

Canoe Carnival Float Rules & Regulations

Revised and Accepted May 5, 2026

Mission Statement

To maintain the tradition of Canoe Carnival as a safe and fun event for all spectators and participants. Uphold fairness in friendly competition while showcasing every float to as many lakers as possible.

Section 1 - General Participation

1. All colony members in good standing are eligible to participate in Canoe Carnival.
2. Float groups may include non-residents but must have at least one Colony member in good standing. Float groups must submit a list of non-residents via the Float Entry form, including addresses, to the committee by the specified date prior to the July Colony Board of Directors meeting.
3. Float groups must submit the completed entry forms located on the Colony website by the designated date. Floats with entry forms submitted after the deadline may not appear in the Canoe Carnival Program.
4. All floats must pass the safety inspection prior to the float parade.
5. All float group members must be familiar with all rules & regulations.
6. Any float group wishing to have participation on the committee should contact the Chairman for available positions.

Section 2 - Float Categories

Each float group shall select their entry's category from the following:

1. Junior Float:
 - a. A float group that is primarily comprised of elementary to high school students.
 - b. Adult supervision is required.
2. Single Canoe: Any individual or group entry using a single canoe.
3. Organization: Any volunteer organization based in Medford Lakes.
4. Non-Competitive: **Any float group that does not comply with the standard Participation Rules BUT has passed the safety inspection. Such floats remain subject to all safety rules and regulations. This category will not be judged.**

5. Tiered: All float Groups not entered in any of the above categories will be placed into categories based on the number of participating members in the float group.
 - a. When a group submits their entry packet, they must include a list of all participating float group members. The number of members within a group will determine placement. The largest group being Shawnee, Neeta is middle size, and Nokomis is the smallest grouping.
 - b. The category placement will be determined by the Canoe Carnival Committee after the final entry deadline. Once a float group has submitted their entry packet, they cannot change the number of members in the group.

Section 3 – Judging and Carnival Scoring Results

1. All results will be announced at noon on Sunday on the Medford Lakes Canoe Carnival Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/139074576122346/>).
2. There are twelve (12) judges spaced as best as possible around the lake. Two judges are alternates and only used in emergencies.
3. The highest and lowest score sheets for each float will be eliminated from the overall calculation.
4. The total number of points available will be 400 (8 score sheets x 50 total available points per score sheet).

Prizes

Prize Certificates will be given to winning floats at the Prize Ceremony. Prize plates will be given to winning floats at a later date. Winning Captains will be notified when plates are available.

The Grand Prize is awarded to the Float with the highest total score, regardless of that float's category.

Junior Grand Prize (Ned Steel Memorial Award) is open to all Junior entries and is awarded to the Junior Float with the highest total score.

First, Second, and Third Place Category Prizes will be awarded to each winning float in the Junior, Organization, and Single Canoe categories as well as in each of the Tiered categories.

Disqualified floats are NOT eligible for any of the above prizes and will receive no score. See Disqualification section beginning on page 5 under Carnival Parade & Procedures.

Awards

Builders Choice Award: Each float group Captain or their Representative will be texted post Canoe Carnival with a survey to vote on the float that impressed them the most (wow factor). Captains or their Representative cannot vote for their own float and only one vote per float group. **All floats are eligible for Builders Choice regardless of qualification status.**

Participation Plates

1. Two-canoe entries will receive up to ten (10) partition plates.
2. Single-Canoe entries will receive up to five (5) participant plates.
3. Additional Plates will be given to Canoe Carnival Committee members, homeowners who allow use of their properties for float building or judging, and Judges and Marshals.
4. Groups may purchase as many additional plates as there are members listed on their entry form. Additional participation plates must be ordered through the Colony Office. Payment for additional plates is due at the time of ordering.

