I like outdoor events that are family friendly.
I like that it's a true festival with entertainment, vendors, food and lots & lots of people
I like the team work with business associates.
I like the team work with business associates.
I like the venue, I like the organization, I like that it supports a good cause.
I liked the location.
I love everything and hope to be in a boat next year.
I love the atmosphere and the way that so many people come together for such a great event.
I love the energy, spirit and camaraderie and the venue is spectacular. I LOVE THIS FESTIVAL
I love the racing and the location because it is close to home.
I love the team mentality of the event. The team mentality not only applies to each individual team, but to every team member across team lines.
I love the venue.
I loved attending this festival!
I LOVED how it was set up to give each team 4 heats/races, regardless of our times... I hope you do it that way again. I especially LOVED that on Sunday we were placed in categories based on similar times (it felt fairer?). This festival weekend represented a significant investment of time/money/exercise/preparation/commitment and I definitely feel I received a good return on that investment. I loved our leaders this year - Kevin was just great and I hope we have him back again.
I really enjoyed it last year, so came again. Great for kids and adults alike. Well organized, shuttle system is great, the location is beautiful and comfortable.
I think everything was well planned. Venue is amazing and very beautiful. Transportation to and from was fantastic. I don't think anyone should complain
I think everything was well planned. Venue is amazing and very beautiful. Transportation to and from was fantastic. I don't think anyone should complain
I will say it was better organized than last year, and emails were sent out every week letting the teams know what was going on as last year this was not the case. The team captains received VIP parking this year, which was great considering the cost of entering the event.
It is a family event and fun for all.
It is a great community event. I felt the event flowed smoother than last year. The equipment was available at each of our races. Staff seem to always have an answer to any questions.
It is a unique and fun experience that involves working together to accomplish a goal. What's not to like?
It is just a fun great event!
It seemed to be a very positive activity for all.
It was a fantastic event where we had so much fun Kevin Quan was so funny and really got the paddlers pumped up while in the marshalling area. he was great
It was a friendly helpful atmosphere! The staff was awesome!
It was a fun event although a bit overwhelming. Loved to watch the dragon boats compete. What precision some teams had, what fun all seemed to have.
It was a fun, relaxed atmosphere! Everyone was friendly and helpful.
It was a ton of fun!
It was all so much fun! Loved our steered Alva Wong!

It was fun
It was fun and exciting something I have never done or ever wanted to do I was scared to death of the boat but I got out there and LOVED IT
It was fun!
It was fun.
It was very well organized. The location was great. The event staff were helpful. The ladies in the swamped boat were very well attended.
It's a fun relaxed festival, with a beautiful setting. The cost is great for the value.
It's a great way to get the community together.
It's a great way to get the community together.
Just an all-around fun event.
Just plain fun!
Just about everything. Food, beer, volunteers and the race.
Kevin Kwan runs a good event.
Like that when u were short rower always someone to jump on and help your team out.
Location
Location
Location
Location
Location and organization.
Location and the people. Maybe it would be good to have more fraternization between teams - perhaps 250 meters races with 1/2 off one team and 1/2 off another?
Location is beautiful.
Location is beautiful. Organizer, Kevin, improved safety over last year, & was very closely involved in all aspects of the festival. Food was very good but ran out before the end of the day. Alcohol not restricted to a beer tent was nice.
Location set up.
Location, craft market, and transportation by bus. Love the decorations the dragon activity and coloring tables.
Location, enthusiasm at event, the people. This is a great event for the Flathead Valley.
Location, level of excitement among teams, variety of participants, breast cancer ceremony & race, event staff.
Location, organization, and affordability.
Location, organization, strong community
location, people and being on lake
location, people and being on lake
Location, Timely, friendly people,
location, weather, fellowship
Location.
Location.
Location.
Location.
Location.
Lots of families having fun.
Lots of fun
Lots of people from everywhere.
Lots of people, merchandise vendors (good prices)
Loved the location of the event. Races were better formatted this year compared to last. Lots of good energy around the festival, staff were great. Was nice that everyone got a medal for participating. Loved how paddlers

could randomly participate in the 1000m event.
Loved the venue! I actually walked away and immediately looked up the lodge because I thought it was amazing. Liked the barrel of fire to keep warm. Great idea! Liked that there was some things for the smaller kids to do. The live music was great!! Liked that all of the teams were so creative on their attire. Dragon boats
Loved the whole experience!
Lovely location, races are run well
Meeting new people, seeing old friends, and a new experience
Music, dragon boats, happy faces, save a sister.
Music.
My mom had breast cancer, so Festival has special meaning, sentimental value. Loved the support that EVERYONE receives for this special event the teamwork and the meaning behind the festival. Got me thinking about possibly joining the local professional team next year I like it so much. Liked the buses and transportation, would like to have seen more local parking for handicap or survivors instead of the bus. Some Family couldn't make it this year because they couldn't get off and on the bus
Number of boats.
Organization. the best I have been seen in my 3 years of paddling and going to many festivals
Overall we had an amazing time and feel so fortunate to be a part of it!! Great event for the Flathead!
Paddling
Parking, clean
Participating in rowing
People and the Averill family as hosts.
People and the venue.
People were welcoming, friendly, location was beautiful, cost was good
People, friends, family, fun, and new friends.
People, outdoors, concessions, kids play area, and tacos.
Popcorn, Chloe, and camass.
Popcorn.
Pretty much everything. :-)
Pretty setting
Racing
Racing, the atmosphere, scenery, location
rowing
Rowing and the coaches
Seeing everyone get together, tourists, and friend making.
Setting, paddling, and festival participants.
Setting.
Social interaction.
Socializing, the area and its surroundings, the cute town of Big Fork
team participation and diversity of groups
Team spirit.
That it is local and I am addicted now!
The activities.
The area is gorgeous, and the four hour drive is an acceptable distance to travel for the weekend. This year seemed much better for the shuttle, so good job on that!
the area/venue
The atmosphere of fun
The atmosphere was amazing! The people friendly. It was really well put together.

