



## Living River Rental Group User Guide

### Preparing to come to Living River

#### **Requirements Before Arriving**

- A signed Rental Agreement and \$500 non-refundable, but transferable deposit is required to secure your group's date and facilities needs.
- A Certificate of Insurance naming Living River as an additional insured is required 30 days before arrival.
- A Facilities Form asking which buildings and for the number of motel-style cabin rooms your group will use will be sent two weeks out from your dates and is required back one week out from your dates.
- A signed Hold-Harmless Form for each participant is required upon departure. The weekend host will collect these. Anyone under the age of 18 must have theirs signed by a parent/guardian, so it is best to have these signed before arrival.
- A cleaning fee will be charged for the cancellation of spaces received less than 7 days prior to your event.

#### **Food at Living River**

Living River does not provide food service. We have a caterer that we can connect you with who can provide your group's food for an additional cost. Or, your group can bring its own food and cook for itself or hire your own catering service. If your group hires a catering service, the cooks can use a motel-style room free of charge.

#### **Linens at Living River**

Your group needs to bring their own linens, towels, and toiletries. All beds are single beds except for the queen beds in three of the motel-style staff rooms.

#### **Healthcare Provider**

It's recommended that your group bring a licensed healthcare provider, especially if there is anyone under the age of 18. Your licensed healthcare provider can use a motel-style room free of charge. There is a stocked healthcare room attached to a motel-style cabin room.

#### **Lifeguard**

**Living River's Waterfront Policy requires that all people in the lake or river wear a life jacket and that there be a lifeguard present anytime someone goes into the river or lake. For canoeing/ kayaking, an experienced small craft adult or currently certified lifeguard must be present with the group.**

Ask Living River with enough advance if your group would like us to provide you with a lifeguard. Your group will compensate the lifeguard directly at \$20/hour. Our ability to provide a lifeguard will depend on their availability, so the earlier we try to schedule with them, the better.

#### **Living River's Educational Partners**



Living River's environmental education partners currently include the Cahaba River Society, the Cahaba Riverkeeper, the Alabama Forestry Commission, and the Bibb County Extension Office. These educational partners can be scheduled to come and work with your group to enhance your experience at Living River. Some of them will have their own additional program fee associated with their service. If interested, please let Living River know as soon as possible so that we can check their availability and get your group on their schedule.

### **Service Projects at Living River**

If you're desiring for your group to spend time at Living River doing a service project for the land or facilities, please let us know in enough time to coordinate a project and have supplies ready. It is not guaranteed that there will be a need or available leadership during your group's time at Living River, but we'll do our best to work it out! Groups coming just to do a project may be subject to a per head "Day Use" fee that covers staff labor and facilities upkeep.

### **Civil Rights Learning Experiences**

Living River is within an hours drive of Birmingham, Montgomery, Selma, and Tuscaloosa, all important cities during the peak of our nation's struggle with civil rights for all races of people in the 60's. Groups are encouraged to use some of their time at Living River for a day trip to one or more of these cities. Please let us know in advance if this is your group's intention and the Living River staff can help you coordinate your experiences and group reflection time.

## **While at Living River**

### **Your Living River Host**

Unless otherwise communicated by the Living River staff before your arrival, a Living River host will meet you upon your arrival and stay at Living River for your group's duration. The host will go over basic safety and user information like the information below, and make clear how to communicate with them if they're needed. The host will help you understand where you're staying at Living River and also take an accurate headcount of your group. The host will provide you with maps and a bunk cabin utility closet key. Please think of your host as a resource while you're there.

### **Medical Emergencies**

- An AED is located in the lobby of the dining hall.
- If needed, have someone call 911 for an emergency. Living River's address is 2000 Living River Parkway, Montevallo, AL 35115.
- Closest hospital with Emergency Room is Shelby Baptist Medical Center 1000, 1st St N, Alabaster, AL 35007. It is approximately 45 minutes from Living River.
- A First aid kit is located in the dining room desk and there are medical supplies in the health room.

### **Child and Youth Safety**



When children or youth under 18 are present, please have your group follow the “Rule of 3” while at Living River for best child safety practices. A child should always be in a group of 3 whenever away from the whole group.

