

Participants relish Yough adventure

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Eleven year-old Madeline Werner of Fox Chapel says she loves roughing it as a participant in the 1998 Youghiogheny River Sojourn.

Madeline, accompanied by her sisters Whitney, 13, and Christen, 10, are spending part of their summer vacation on the six-day expedition from Connellsville to McKeesport.

The girls are taking the trip with their mother, Susan Whitacre, who said she loves the outdoors. She praised the tour guides, too.

"They are taking care of us in such a way," Whitacre said enthusiastically.

According to Whitacre, the raft guides from Wilderness Voyageurs who are on the river with the group are very encouraging when participants become weary of the water. "They dig deep, they find it and they do it," she said.

Madeline said the trip so far has turned out to be better than she thought it would be. She's met new people and made new friends.

"The food's great, too," she said.

On Wednesday, the third day of the river sojourn, about 60 bicyclists trekked to Yough Park in Connellsville from the Yough River Trail.

The 21.5-mile bike ride began at Ohiopyle, where sojourners geared up for the long haul after eating breakfast at 7:30 a.m.

Cindy Moag of Dunbar rode the trail with her cousin, Todd Sproul of Dunbar, and his girlfriend, Lisa Keller of Connellsville.

The trio decided to join the river sojourn for just one day. Moag was



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Dorothy Hamilton (left) and her daughter Kim Ansell, both of Dawson, wait to cross West Crawford Avenue in Connellsville.

the first to bike off the trail.

After fueling up with some food, sojourners gathered Wednesday to hear the proclamations presented by state Sen. Richard A. Kasunic, Fayette County Commissioner Vincent Vicites and Jim Schilling of the Yough River Trail Council on behalf of Connellsville Mayor Thomas Duncan.

"We're very proud of what we have here in the Yough corridor," said Kasunic.

The river sojourn is good for tourism in the county, Vicites

added. "The Yough contributes to the scenic beauty and ecology of the area."

Today the canoers will paddle the 14 miles from Whitsett to Sutersville, with a stop at Cedar Creek Park for lunch.

And on Saturday, the group will bicycle 15 miles from Sutersville to Boston for a "Boston Tea Party," then canoe to McKeesport for a celebration of the sojourn's end.

Joyce Koballa is a reporter for *The Daily Courier*, Connellsville.