The beautiful location and the atmosphere.
The beautiful setting and it being a community event.
The beautiful setting.
The boats and the area are beautiful.
The camaraderie of teams and the lodge staff.
The comradery of the groups.
The different events and the ability for many teams to win metals.
The dragon boats
The entertainment and the people.
The event is fun and the weather was beautiful.
the event itself, the costumes, the beautiful location, the nice weather, the hula dancers, the vendors
The fact that we got medals in the breast cancer event unlike last year.
The feel of the event
The fun atmosphere. All the team tents.
The fun atmosphere.
The fun spirit of all the teams
the fun, the spirit all people had for the event
The great competition.
The helpful to assist with disabled.
The lake, the environment, well organized, fun
The location
The location
The location and all the activities that are available during the festival was very good.
The location and grounds were very nice. Providing chaser boats was a critical necessity. Kevin and Dianne were always available for questions. The handling of the frightened women on the swamped boat was done urgency and caring.
The location and space for lots of people without feeling cramped.
The location and the activity.
The location is fabulous. The mix of teams from a large geographical area make it fun.
The location of the event is absolutely gorgeous. Good viewing locations, Dock is good for loading.
The location was amazing, staff and volunteers were very friendly.
The location was spectacular and it was a well-organized festival.
The location.
The magnitude if the event...
the opportunity for community building
The people were fantastic and the facilities were beautiful and very well maintained.
The people, music, and the lake.
The people, the racing, and the venue
The people, the Flathead Lodge, The Grand Hotel
The people.
The races, beautiful venue, watching my daughter race, and parking was easy.
The races, camaraderie, concessions, kids' events, Flathead Lake Lodge, and the shuttles.
The racing was great, socializing with teammates and other teams, and the fantastic location
The teams.
The training we received was excellent! The venue was beautiful & perfect! The whole event was a blast!!!!!! Keep it coming!!!
The vendors and the kid's area.

The venue is wonderful and the organizers/volunteers were great
The venue was amazing. Beautiful country. Well organized. Fun. Loved having the heat at the line up for the boats. Say thanks to Vonnie. Answered many questions before we got there. The newsletters were very helpful as was the captain's corner.
The venue was perfect. The volunteers were wonderful. The race organizer did great and was very personable.
The venue was so pretty!!! I loved the whole event. The people were friendly and helpful.
The venue, friendly people, great volunteers.
The venue-it's beautiful! Parking passes Good organization, heaters & fires! Activities for families
The weather and location. Thank you Averills.
The weather was perfect and the band was great.
The whole experience was wonderful it was my first time I will defiantly be returning.
the wonderful spirit of everyone there
There is a fun atmosphere at these races.
This is one of the most amazing events I have ever been a part of.... The location is AMAZING! The environment is so fun and friendly and what an incredible thing to see so many people supporting their community in this way!! We use our boat as a fundraiser for our Charitable Foundation and I absolutely love every aspect of the event!!!
This is the third year we have attended, the venue is spectacular and the event is very well organized.
This location is extremely beautiful.
This was second year as a competitor and though it went extremely smooth overall
Uniqueness of the event.
Vendors were great.
Venue
Venue and great people.
Venue is beautiful, great way to end the summer.
Venue is beautiful. - Volunteers were awesome, very friendly and helpful. - Enough 'porta potties' - they were well maintained (appreciated that they were clean Sun am), - Enjoyed the entertainment. - appreciated that each team had 2 VIP parking passé
Venue is wonderful. Staff - location - organization and paddler's party is beautiful. One of the best dragon boat venues on the planet :) Wonderful event for both spectators and participants. Could not dream of a more wonderful place as far as the facility and view go? Parking / shuttle is well organized. Events for children is well organized.
Venue was beautiful
Venue was beautiful, and volunteers were friendly.
Venue, Montana
venue, nice people, clean
Venue, volunteer's friendly and helpful, food was good at Dragon bash and captain's meeting, enough porta potties - maintained well. maps helpful, email /Facebook updates helpful, 2 VIP passes/team (Thanks), heaters in staging area, entertainment
Venue.
Very energetic and friendly staff/volunteers. The Coaches were all amazing. There were plenty of opportunities to race. Restrooms were plentiful and well maintained. The hand-washing stations were well stocked!
Very fun! Our team was disorganized but the event as a whole seemed to run smoothly.
Very well event was managed so wonderfully. And it's a beautiful location.
Very well organized - fun!
Very well organized event!
Very well organized, great location. Excellent beverages
Very well organized, volunteers did an amazing job as well as the organizers of the festival. And of course the weather could not have been better :)

Very well organized.
Very well organized.
Very well organized.
Very well organized. I loved being able to participate with more experienced teams who were short rowers. The addition of the kids' race. Marshaling groups/teams in and out of the boats seemed more organized this year. Volunteers were very knowledgeable.
Very well organized. Location, including perfect little bay for staging of the teams/boats
Very well organized. Location, including perfect little bay for staging of the teams/boats
Very well organized; great venue; clean
very wonderful experience
Volunteers and staff were very pleasant. They listened and went beyond expectations to facilitate requests. The venue was well played out and very beautiful.
Volunteers were friendly, organized and helpful. Lake location was beautiful and tents were nicely placed. Heaters and fire pit were very welcome. Hot coffee available a few steps from tent...awesome.
volunteers were great and I liked the VIP tents
we didn't tip over
Welcoming nature of the event for people of all ages/abilities.
Well organized
Well organized and fun for all ages.
Well organized and ran on time for the most part.
Well organized and the weather.
Well organized community event yay Vonnie Day
Well organized in terms of getting onto the boats
Well organized, enthusiasm, and creativity of names.
well organized, great volunteers, beautiful location
Well organized. Beautiful location. Kid friendly.
Wonderful event and well organized.
Yeah!!! The beauty, the friendly competition, the boats!! The organization, the medals!!!What a nice surprise....very well organized...and FRIENDLY...
Your venue is beautiful.

Q24. Please tell us what you did not like about the Dragon Boat Festival.

