

Aquatics in



High Adventure

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Offered by the
HIGH ADVENTURE TEAM
Los Angeles Area Council
Boy Scouts of America

The High Adventure Team of the Los Angeles Area Council-Boy Scouts of America is a volunteer group of Scouters which operates under the direction of the LAAC-Camping Department. Its mission is to develop and promote outdoor activities within the Council and by its many Units. It conducts training programs, sponsors High Adventure awards, publishes specialized literature such as Hike Aids and The Trail Head and promotes participation in summer camp, in High Adventure activities such as backpacking, peak climbing, and conservation, and in other Council programs.

Anyone who is interested in the LAAC-HAT and its many activities is encouraged to direct an inquiry to the LAAC-Camping Department. The LAAC-HAT meets on the evening of the first Tuesday of each month at the LAAC Service Center. These meetings are open to all Scouters.



This edition to HIKE AID 14 makes nominal edits and corrections to the version dated June 2001. Thanks to Richard Hoesly for his contribution and encouragement.

Warning

An aquatics High Adventure Program places its participants in an environment that possesses significant risk to the inexperienced, the inattentive, the undisciplined, or the untrained. These risks will most often be in locations without medical facilities and to which search and rescue personnel may not have ready access. The Unit should use the services of a Certified instructor to teach all participants the rudiments of the specific aquatic activity and have an instructor or similarly qualified person accompany the Unit on any outing that involves any risk beyond that which the Unit can reasonably handle. The Unit Leadership must vigorously enforce the BSA-National Council's Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat programs for every aquatic activity.

Aquatics in High Adventure

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“Failing to prepare is preparing to fail.”
John Wooden

“Danger and delight grow on one stalk.”
English Proverb

“A man must know his limitations.”
“Dirty Harry” Callahan

Introduction

For many boys, Scouting provides the first opportunity for meaningful participation in aquatic activities. They may have splashed around in the shallow end of a swimming pool or at the beach, but this is when they learn to swim. For most, this is the first, and, possibly, only chance to learn to handle any kind of watercraft. The experience can be healthy, safe, and enjoyable or it can be otherwise. The outcome depends upon the Unit Leadership, as with any outdoor activity.

The LAAC-HAT recommends that the Unit require that a member earn the Swimming merit badge as a qualification for participation in a High Adventure aquatic program. Each adult that participates should demonstrate a swimming proficiency that is equivalent to that required for the merit badge. While each person must wear a U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) approved personal flotation device (PFD) when on the water, it is a backup safety device, not a substitute for knowing how to swim and function in the water. The BSA-National Council strongly recommends that a Unit have at least one adult or older Scout certified as a BSA Lifeguard. This person is to assist in the planning and to participate in the conduct of all aquatic activities. For a more challenging program, the Unit may want to require participants to earn Lifesaving and the related aquatic merit badges.

Of course, the Unit will be getting technical instruction in the aquatic activity from a qualified source before the outing. For some activities or outings, such as whitewater rafting, an instructor or guide will probably be accompanying the Unit. This is especially important for outings where the potential risks exceed the current proficiency of the participants. Proficiency in handling any watercraft requires training, practice, and experience. Being on the ocean, river, or lake is an entirely different environment than that of a training or instructional situation; skill in the latter does not automatically translate into skill in the former.

Instruction in associated aquatic matters is also desirable at the start of a program, to be repeated at regular intervals and as new members join the Unit. This should cover such matters as:

- ◆ basic knots and rope handling.
- ◆ use of safety equipment, such as rescue ropes and life preservers.
- ◆ basic rescue techniques.
- ◆ rescue breathing.
- ◆ the basic nomenclature of boating, including port and starboard, fore and aft, etc.

All of this sounds like a lot for just a weekend canoe trip on the Colorado River or for using a guide service to raft the Kern River. However, even for a single activity, the greater the amount of preparation and training, the greater the likelihood of a safe and enjoyable experience. This, in turn, may lead to aquatic activities becoming a regular part of the Unit's High Adventure Program.



Planning

For an aquatic outing to be successful, planning of the same basic nature and quality as for a backpack trip must be prepared. The comments on this matter, to be found in other Hike Aids and the Training Syllabuses, apply. However, instead of the Trail Profile/Trail Schedule, an aquatic program requires float plans. All of the other planning and preparation is, basically, the same.

The float plan identifies the location, specifies the start/end point for each day, distance traveled, estimated times, maps and other planning materials used, etc. All local rules that apply to conduct on the water and/or at each campsite are specifically stated. Opportunities to “bail out” are identified, along with contingency plans for dealing with an unexpected event.