Section 4 - Float Construction Rules

1. A float must be constructed on one (1) or two (2) canoes not greater than 17' in length.
2. All floats must be self-contained on those two (2) canoes (one (1) canoe for single canoe entries).
 - a. For two-canoe floats, no additional means of buoyancy is acceptable. If additional buoyancy is needed, two-canoe floats must be registered as Non-Competitive or be subject to disqualification.
 - b. Single canoe floats may have additional means of stabilization. Stabilization Devices are meant solely to provide additional stability and lessen the possibility of overturning.
 - i. **STABILIZATION DEVICE LENGTH MUST BE LESS THAN THE LENGTH OF THE CANOE.**
 - ii. **STABILIZATION DEVICES MAY BE DECORATED AS PART OF THE SINGLE FLOAT.**
 - iii. **Single Canoe Floats, which do not meet the above criteria, will be Disqualified and become Non-Competitive.**
 - c. **Total float height from the water is to be no greater than 40 feet.**
3. Use of a keel and/or rudder is encouraged.

4. Bilge pumps are highly recommended.
5. **All floats, both competitive and non-competitive, must adhere to all Safety Rules as listed on the Safety Checklist.**
6. Paddlers:
 - a. **Up to four (4) paddlers may be used on a two-canoe float without penalty.**
 - b. **Up to two (2) paddlers may be used on a single-canoe float without penalty.**
 - c. Paddlers should be positioned to allow good maneuverability and sight lines.
 - d. No additional means of locomotion may be used.
7. All floats must be constructed, decorated, and lighted as to be fully visible on the right side (shoreline) when traveling counterclockwise around the lake.
8. For groups constructing their floats on one of the beaches:
 - a. Float groups **MUST EXERCISE CAUTION, CONSIDERATION, and COURTESY** regarding bathers on the beach.
 - b. Driving on Beach 1 or 2 with any type of vehicle to drop off equipment or material too bulky to carry **MUST BE LIMITED.**

Section 5 - Carnival Parade Rules and Procedures

1. All floats should be ready by 8pm. The Carnival will begin **and end** by signals as established at the Captain/Safety/Marshal Meeting.
 - a. **There will be two (2) flares to signal the beginning of the parade. The first flare will act as a 10-minute warning. The second flare will announce the start of the parade.**
 - b. **A final flare will announce the end of the parade once it has been established that all floats have returned to their launch points or have been otherwise accounted for.**
 - c. **Captains or their communications designee will be required to report the return of their float to its original launch point to the Command Center via procedure established at the pre-Carnival Captains' Meeting.**
2. **The total number of people on float may not exceed ten (10).**
3. **Once the parade has started no one may leave or board the float except in an emergency. Disqualification may result if any member of the float team enters the water or exits the float other than in an emergency.**
4. **Floats MUST begin the parade from their assigned launch location. Failure to launch from designated launch site may result in a disqualification.** NOTE: To ensure that floats are spaced out around the lake as best as possible, the launching point may be different from the location of where the float was being built. All float Captains will be informed if this becomes necessary. If requested, floats will move to their assigned launch points at least 30 minutes prior to first flare time.

5. Float group members may only assist their float during launch and once the float has returned to its dock.
6. **Floats must maintain a reasonable distance between themselves and other floats as well as maintain the speed at which the parade is proceeding.** The Marshals will monitor the progress of the parade.
7. All floats are expected to comply with the request of the Marshals on the water during the Carnival Parade. Failure to comply with the requests of the Marshals may result in disqualification.
8. Person(s) may enter the water from the shore up to their waist to assist a float that is in danger.
9. Floats may pass other floats ONLY under the direction of the Marshals.
10. Where possible, float paddlers should make every effort to maneuver their float along the contour of the lake shoreline.
11. Additional buoys will be placed at Beach 1 to provide adequate spacing to make the turn up lake.
12. **The Marshals have the discretion to require a float group to reduce their sound if necessary.**
13. Each entrant is responsible for the safety of his/her float. Participants must adhere strictly to the safety and procedure requirements listed in this entry packet. Float Captains or their representative MUST sign the safety inspection sheet stating that they have read and understood all safety rules and Carnival procedures.
14. **All floats will be expected to go to the RIGHT of any buoys.** Remember, the buoys are intended to guide the path of your float to better show it to the audience and judges.
15. **Exchanging paddlers with others already on the float during the Parade is optional and will result in no point deductions** (i.e. operator and paddler may switch positions if needed). No one may enter the water during this exchange.
16. **Floats must complete circumnavigation of the lake under their own power or be subject to disqualification from prizes.**
17. **Floats unable to make it around the lake under their own power will be subject to mandatory towing at the discretion of the Command Post Marshal. Any float towed will be disqualified from prizes.**