5 boats in a race (too crowded) Sister Power breast cancer team not mentioned during the rose ceremony. Only those teams that raced were acknowledged.
A little too much wind.
A single day of events would be preferred, but regardless, there needs to be more racing per day for each team. As it is, you spend the entire day waiting around for 2 2-minute races. This has many questioning whether it is worth spending the entire weekend. If there were more races to compete in, it would be much better.
As I was in a boat that capsized, I felt that it took too long for the rescue boat to arrive and that the first responder did not know what to do about the lady trapped under the boat until prompted by other ladies in the water. I suggest that motor boats be limited to a greater distance from the race area.
Averills.
Beer and wine sales closed before the final race on Sunday was completed. Unable to 'celebrate' if you are in the A division Sunday afternoon. Would have been OK if we had known ahead of time and were able to bring our

own in.
Boat loading and docking could be more streamlined. Ensure the right boats are going out for each race. Staging out on the water was sometimes confusing just prior to the race line up. Need to improve concession choices....sadly only 2 options. Consider a beer gardens. Teams have nothing to do in between races. Ensure alcohol service is available to the end of each day.
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Boats used this year were very tippy. Boats sit too low below the dock, making it difficult for some people to get in.
Bring back the bouncy castles and astro-jumps.
Bus lines to leave last year.
Can't think of a thing that I did not like.
Can't think of anything I really don't like... maybe the parking. I don't like having to shuttle in, we have too many things to carry for that.
Choppy water
choppy water when the wind kicks up in the afternoon - not a big deal, and obviously completely out of control, but maybe if there was a log boom on the outside edge of the course, or something to break the wake a bit, there wouldn't be as many capsized boats.
Coffee line was to long...need two coffee (expresso) venders, and different food venders
Coffee.
Cold water.
Cold weather, cold water, Transportation issues, no cabs in town,
Cold weather, cold water, Transportation issues, no cabs in town,
Cold weather/ not acknowledged in Breast Cancer Race because we did not have a full boat in the water. Only 1/2 of our team are Breast Cancer Survivors so we were unable to be in the BC races we are the designated Breast Cancer Survivor Team for our City
Cold.
Competition - there were several cases where getting lined up before the race was chaotic. We ended up being told to run in an earlier heat due to much confusion in the loading and lining up areas. Given that this is the 3rd year of the festival, hopefully these wrinkles can now be eliminated. Also, having races that go until 4pm makes it very difficult for many teams who need to travel. Especially for Canadians, as many of the border crossings begin to close at 9 pm, making it tricky to get back in time before the border closes. One solution could be eliminating the consolation rounds, which should shave off at least an hour (or at least the consolation rounds for the B through E divisions, many of whom didn't even show up).
Confusion on final times/paddling events, running 5 lanes was tough as some boats got crowded out
Cost of food and activities.
Cost of food.
Could not see the start and finish lines together
Did not like how disorganized it felt. My husband and I thought all of the group tents were vendors and found out differently when we started walking through the strip of tents. We were confused on where we were able to watch the event. This was our first time. Did not like the party-like atmosphere. We brought our 2 small children hoping for a family fun day. Not much for concessions or vendors but was glad there was something. We were first timers to the event so we went in blind. Everything we looked up didn't seem to give us much information on what to expect. There wasn't a sign stating that any of the child zone stuff was free so we were a bit hesitant.
Did not like the boats they used this year, to tippy. Much preferred the ones from last year!
Didn't have the Cat/Griz boat showdown. Was bummed about that. Would've liked to have more local art craftsmen tents. It's a good opportunity for 90% of the people visiting from out of state to see what Montana has to provide. More food venues, same and new choices. Water stations set up (bottled water).

Distance from Edmonton....way too far Need to be better prepared if a boat capsizes....i.e...handing out emergency heat blankets to the wet paddlers ASAP
docks were difficult for loading the boat for some of our team members Boats were tippy
don't think we knew about the tent decorating contest
During the practice we really wanted to work on our timing and instead we had to take "rowing 101" with one of the event staff. I think I would offer this as more of an option to the teams
everything
Expensive food, needed a few more eating options. Long line for coffee
fact that the ladies races are always first thing in the morning
Few options for meals onsite (mostly drinks and treats). Many paddles were falling apart.
Food selection limited, quality average only. Needs more food trucks or vendors
Food vendors.
Getting lined up to race was confusing. It was hard to hear the announcers. The website. As the captain I couldn't submit my updated roster. Info on the website was incorrect.
Hard to find.
I am disappointed with the race director and his inability to keep safety first as well as a few other things.
I competed in the final race - the boats collided and disrupted the course way - they made us all go to the start and restart. We were not affected by the collision and continued to paddle. We were then told to stop and restart with the rest of the boats... All of the other races that had boats collide- the participants who were not involved continued on with the race... I would prefer for there to be a policy so that we know the protocol. It was also announced to the crowd as a "false start" ... That was represented inaccurately.
I felt our team was snubbed by the guy running the festival. The volunteers didn't really know how to load and unload a boat, as a drummer I shouldn't have to jump to get off the boat or stretch across the water to get on.
I liked it better the first year when it was a one day event.
I REALLY REALLY DO NOT LIKE that it is two days long. This single factor is a major negative for me and a number of other local people I have talked to, who have decided not to do the race because it takes up the entire weekend. It is too long and seems drawn out. This single factor makes me not want to do the event.
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I really think it's too long of an event, especially for the non-competitive division. Many of the teams are corporate teams, and I think they are very happy to be there on Saturday, but I heard a lot of people saying they wished they didn't have to be there again on Sunday. Our team had fun Sunday, but also wished the event had only been one day. Also, the communication about race times could have been better. As the team captain, I didn't know every team had to race two times on Sunday. The race times were posted pretty late Saturday night as well, so that was somewhat challenging.
I think it would be nice to have more than one group or team organizing and training community teams. As a paddler with the Dragonflies it felt like a lot of responsibility.
I think it's too far into September.
I was disappointed with the minimal food options. Most of which were not the healthiest options. I was also unimpressed with the chicken wrap that had 3 bits of chicken, that was it - AND it cost \$8! Not happy. Brought my own food for second day.
I was not too fond of the two days you had to be there.
I was on the boat loading detail. I have done this for 3 years. I have an idea of what do to. I did not appreciate being told how to load and maneuver each boat that came to my dock.
I wish that it could be earlier in the season. However I do understand that it is availability of the venue.
I wish that it could be earlier in the season. However I do understand that it is availability of the venue.