Gee, that sounds an awful lot like the same type of planning and preparation that is necessary to ensure a safe and healthy backpack trip. The point is that it’s not enough to arrange for an outfitter/guide service to provide an aquatic outing and just show up at the appointed time; you are always responsible for providing reasonable and prudent leadership.



Risk

Water is a dynamic medium. Even lakes, which are considered still water, generally have a slight breeze blowing across them (the difference in land and water temperature all but guarantees it). This dynamic quality demands everyone’s constant attention to proper behavior and careful, correct handling of any watercraft. An unexpected event is just that, not something that occurs at a convenient time, when the Unit is totally prepared to deal with it.

About a dozen persons die each year in rafting accidents on California rivers, with the Kern River accounting for a significant portion. Boating, water skiing, swimming, and snorkeling also regularly claim victims. However, all of these are recognized by the BSA as acceptable activities for a Scout Unit. The BSA understands that water is an inherently risky environment and mandates that the Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat programs be enforced on every aquatic outing. When under these very controlled conditions, each one can be a safe and enjoyable experience for every participant.

Persons get into trouble on the water for the following reasons:

- ◆ insufficient or no training.
- ◆ insufficient or inadequate equipment.
- ◆ unrealistic assessment of skill.
- ◆ inadequate supervision.
- ◆ lack of discipline.
- ◆ unrealistic assessment of risk.
- ◆ failure to use, or improper use of, safety equipment.
- ◆ attitude.
- ◆ alcohol use.
- ◆ overloading the watercraft.

These are conditions that must be avoided.

Drowning is not the only way that water can harm the unwary. It can induce hypothermia, induce disabling shock, contain hazards, contain biological and chemical contaminants, and accelerate sunburned skin and eyes. Hypothermia sufficient to disable a person occurs in about 20 minutes of submersion in water with a temperature of 50 degrees. The lower the temperature, the shorter the time. However, prolonged immersion in water in the 50-65 degree range can also cause a dangerous drop in body temperature. When a person begins to shiver, he/she must get out of the water.

The body does not handle an abrupt change in the surrounding temperature very well. Yet most aquatic activities occur in conditions where the difference in air and water temperatures ranges from 10-40 degrees. The greater the difference, the more likely that persons will experience disabling shock when they jump or fall into it. The consequences can range from disorientation and reduced motor function to heart arrhythmia. The person may not be able to assist in his/her rescue, much less put on a personal flotation device. The impact of this shock can be lessened somewhat by splashing water on one's face and neck for a minute or two before full immersion.

Concealed hazards can harm both the watercraft and the person. Submerged trees or branches and rocks, eddies, and shallows or sandbars will damage or overturn watercraft. Persons are injured by broken glass, sharp rocks and sticks, and holes or sudden drop-offs. All are reasons for Item 3, Safe Area, of the Safe Swim Defense program.

Biological and chemical contaminants are a too frequent occurrence in our inland and coastal waters. Their effects can range from relatively mild illness to death. Besides staying out of the water, there isn't much that can be done beyond advising everyone not to drink it, (unless treated or filtered) and to dry their hands before eating. Sunburn occurs very quickly when a person is on or near water, even when he/she is already tanned. Moreover, the reflected sunlight can cause it to occur in the most unlikely places, such as the armpits, roof of mouth, and inside of nostrils. Extra care is mandatory to protect the skin and eyes: long, loose fitting clothing; wrap-around sun glasses; a hat with a wide brim; sunscreen or sunblock for anything left exposed. Sunburn can disable a person, and is always painful.

Another source of risk in aquatic activities is the weather; it changes more quickly over water than land. The Unit Leadership must be constantly alert to the classic signs of a change: temperature drops; wind changing direction or intensity; clouds; drop in barometric pressure; birds and insects disappearing. Even one of these conditions is reason enough to get off the water; several increase the urgency. In or on the water is not the place to be when there is any chance of high wind, rain, or lightning.

A different type of risk is other boaters. Learn and obey all rules of the road for the specific aquatic activity. Unit Leadership must be aware of the location and actions of other watercraft; the goal is to "drive defensively" on the water. An incident involving another watercraft is almost always more serious than one that does not.

Properly planned and conducted aquatic activities are great additions to the Unit's High Adventure Program. As with all outdoor activities, the proper assessment and accommodation of risk are vital to safe, enjoyable experiences.



Fitness

Aquatic activities involve more than just "... cruising down the river on a Sunday afternoon...". Even motorboating, not a notoriously physical pursuit, requires a certain amount of mental and emotional fitness. The point is that all participants need to understand that they will be in situations where they must perform certain tasks, in certain ways, and at certain times to ensure their safety.