Disqualification

The Canoe Carnival Committee will review all potential disqualifications prior to the release of all scores. Captains will be notified as to the possibility and reason for their float's potential disqualification. The float Captain and only one (1) other representative from the group may attend the discussion with the Canoe Carnival Committee at the appointed time.

The below actions may result in, but may not be limited to, disqualification.

- Spark, flame, or fire of any kind.
- Spare gas can aboard float.
- Throwing objects from the float.
- Additional canoes.
- Additional buoyancy and/or additional means of flotation.
- Additional locomotion.
- A float requiring towing.
- Failure to complete circumnavigation of the lake under their own power.
- Failure to launch from designated launch location.
- Failure to pass the safety inspection and to maintain that status.
- Failure to follow Fire and Police direction.
- Failure to comply with the requests of the Marshals.
- Disregard of other floats.
- Actions detrimental to Canoe Carnival as determined by the Committee.

Section 6 - In Case of Inclement Weather

1. An Inclement Weather Committee (IWC) will be formed and charged with deciding the status of the Carnival relative to inclement weather conditions (rain, wind, etc.).
2. The IWC will consist of the Canoe Carnival Chair, the head Marshal, the Safety Committee, and a float Captain or their appointed representative. The Canoe Carnival Chair or their designee will act as committee chair.
3. The IWC will meet on Carnival Day at the time and location designated. The Committee may also elect to meet prior to carnival day if deemed necessary.
4. The IWC will have the responsibility for deciding the status of carnival relative to weather conditions. They will have the authorization to:
 - a. Have carnival proceed without restriction or modification.
 - b. Have carnival proceed with restrictions as they see fit.

5. ONLY as a complete last resort, the IWC may postpone carnival.
6. The IWC will immediately report their decision to appropriate parties as soon as possible. Notified parties will include:
 - a. Security personnel (Police, Fire, Safety)
 - b. Head Judge
 - c. All float Captains
 - d. Beach 1 MC
7. IF carnival is to be postponed or delayed, this committee will also, as soon as possible:
 - a. Inform all lakefront homeowners & audiences at Beaches 1 & 2 and Beach Drive
 - b. Post signs notifying of the postponement information on Beach 1 and 2 as well as Beach Drive.
 - c. Request posting of postponement information on the Colony website, Canoe Carnival Facebook page, and through the Police “Nixle Team” system.

Section 7 – Post-Carnival Procedures

1. The Carnival Committee will provide a dumpster(s) on Beach 1 on Sunday after carnival.
2. Float groups may use these for the disposal of float remains only!
3. NO GLASS is permitted.
4. Care **MUST** be taken to ensure that **ALL TRASH HAS BEEN REDUCED IN SIZE** as much as possible and that no screws, nails, or other dangerous materials and/or objects are left on the beach.
5. Driving on Beach 1 with any type of vehicle to drop off trash or material too bulky to be carried **MUST BE LIMITED**. Float groups **MUST USE CAUTION** regarding bathers on the beach.
6. Vehicles may not be parked on the beach for any period of time.
7. All float canoes, platforms, and related items **MUST** be removed from Beach 1 and 2 by the end of day Sunday of Canoe Carnival weekend.
8. Any request made by the beach lifeguard is to be obeyed as they are hired to ensure the Colonists’ safety. A Canoe Carnival Committee representative will be present to assist the lifeguard in the implementation and enforcement of these rules.
9. The Canoe Carnival Committee reserves the right to sanction Canoe Carnival float groups who do not abide by the rules.