I wish there was a greater variety of food vendors and also more coffee vendors...
I wish there were more food options and that there was better parking but I think there weren't a lot of other options so it was fine.
I wonder if you would consider hosting it in August when it is really hot and a pleasure to get dumped in the water. :)
if anything- the parking, but it wasn't that bad
In the marshaling area, having to wait for over an hour at one race.
Interference of motor boats
It is too late in the year. The mornings were far too cold.
It needs to be 1 day. Rec racers on Saturday and Comp. racers on Sundays.
It needs to be 1 day. Rec racers on Saturday and Comp. racers on Sundays.
It was cold.
It was not organized.
It was really cold in the mornings... I was wearing thermal underwear and fleece and I wished I had more layers! Also there weren't as many food trucks as I expected; basically just Island Noodles and the lodge's food for actual meals.
It was split between Kalispell and Bigfork. The evening events were too far away from the day event. Could it be all at the Lodge?
It was very hard to hear when teams were called to the staging area. Some of the Steersmen seemed very inexperienced and could not handle the choppy waters of Flathead Lake.
Lack of actual beer gardens and few concessionaires
Lack of coffee booths.
Lack of good vendors. Coffee was in bad location should be off the main path as the line blocked traffic. People will find coffee no matter where it is!
Lanes were quite narrow and a little scary when the races where underway and the
Last year's parking, return to car.
Let the teams load the boat safely, too many instructions conflicted a few times.
Line ups for food and coffee. Asian Noodles ran out of food on Sunday, early afternoon. On Sunday, early after 1pm, there was not much choice for food. Not sure about Saturday.
Lines at concessions and the concessions closed too early.
Long time between runs.
Long wait.
Lots of crossed communication in the organizing
Medals given out for only the top three teams, overall. Divisions B and C also deserve medals, and not just participant medals. Boats that had times in the top ten of the mixed category got nothing for all their efforts while, if you were a boat in the right category, you were guaranteed a medal. That's why you had teams that did not finish their consolation races and even some finals in lower divisions; there was no reason to do so.
More coffee.
More food options and coffee.
More food vendors with healthier choices.
More garbage containers, more concessions, especially coffee.
More to do while waiting and watching.
Music from loudspeaker at the boat launch area, cannot hear steers.
Needed more food and drink options
Needs better food choices and better weather.
Needs more fire pits. Was very cold
Needs more stands.
No lanes! Did not like the style of dragon boats, very tippy.

No time to eat.
none
None.
Not a lot of food choices
Not a lot of food vendor options
Not as quick turnarounds on boats racing, last year was quicker.
Not enough choice in food.
Not enough choices when it came to concessions did not want to have to pack in a bunch of food and drink
Not enough concessions. Very few vendors selling actual meal options.
Not enough craft booths.
Not enough food or coffee (espresso vendors, not enough variety in bar options).
Not enough food varieties.
Not enough food vendors
Not enough food vendors, paddlers party was slow
Not enough food vendors. The mandatory captain's meeting was held before we even registered a team (it was June 26th) so as a new team we were a little confused. Was treated very rudely by Aletta from dragonflies when trying to figure out the practice schedule. Almost withdrew from the event due to her abrasiveness. She did not explain that she was with the dragonflies, that the practice was optional, and that there was a \$50 charge for participating in it. It was very difficult as a first year team because the captain's meeting was held so early.
Not enough good vendors. Too many boats racing at once. Long waiting time on the water. The floating dock was dangerous. The boats watching on the water is cool but they don't know to slow down and then cause waves for the dragon boats.
Not enough variety of food for meals.
Not enough variety of food.
Not much to choose from for food options. Especially if you were looking for healthier choices.
Not one thing!
nothing
nothing
Nothing
Nothing
Nothing it was awesome
Nothing.
On the first day I witnessed the head of the event wearing a soviet red star on a soviet flight helmet representing communism. I was very upset as were others. Many commented that it might as well have been a Nazi Swastika when they heard of it. It was not worn the second day and that was appreciated. Please remember that communism has killed more people than any other political ideology since the time of man.
once the band was playing it was very hard to hear the announcer of the boats & who was racing & winning
One of our paddlers on our roster ended up volunteering and was NOT allowed to race in the Sunday's final race of the day due to the volunteering. This was not fair for the team as he would have been the 12th man in the boat and we had to substitute for a female paddler that hasn't paddled for years. If a paddler is on a roster prior to the event he SHOULD be allowed to paddle with his team regardless of volunteer obligations.
organization of the racing is not yet where it needs to be
Our group needs to be better organized.
Our group wasn't organized
Our team did not win.
parking
Parking and taking the bus is miserable. None of my family wanted to come spectate because of it. Also it's so windy that end of the flathead it would be nice to have it where the water wouldn't be so choppy.

parking availability and price
Parking but there's not a whole lot you can do to change that.
Parking fees
Parking system made it hard to haul items to the tent.
Parking was inconvenient. We actually walked to and from Bigfork because it was easier
Parking, no alcohol, and not pets.
Parking.
Parking....Parking....ten dollars is a lot of money for my teenagers to absorb and my clients to absorb. Therefore, they were unable to attend and cheer us on!
Paying to park such a long way from the site
Penny the steer women. She treated are boat with complete disrespect. If I was on charge I would not allow her to be part of this wonder event. She was flat out mean.
Penny the steers women. She was rude, mean and very degrading. She brought are whole team down.
Poor vending. Vendors running out of food. Coffee line 1 hour long.
Race lanes too close together.
Race was too long, and cold!
Races a bit disorganized.
Recreational boats were too close to the race lanes causing wake...they should not be allowed to be that close - very dangerous and I would not attend again over that alone
Rest room placement.
Restrooms were few and only in one location.
Rough water at times but generally well done event.
seemed smaller/less than last year
Signage made things really hard to find.
Since it was mid-Sept., it was pretty cold
Since there were a number of different divisions, we were given the impression that winning our division meant winning a gold medal (like other festivals). We were surprised to see that this was awarded to only the top three in Division A.
Some dock people not advised of best practices in certain situations (others were AMAZING!!)
Some of the "contests" were not communicated properly, for draws and winners. The playing of O' Canada was not over the sound system and could not hear it
Some of the instructors on practice days were so rude my team almost quit. Some members did. He made very disparaging remarks about our skills
Some of the staff were very rude to me because of my service dog.
Someone stole my shoes. O well they must have needed them more than me. Not any fault of the event planners. Otherwise the experience is what will bring us back next year.
Sometimes event planners were bossy
Staging area was not always efficient. We were sent to back & forth 3 times to load boat.
Standing in a long line for coffee.
Starting to get chilly this late in the year. Could run into weather issues.
sudden stop after finishing the race
Teams using professional or local more talented paddlers to compete for them. This seemed very unfair to those who spent good money to compete legitimately. Very disappointing.
That there were no gold medals for the Breast Cancer race. Not taken seriously or deemed important.
That we had to cancel our boat due to lack of participants for our group.
The awards ceremony lacked some thought. It was confusing getting the metals. The Elemental boats were very tipsy.
The capsized boats were scary... I also had trouble finding healthy food options.