### **General Safety at Living River**

All local, state and, federal laws must be followed. Living River has all the usual hazards found in the Alabama outdoors.

- Apply bug spray outside, not in the cabins or on the porches.
- Conduct tick checks when coming back inside.
- Do not sleep in the same clothing you wore in the woods. Chigger, really small red bugs, bites are common.
- Wasps, yellow jackets and scorpions are also common in Alabama.
- Wasp spray is kept in the dining hall desk.
- Scorpions like drains in sinks and showers. Run water to flush them down.
- Venomous spiders and snakes are also present. Woodlands are their natural habitat. Give them plenty of room.
- Living River is a former mining operation. Do not go into any opening that looks like a cave or mine.
- In case of thunder or lightning, come inside and wait 30 minutes before resuming outdoor activities.
- There is a 150 person tornado shelter behind the dining hall. Your host will help monitor for extreme weather like a tornado.

### **Cabins**

- Absolutely no food or smoking allowed in cabins (no smoking is allowed in any Living River building).
- Your group leader will be issued a key to the utility closet where you will find cleaning supplies and extra toilet paper. Please keep the utility closet door locked when not in use.
- Your group needs to bring their own linens, towels, and toiletries. All beds are single beds except for the queen beds in three of the motel-style staff rooms.
- There are just a few sets of “loaner” sheets and towels in the bins in the health room. Wash and dry and fold them and return them to where you found them. A washer and dryer are located in the room at the end of the staff cabins marked “staff lounge.”

### **Dining Hall**

- You are responsible for moving tables and chairs into the formation you wish to use during your retreat, and returning tables and chairs to their original location.
- For the AC/heat to work best, controllers should be set **on the same temperature on both sides** of the dining hall and the doors to the lobby must stay closed.
  - Please adjust the AC/heat in no more than 2 degree increments.

- You are welcome to use the **sound equipment and tv**. The speakers connect to a receiver that you can plug a phone or laptop into. The tv is a smart tv and can be cast to or connected to using HDMI. TV remote is kept on top of the desk near the frying pans.
- Your group is welcome to purchase items out of the glass “Camp Store” shelf. Your group leader may collect cash or checks for merchandise and leave with host, or let us know that we can add the merchandise purchase to your group’s invoice.

### **Use of Kitchen**

- Leave it like you found it with all dishes clean and on the shelves and **no food left behind** in refrigerators, freezers, or on shelves.
- All kitchen trash must be removed from site (taken with you) or placed in the dumpster on the road to the lakes. It is recommended that you take kitchen trash to the dumpster nightly. If you leave food trash in the kitchen overnight, you may find mice in the morning. Never leave trash outside the kitchen door overnight.
- We request that you refrain from using styrofoam cups and plates and plastic bottles of water.
- If you wish to consume or serve alcoholic beverages to adults over 21, permission from the Executive Director must be obtained.
- There are directions for the dish washing machine, ice dispenser in the Dining Hall (ice maker is in the kitchen), and coffee maker.
- The kitchen is on a separate HVAC unit. Keep the doors to the dining hall closed unless serving a meal or cleaning up. Also, do not prop open the door to the outside.

### **Internet and Cell Service**

- All telephones and internet are dependent on satellites.
- The Dining Hall, Shades Valley Lodge, and Camp Office are the only buildings with internet service. The WiFi names and passwords:
  - Dining Hall: vsat 24G
    - Password: L1v1ngR!v3r
  - Shades Valley Lodge: vsat-24g-8397cc
    - Password: shapingbacking08
  - Office: vsat-5G-8DF954
    - Password: gkolv7jsvzbenqu6
- The more people on the internet, the slower it works.
- Heavy cloud coverage or storms will interrupt communication.
- There is no land-line at Living River.
- Cell service is available at random spots on the property depending on your carrier. There is usually service on the porch of the office or in random spots outside the dining hall.
- The strongest cell service on our property is up the hill behind the camp office at the water tower. It is a very steep hill with loose rock, take an SUV or truck.
- **In the event of a power outage**, cell service, internet and walkie-talkie radios will not work.