The level of physical fitness that is required can range from what is necessary to earning the Swimming merit badge to paddling a canoe into a 30 mile per hour headwind. The duration can range from a few minutes to re-set or trim sails to several hours of continuous, strenuous rowing or paddling. Everyone on a watercraft is expected to share in these tasks; High Adventure aquatics are not the keel boat ride at Disneyland. Persons will get a feel for what this involves when they receive instruction in handling a craft. However, once on the water, blisters and muscle aches will develop in unexpected places.

Which leads us to the emotional fitness that is needed to overcome these little annoyances. Not that aquatic activities are not fun - they certainly are, they just are not trouble free. Because you are on, or near, the water all of the time, persons are subjected to sunburn, insect bites, and wind, in addition to blisters and sore muscles. Emotional fitness gets you over them and into the fun and feeling of accomplishment of the outing.

Mental fitness keeps the person on track during the activity. Instructions must be remembered and followed, as time and conditions dictate. Water is dynamic, it doesn't wait for you to make up your mind and act. Macho and "I dare you" attitudes are inappropriate and unsafe. Mental fitness keeps the person focused, ensuring a safe and enjoyable experience.

The LAAC-HAT recommends that every person who participates in a High Adventure Program have a physical examination every year, using BSA Form 4412A, Personal Health and Medical Record, and maintain a physical fitness program that includes aerobic workouts 3-4 times a week.



Awards

Several unique outdoor awards may be earned by members of the Unit that includes aquatics in its High Adventure Program. Listed below are those sponsored by the Scout Councils in Southern California, plus the BSA-National Council's award. As its program grows and the Unit becomes more adventurous, it should check for awards offered by Councils in locations such as Northern California, Southern Utah, and Northern Arizona. The rivers and lakes there are not that much further away, particularly when the outing is for more than a couple of days. Besides the possibility of other awards, these areas provide different aquatic experiences.

- ◆ 50 Miler-Afoot, Afloat. Sponsor: BSA-National Council.
- ◆ Colorado River-50 Mile. Sponsor: California Inland Empire.
- ◆ Weekend Canoeing. Sponsor: California Inland Empire.
- ◆ River Rat. Sponsor: San Diego-Imperial.
- ◆ Lazy Rat. Sponsor: San Diego-Imperial.

- ◆ No electronic noise makers or toys.

These are supplemental to your usual list for a High Adventure outing. The quantity and warmth of clothing is conditional to the location and time of year.

Unit Equipment

- ◆ Watercraft and their operating gear, sufficient to safely and comfortably accommodate all participants. Overloading is a major factor in many aquatic accidents.
- ◆ USCG approved personal flotation device (PFD): one per person.
- ◆ 65 foot throw line: one per watercraft.
- ◆ Waterproof gear bags (dry bags): sufficient for all personal gear, Unit equipment, and food.
- ◆ NOAA weather broadcast radio.
- ◆ Signal flares.
- ◆ Watercraft repair kit/items.
- ◆ Spare oar(s) or paddle(s).
- ◆ Bailer: one per watercraft. Cut off the bottom of a gallon plastic bottle and glue on the lid.
- ◆ Large sponge: at least one per watercraft.

Some or all of the above may be supplied by the outfitter or guide service. Just be certain to have them.

- ◆ Other unit equipment is the same as for the backpacking program.
- ◆ Carry and use backpack or liquid fueled camp stoves. Do not have a wood fire for any purpose. River banks and shores are extremely fragile, with a high fire potential.
- ◆ The 100 foot bear bag rope is now a multi-use item.
- ◆ Several short (15-25 foot) pieces of rope per watercraft - to tie down gear.
- ◆ Extra, heavy duty trash bags: backup for dry bags; carry out all trash, garbage, and used toilet paper.
- ◆ Maps and charts for the location, in waterproof sleeves (double, resealable bags).
- ◆ Permits, money, etc., in waterproof sleeve.
- ◆ Camera and film.

Carry something to provide shelter from sun, wind, bugs, etc., just as is done on a backpack trip. Moreover, rain happens, not always to plan or on a seasonal basis.



Maps

Maps are just as useful to an aquatic program as they are to backpacking. The Unit Leadership will certainly need highway maps and, probably, detail maps for the location of the waterway to be traveled. As with the maps used in planning for other types of outings, the more current and detailed, the better.