The coed.
The cold, would have been better and warmer if earlier in the summer.
the concessions did not have food available for people with gluten allergies
The extra VIP tickets were really only available to local participants since it was on a first come first serve basis.
The food selection. I wish there had been somewhere to get a hamburger and the food seemed pretty pricey.
The food vendors spread about rather than one location Sept is hit and miss on the weather
The gal announcing in the marshaling area could not be heard: need a bigger voice or better utilized microphone. Only race teams should be allowed in the marshaling area-too much spectator foot traffic in that area causes confusion. Large clocks posted throughout the event would be helpful.
the large waves and water inconsistency; the way we were loaded and unloaded from the boats
The loading/unloading docks
The medal ceremony. See below.
The medals were somewhat confusing. There did not seem to be enough. The presentation of the medal ceremony was disappointing.
The only downside was the amount of time it took to drive there ≈10 hours. But it was worth it!
The parking being on the other side of town for participants. No signs showing where to park for the event. Not enough food vendors.
The parking! And the lateness of the year.
The race director, Kevin, was less than professional. He failed to ensure the safety of the competitors allowing races to begin safety measures were not in place. Example at hand... there were no pick up boats present or ready when the races began on Sunday. The participants in the boat that flipped were left in the Web water without rescue personnel to help for about 20 minutes resulting in hospitalization for some members of the team. Kevin is directly responsible for ensuring the safety of all participants at all times - failing to adhere to safety places those associated with the organization of the event at risk for being held liable. Example two. .. Kevin allowed children under the age of 13 to participate in the kid race. Several of these children were wearing oversized life vests. If the boat (s) would have flipped, the safety of those children wearing these vests would have been in jeopardy. I understand wanting to get kids interested, but not at the cost of their safety. Lastly, Kevin claimed he had held a safety meeting for the stereotypes. This meeting was not made public or announced at the captains meeting the night before. He then singled out our steerer and warned/threatened to pull her off the boat if she was not able to perform to his expectations. At the end of the race, Kevin apologized and gave her a compliment for her performance. Regardless he failed to make proper notification that any such meeting was to occur. The event organizer wasn't even aware of such a meeting. Ultimately.... our greatest concern is for the safety of the participants. Kevin clearly failed jeopardizing the lives of many. Hypothermia is a serious problem and easily preventable. We do appreciate the medical personnel on scene who did offer their help and assistance. No complaint there.
The sound system was not very good, you could only hear clearly from the lodge to the marshal area. If you had a tent set up on the other side of the lodge it was hard to hear, it would be better if speakers were set up all over the grounds even to the parking area would be great. There were not many food vendors at the event, it would be great to have more of a variety of food available to purchase and a more reasonably priced.
The stereotypes for our races were very difficult to hear and not very encouraging.
The temperature could have been warmer, but no control over that. The side wave that caught us in our first race Sunday morning. I felt it would have been safer having the lanes farther apart!!!!
The time of the year the festival runs. It's quite cold.
The time of year, too cold this year!
The venue was rather poor. Dockside was okay but the tent location was too sloped. Parking was horrible and the shuttle only went from point A to B. We would've like to be dropped off in Big Fork (We live there) but the drivers refused. Poor food choices. Noodles or \$7 hot dogs... Race results were difficult to obtain and the online finals were not posted until late Saturday night (10 pm).
The very cold mornings.
The wait between races on Saturday. It seemed like the boats were not loading very efficiently

The water gets very rough and can pose a challenge to the paddlers. It's very hard for beginner crews.
The waves on Saturday afternoon
There could be more FOOD vendors....i.e....vegetarian or vegan options... (Though the noodles were awesome....!) ate that twice....would LOVE a vendor with cool Dragon boat T-shirts.....
There is a lot of waiting time between races.
There should be facilities to warm up and change into dry clothing. We encountered cooler weather and it's very hard and uncomfortable to change into dry clothing in portable potties. An indoor facility to have coffee and/or lunch and change would be very beneficial especially when the event is in the fall.
There was nothing I didn't like. It was an awesome experience!!
This seems to be becoming more of a Canadian event rather than a Flathead/regional event.
This was our first time at the festival and we did not know we were scheduled to compete on Sunday. We thought if we didn't do well on Saturday we were out on Sunday. The schedule was not posted until 10:00pm since most of us were older we were in bed before we knew the schedule. We didn't have cell service where we were camping.
Tippy dock. Lack of steerspersons
Too many medals. Don't give out participation medals.
Too many medals. Don't give out participation medals.
to many spectator boats on the water close to racing lanes
Too late getting the Sunday schedule - we didn't know we were racing or when. Our team dispersed because we didn't think we qualified for day 2.
Too many boats racing at once, it was at times dangerous. We almost crashed.
Too much time between races
too much waiting
Too slow at setting up boats and races.
Try to have the outside temperature a little warmer next year :):)
Two free cookies.
Variety of food
Very cold in the morning.
Wait time between races.
wait times in the dragon boat, narrow lanes
waiting for over an hr. for one race in the marshaling area
Water was very choppy.... The way the finals were put on the board , hard to figure out
Water was way too cold
waves & wind
We capsized and there was not a place to get warm for our team!
We found it difficult to find out what time the finals were for the women's division and what time we were to race.
We had an issue with losing one of our key paddlers due to a lack of trained steerspeople and event staff running the race course. This had a negative upset with the team. The team was upset with losing one of our best paddlers in the most important races, and this has led to use question doing the festival the next year. We do not want to go into the finals again handicapped and if that maybe the case, another festival maybe a better option. Also on the final, as our steersperson was over worked on the weekend, she herself admitted she was too exhausted to give her best race. And when medals are on the line that is very upsetting. No staff member should be worked that thin over a weekend. These small actions took what was a great weekend and ended it on a less positive note, which stuck in the paddler's minds. This will surely play a factor in deciding our festivals for next season.
We thought there would be more concessions
weather
Weather during practice.
Well, being on one of the boats that capsized, in the morning there didn't seem to be much of a plan for rescue, three boats tipping is too many