- Your host or your group leader can go to a location with cell service. (Water tower at the top of the hill behind the office; or back to the main road (Highway 10) turn left and turn left on to the first road you come to, Shelby County Road 251) and call Jenny or Brett, our Facilities Director.
- If they can't be reached, proceed with calling Alabama Power, 1-800-888-2726
- Tell them there is no power at Living River, Building B, account # 65692-44011

### **Campfires**

There are three fire rings at Living River- on the large field, off the road on the way to the Dining Hall, and at Shades Valley lodge. Only build campfires in those rings or at a campsite.

- Make sure fire is fully extinguished before leaving. You can use water cooler in the kitchen and bring it with you to your campfire to be prepared for once your fire is over.
- You are welcome to use the wood that is adjacent to the campfire rings.
- You are welcome to use the marshmallow roasting sticks in the Dining Hall kitchen for s'mores or roasting hot dogs. If you make s'mores, soak the roasting sticks overnight before hand washing. Please don't forget to wash, dry, and return them. Do not leave them soaking when you leave.

### **Recreation**

There are a few kickballs and basketballs that are kept in the dining hall, board games, and other miscellaneous fun things. We have a shed with additional recreational equipment that your host can unlock for you. Your group is also welcome to use the supplies in the "Craft Hut," the building at the end of the bunk cabins. The "Craft Hut" is a great multipurpose space like the Dining Hall. Both can be used for your group's unique purposes. Please clean up after yourselves and leave things slightly better than you found them. Living River also has a **Gaga Pit, Volleyball Court, and Labyrinth.**

### **Low Ropes Course**

Our Low Ropes obstacles are:

- Balance Beam
- The Whale Watch
- The Spider Web
- A Track Walk
- The King's Finger
- Team Wall

Ask for an Low Ropes Facilitator Instruction Sheet if you group would like to do Low Ropes and you'd like some guidance.

### **Outdoor Chapels**

There are two **outdoor chapels** at Living River that are great for worship, vespers, or meeting locations. The Durham Chapel is a very short walk down the hill from the Dining Hall. The IPC Chapel is a slightly longer walk down the Potts Trail. Both are beautiful!

### **River or Lake Use**

The road forks at the office, the right taking you to the main part of the camp where all the buildings are and the left taking you to the best river access (Williams Access Point), the lake, and Fossil Ridge. It is over a mile hike if your group walks from the bunks to the lake. It might be easier to carpool to the river or lake and back!

Groups can swim, fish, or canoe and kayak in the lake. Groups could also wade and play in the Cahaba River or canoe the Cahaba. Living River has 4.5 miles of the Cahaba on its property! Living River has cane fishing poles and lots of life jackets, both are down by the lake. The life jackets can be used and replaced where found for either lake or river use.

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Your group needs to provide a vehicle with a trailer hitch if you're moving the Living River canoe trailer from the lake area.

### **Hiking**

- **Trails around "the thumb"**- off of the field, down the hill from the Dining Hall, there are four trails that connect or can be out and back. There's around 4 miles of hiking across those trails.
- **Railroad Trail**- the Keller Railroad Trail outside the office is beautiful, short (about 0.25 miles one way) and ends with a view of the River (down the hill to your right at the end). This is a great option for young kids or anyone looking for a short hike.
- **Fossil Ridge**- because Living River's property was a mining operation, we have a Fossil Bed! The Fossils at Fossil Ridge are 300-600 million year old plant fossils from the Carboniferous period or earlier. Each member of your group can take a fossil no bigger the size of their hand if your group visits fossil ridge. The hike to fossil ridge starts down at the Lake.

### **After Staying at Living River**

#### **Leaving Living River**

Please walk through all areas that were used to check for lost and found and to assure that all trash has been removed and taken to the dumpster. The group leader must check out with the



host upon departure. All signed hold-harmless forms, any radios and keys must be turned in at this time.

**Final Invoice and Thank You!**

A final invoice will be sent to your group's contact for the remainder of your balance after your group's stay at Living River. We will send your group's contact a feedback form for your experience at Living River, too. We appreciate any feedback.

Thank you for bringing your group to Living River!