Which it was just one day for the non-competitive...?

Wishing you didn't have to shuttle and that you could just part somewhere. Inconvenient to have to pack everything...gear, food, dry clothes etc.

Q25. What suggestions do you have for improvements to the event?

5 boats In a race seemed too many, I think 4 maximum. Lanes farther apart,

Add more fire pits and have more varieties of food and snacks.

Adding a third set of 5 boats would significantly speed up the event

An additional coffee vendor

An additional coffee vendor

As above. Great event, thanks!

As one whose boat capsized: our steersperson & Kevin were SUPER great, as were local event staff. Perhaps consider, when a team gets wet, assign a local staff person *to ESCORT injured to medics or call medics to the team because we did not realize how hurt we were *to show up with blankets, hot drinks and a first aid kit *to provide a warm indoor space to change/dry/warm Really, you were all great and concerned and I appreciate everything you did to help us re-group and get medical attention. I felt supported & cared for. I was not injured, but 2 of our team got hit in the head and 1 has a concussion. No blame here, just observations born from experiences.

At least have a set of buoys in the middle of the course, and if possible wider lanes.

At this point I'm quite satisfied with the event. Seems to move along nicely.

Attempt to have more full teams with trained steers.

August event.

Beer gardens on site, perhaps where the kid's area was this year. Think you would get a lot more participants staying on site for the entire day and into evening. More options for food vendors

Better boats, the boats were very unstable. Better rescue plan for retrieving people from a capsizing.

Better communication about race times. Shorten to one day of racing for non-competitive divisions.

Better organized parking and appreciate thoughts shown for participants.

better parking options for participants

Better parking.

Better parking/ closer parking for handicap.

Better promotion, concessions (coffee), closer to water, spec area.

Better signage early in the morning for the turnoff to the actual event location for VIP parking. No one was posted there and the signage was non-existent so we went a long distance out of our way.

Better signage.

Better signage.

better sound system to hear the boat/race info

Bigger and higher signs for the positions of the boat docks. More steers persons. Boats waited on Sunday for steerspersons to become available.

Bring in more trainers throughout the summer for teams to have more opportunities to practice. Thank you to the Dragonfly's for all the hard work and dedication they put into the practices this year! They must have been overwhelmed with all the teams wanting their attention and all the weekends they put in!

Bring the parking within walking distance or minimize the cost to park.

Change the brand of boats to more stable ones. Necessary because of the rough water. Restrict fast moving power boats to a greater distance from the race course.

Closer parking for participants, Better signs showing where to park. More food vendors.

Could you build a break water wall? Just kidding. Maybe real the day up and have racing in the morning and in the

evening when the water is calmer?
Do not put team tents right next to edge of water on grass. Leave ample room to allow spectators access for viewing the races.
Do not run a race operations with a barebones staff. The steer's people and the race officials need to be able to take breaks and rest. on that note, if a paddler is signed on to a roster, he should be permitted to race with that roster regardless of his status of a steersman or race official. Replacements need to be available to cover positions. I would've hated to see what happened if one of those in that position got sick or injured. Also note, due to the unpredictable water conditions, more stable boats need to be used. This is a safety concern, with the water being so shallow, very easy for a drummer, steersman or paddler to get injured. That water is not deep enough to dive in at the finish line.
Do not schedule it on a Griz football weekend
Earlier results from the Sat. race and schedule for Sunday. 10 pm (we heard) is too late for those of us who have to drive from Swan Lake to get cell service.
Easier access.
Eliminate the breast cancer dragon boat race. Have all survivor teams and participants to the dock so that they can be acknowledged during the rose ceremony.
eliminate the consolation finals
Ensure all safety measures and procedures are in place before the start of any race. I'm not sure if I would consider returning if Kevin were the race director again. This is not the only issue we have experienced with him.
Expanded kid's area with more activities for toddlers.
Felt the racing lanes were too close together. Possibly race 4 boats instead of 5 or widen lanes. Quite dangerous
Fewer boats in each race. 5 is too crowded.
For the rookie teams to have access to experience steersman when the weather gets rough
From a bystander's point of view, everything seemed to move along very smoothly.
Fry bread vendors.
Get a few more food vendors, maybe a gyro truck or something.
Get more steers people so that they can have breaks, could result in serious safety issues having the same person steer for a full day without a break. (puts everyone at risk for injury)
Gold medals for all events
Have a one day event for the recreational boats and 2 days for the competitive.
Have a place where extra paddlers can sign up or are available to fill spots on the boats.
Have all steering people use a paper megaphone so paddlers can hear directions. (women very hard to hear at front half of boat)
Have all steersmen use a paper microphone so we can hear them--the women voices do not carry to the front of the boat
have all steersmen use a paper microphone--front of boat could not hear well--especially women steersmen
Have boats filled and waiting for the next run.
Have in August.
Have it a totally non-smoking event
Have it in August
have it just one day for the boats that are just in it for fun and fellowship
Have more concessions available
Have more volunteers that are NOT on a set roster. With the inexperienced teams racing these boats are very tippy and unsafe.
Have one dock master to control everyone around the docks
Have registration open earlier
Have the right medals on hand.
Have the right medals on hand.
Have you ever thought of Whitefish Lake? Maybe not as much boat traffic and lake not as rough...

Healthier food vendors. Local food, especially since this event is focused on good health (breast cancer, etc.)
Hold in early September or late August.
How about a limited ticket after party on location after day 1. Make limited on-location camping available if possible
I believe there should be low cost alternatives to the parking issue. I think five dollar parking fee is fair and I am willing to bet that significantly more individuals would attend!
I have no suggestions for improvements.
I know why you have to shuttle people to the event, but I believe it deters spectators from attending the event.
I know you have not control over the weather but last year was so nice and this year was solo cold. More VIP parking for each team
I personally think the BCS race should be a ceremonial race and not competitive, possibly only 250m not 500m.
I think it would be great if you had all recreational/non-competitive teams race just Saturday and competitive teams race Sundays. The rec teams are looking to have fun and attend the Saturday night gathering. Most teams were scrambling for people to fill their boats Sunday because either some of their teammates enjoyed too many festivities the night before or they were unable to commit to two days of racing. Also, I think the event loses momentum by taking such a long lunch break, participants and volunteers will be able to find a time to eat lunch, It'd be great to see the event continue full board through the lunch hour. Participants and viewers were losing interest during this lull period.
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I wish there was a greater variety of food vendors and also more coffee vendors...
I would say wherever you advertise make sure you are specific with what's free and what's not. Have things clearly marked. What is treasure island? New people have no idea.
I would suggest that when a boat flips, that people are taken out of the water quicker. Also, it would be helpful to have more blanket available to warm people up after a dip.
I'd like more stress on local/regional rather than stressing the international. There is a lot to offer here - make that a commodity rather than a convenience or accommodation.
Improve registration - ? have it earlier at your office or at hotel during day so anyone can pick up race package early to avoid the congestion at the captain's meeting I did have trouble trying to update my roster on website... but that might have been me
Improve safety procedures.
Improve the website, clearer communication. Move some of the tents to the other side. Too crowded
Improve vendor food options. Add healthier drinks and food....fruit, veggies, simple sandwiches etc.
Improved sound systems. More opportunities for practice.
Increase number of community teams. More heaters in the am. Larger variety if food & drink options.
Is an on-location after party Saturday or on-site camping possible?
Is an on-location after party Saturday or on-site camping possible?
It is not necessary to have participation medals. These are a waste of money. It is extremely necessary, however, to have first, second, and third place medals for each of the finalists, including, especially, the breast cancer race.
It was great just keep up the great work.
It's hard to hear marshalling times/race times when your tent is at the far end of the grass. Would like to see a schedule posted Sunday morning rather than relying on the website. Also have a race board showing the progression of where your team goes after each race, (somewhat to a ball tournament schedule).
keep the motor boats behind a line , there was a couple boats that kept coming into the race area
Keep up the great work!! Good on you all!

less waiting at the start line, faster flow to the races, more skilled personnel in some areas
Less wind.
Line up sooner.
make spectator boats move out more
Make the race ONE day long. Even a longer single day would be SO much better (and was ok the first year). You could have everyone do 3 races on Saturday, bring in different music/food for the evening and go until 7. Please, please, pretty please?!?
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Make the race ONE day long. Even a longer single day would be SO much better (and was ok the first year). You could have everyone do 3 races on Saturday, bring in different music/food for the evening and go until 7. Please, please, pretty please?!?
Make the schedule on Sunday available earlier so we can be ready to participate. It was a good first experience and we look forward to participating next year.
Maybe age group boats
Maybe have signs that the teams attach to the boats, so spectators and race officials can tell which team is which.
Maybe more for teens and young 20's. Other than that it was very well done!!
Maybe review how we could make boats safer, we were told our boat was to heavy maybe cap a total boat weight, the coaches kept saying they have never had a boat tip, I returned the next day with a different mindset and more prepared to fall into the water
More booths.
More classifications. Why should a team made up of coworkers who had maybe one practice be competing with teams that practice year round, have their own boat and travel hundreds of miles to compete.
More coffee or free coffee would be even better.
More coffee stands!
More coffee trucks and more food venues with different choices.
More coffee vendors.
More concessions
More concessions is about it this was an awesome experience WELL DONE
More concessions.
More docks would really help the loading/unloading of boats.
More events.
More food (not "treats" or sweets) options and vendors.
More food and coffee vendors.
More food booths
More food choices.
More food options and bring back the Tacoma, Washington crew to run the event again!
More food options.
More food options. I really don't want to eat something heavy and greasy like pulled pork or a hotdog before I race. I would really like to have options like salads, veggies and dip, sandwiches, etc. Also a few more water stations.
More food stands
More food variety and activities.
More food vendors, healthier options that offer better quality for my money.
More food vendors if possible
More food vendors the options were a little limited but I was still happy with how fast the service was
More food vendors, especially healthy snacks for between races. Drinks/snacks are good but very minimal meal

options.
More food vendors, wider lanes
More food vendors.
More food vendors.
More food vendors... there wasn't enough of a variety of foods from which to choose.
More food.
More food/coffee vendors
More free kid activities
More golf carts to help teams and VIPs with hauling things from parking to tents. Or get a high school football team to help? :-)
More kid stuff, maybe a bouncy house.
More kids activities.
More mobile espresso options...more varieties of food options
more music at site later on sat
more music at site later on sat
More places to eat.
More places to get coffee and food and staying open later in the afternoon
More places to get food and other activities
More races per day. More of the longer races. 1/3 more boats to reduce time spent marshaling/loading and unloading. I think we could squeeze more races in if more boats were available.
More restrooms.
More seating.
More selection of foods (not deep fried). If you can do anything about the waves experienced on Sat that would be swell.
More varied food vendors
More variety of food vendors.
more variety of food vendors
More vendors.
More vendors
More vendors and food choices.
More vendors and plug in for teams eating on site.
More vendors.
More vendors.
More vendors.
Motorcycle parking close to event locations.
Move the recreational boats further back
Multiple espresso vendors and food vendors/bar.
my mind is blank
Need more activities and no cost for kids.
Need more food options
need more food vendors open later
Need more vendors for food, meals not just snack food
Need rest room signage and more food vendor selection.
Needs more food vendors.
No kid activities that you pay for.
No more than 4 boats racing at once.
No suggestions on the event. It's fantastic!

none
none
none
none
None
None
None
None
None, other than more food choices.
None, really. It gets better every year.
Not have penny part of the experience.
Not sure
Noted above
nothing
Nothing. I went to the event in Denver, CO but this was way better.
Nothing. It was great!
One last race with the overall 4 best times (any class). Small traveling trophy.
Only race 4 boats at a time max. Waiting on the water should be minimal with all the waves. Too many boats flipped.
Open up the other pastures for parking and make it earlier in the year. The schedules this year didn't seem to run as smoothly as last year and we were put in the wrong place in our race and it took a long time for it to be fixed and nobody on the staff seemed to care. Why record every second then not fix a mistake when it's made!
Other than the food selection, nothing.
Our group needs to be better organized
Our team had issues with a two day event, is it possible to have a mini event for those who do not want the "trophies
Parking and more food choices.
Parking options. I would be willing to pay for parking closer.
People and organizations pay a LOT to register and they deserve a real medal for placing - not just a participation medal.
Perhaps a bigger discount for non-profits and/or Montana teams so the number of local participants increases. Consider having the "mandatory" captain's meeting after the registration closes. Consider a separate captain's orientation/meeting for first year captains or even a first year captain's information tab on the web site that walks you through the steps from registration, optional practices, (with whom, at what cost, how to sign up), completing various waivers and when to turn them in to whom, how and when to complete preliminary and final team rosters, etc.
Perhaps letting teams know that only the top 3 from division A will be awarded medals.
Perhaps more stable boats would be a better choice for this type of water. The participation were a nice touch, but it seemed that not all teams received them.
Pick a venue with better parking.... Didn't seem like a big turnout but space was limited with the venue
Possible try to have it in only one day.
Possibly a few more food or snack vendors.
Posts on water to warn boats of racing and to reduce their speed thru the area in order to reduce the wakes which have proven to be issues with flipping boats. Perhaps slightly wider lanes and another set or two of markers for race lanes may help as well.
Provide more seating and disability/handicap services.
Pull the date back a week in Sept.
Race results readily available and up-to-date (Score board? Big screen?) More food vendors. The lodge could keep their prices a little more reasonable. Better parking. Offer more drop off locations with the shuttle. Maybe

consider moving the entire event to Lakeside next year? More practice opportunities would be great.
Safety drills on what to do if capsized. More on that! EMT's were great when we asked for them, they should have checked on any team that capsized. There were no clear instructions on what to do.....Thank you for asking
Safety first! More food options.
Second coffee vendor, food vendors
See above
See above.
See previous. That's all - overall the event was fantastic!
Shuttle to Kalispell, probably impossible but our bus driver has rules to follow because of the long distance.
Shuttle to Kalispell, probably impossible but our bus driver has rules to follow because of the long distance.
Signs need to be brighter and provide more coffee.
Speakers set up thru out the grounds, placing more maps at the entrance of the grounds, so that when people get off the buses or after parking their cars they know which way to proceed, so they know which paths to take to their designated tent sites, directions to rest rooms and directions to the lodge. Overall the event was better organized this year than last year and I know that from this year forward it will get better and better. Our team had a great time and lots of laughs and plan to attend next year.
spectator
Standardize the rules. It felt like the race rules were being made up as the event went along - There was no rhyme or reason for races to have a restart or why there were time penalties. Publish a set of rules and stick with them.
Start Sunday at 8 to finish earlier
Steers people with loud voices!
Team roosters must be checked and honored. It is fairness to all and shows no favoritism or poor sportsmanship.
Tell the weather gods to keep the wind away.
The great logo on shirts and hats.
The medal ceremony. The bash tickets that were available on line cost us more (paying in US \$ and a service fee) than purchasing on Friday (CDN at par and no service fees). We had 21 attend.
The only change I would suggest is making the lanes wider. The closeness of the boats was not ideal
The only change I would suggest is making the lanes wider. The closeness of the boats was not ideal
The temperature. And something different for the BCS ceremony. The Sr. Paul Dragon Divas plan to register a boat next year. We would have been there this year, but are attending the International BCS races in Sarasota, FL in October. That was the only long distance festival for this year. See you next September!
There is a good amount of activities for kids, however there can never be enough, especially if they need to be there for 8 hours. The fishing pond was amazing last year, as was the bouncy castles, however neither were here this year. Horse/pony rides would also be great. More eating options would also be good. For lunch there was only Noodles, hot dogs, or beef on a bun. Having at least one more choice would make a big difference.
to have it earlier
training dock people the days/week before
Tribal belly dancers. Parking was a bad experience though.
Update your website to new rules and more of what to expect for a first time racer.
upgrade the docks for loading/unloading Use different boats
use 4 lanes instead of 5, penalties for boats that cross lanes and affect other boats
Vendor that sells concession items, tums, chocolate bars, and chips.
Weather permitting, I would suggest move the festival earlier in the year.
Weather.
Wider lanes, boat beyond outer lanes to check for waves.
Would be good if there was parking in Bigfork. I used the bus. If the spot where you got on the bus was in Bigfork, then Bigfork would get a big boost from this event also. I felt bad seeing that all the visitors were not stopping in Bigfork.
Would help steers person if dock was clearly marked on both sides of dock as to which one the boat is to go to

unload.

Would like to have seen more breast cancer tents. That is what this is all about. More info about support groups for survivors locally in the northwest area. How to get more involved in the community regarding breast cancer, the walks, the projects involved, October is Breast cancer month. Would like to have a forum for survivors who are interested in sharing their stories, their triumphs their struggles, they aren't alone in this support for other patients and caregivers. Definitely would like to have seen more organization for volunteers and set up. Not as organized as past years.

Wow.....really.....???This was our first time.....want to come to Coeur d Alene Idaho with the boats??? How awesome, cool would that be????????/THANKS for a great weekend.

You need a long table on the stage to lay out the medals which should be properly labeled in order to give the right medals to the right team. Only the captains should be called up to receive the medals. This makes the ceremony go quickly.

You will get there :)

You're doing a berry god job just doing the best your can