Highway maps are needed to prepare a driving plan to and from the location and for any car shuttles. As many of the put-in and take-out points on rivers are accessible on secondary (or worse) roads, be certain to allow sufficient driving time. Never prepare a plan on the assumption of exceeding posted speed limits - that is not reasonable and prudent leadership. The Automobile Club of Southern California is an excellent source for these maps. Besides the usual state and county maps, get a copy of its "Colorado River-Lake Mead to Yuma" map. Also ask as to what other current items it might have that are specific to boating and fishing.

Detailed maps or charts for the location of the aquatic activity are needed when the Unit is not to be accompanied by a guide or someone who is equally familiar with it. It is just as easy to

become disoriented on a river or lake as it is in unfamiliar backcountry. Specialty maps for Lake Mead, Lake Powell, and Lake Havasu may be ordered from Aquamaps, P.O. Box 417, Denver, CO 80201, Tel. 303-629-6111. Topographical maps may be purchased from several sources:

- ◆ Specialty backpack stores, such as REI, A-16, and Sports Chalet for popular California locations south of Lake Tahoe.
- ◆ Commercial Graphics, 1435 Daisy Avenue, Long Beach (562-436-9761) or Allied Services, 966 N. Main Street, Orange (714-532-4337), for locations in local Western States.
- ◆ U.S. Geological Survey, P.O. Box 25286, Denver, CO 88025 (303-234-3832) for all locations in Western States.

The California Dept. of Fish and Game has free literature about the Colorado River. This includes maps of portions of it and information about fishing and the kinds of fishes to be found there. Obtain by writing DFG, 1416-9th Street, Sacramento, CA 95814.

Be certain to take all precautions to keep these maps dry while on the water.



Getting Instruction

The members of the Unit need instruction in the aquatic activity before an outing. The Unit Leadership may provide it, or an outside source can be used. Numerous “how to” books are available, both from the BSA and commercial publishers, as instructional guides (see the Bibliography). There are several local sources of instruction. Whatever the process, the product must be a level of skill and comprehension on the part of each person that is adequate to the potential demands of the outing.

Before deciding to go the “do it yourself” route, consider the following questions:

- ◆ Is there someone in, or available to, the Unit with sufficient knowledge and skill to provide/direct the training?
- ◆ Does the Unit possess, or have access to the use of, sufficient, proper equipment?
- ◆ Is a suitable site for training conveniently available?
- ◆ Can the training be conducted in a safe manner, with minimal risk for each participant?

If the answer to each of these is a strong “yes”, then self-instruction seems reasonable.

However, most Units are going to seek an outside source for training in the different types of aquatic activities. The first place to consider is the aquatic program of the Scout Councils. Every summer camp offers a waterfront program. Some are more extensive than others, and the quality of instruction can be uneven. However, it is a good place for boys, and adults, to get some initial instruction through the merit badge programs offered.

Even more attractive for this training are the aquatic camps that several local Councils operate. As they are ocean front, or access, facilities, they offer more complete programs, typically on a year-round basis. The Unit can usually arrange for instruction in the activity of choice, any time of the year. Reservations and discussions in advance with the staff are advisable to ensure an understanding of what the Unit desires. Most of these camps have the equipment and qualified staff to provide instruction in swimming, life saving, canoeing, rowing, small boat handling, and snorkeling. Those most conveniently at hand are:

- ◆ Cabrillo Beach Youth Waterfront Sports Center
www.cabrilloyouthcamp.org
Operated by Los Angeles Area Council; located in San Pedro.
310-831-1984

- ◆ Newport Sea Base
www.newportseabase.org
Operated by Orange County Council; located in Newport Beach.
949-642-5031

- ◆ Pardee Sea Base
www.bsa-la.org/camping
Operated by Western Los Angeles County Council; located in Marina Del Rey.
818-785-8700, x121

- ◆ San Diego Youth Aquatic Center
www.sdic.org
Operated by San Diego-Imperial Council; located on Mission Bay, San Diego.
619-298-6121

Obtain a brochure from the Council that operates the base for specifics on the type of training offered, fees, camping arrangements, etc.

Two Scout camps are on Catalina Island:

- ◆ Cherry Valley
www.sgvcbasa.org
Operated by the San Gabriel Valley Council.
626-351-8815, x237

- ◆ Emerald Bay
www.bsa-la.org
Operated by Western L. A. County Council.
818-785-8700, x130

While not as convenient, and more expensive for a day or weekend of instruction, combining it with several days of canoeing along the coast can make an attractive package.

The American Red Cross offers some training in aquatics, and, certainly, swimming and water safety. For information as to the type, location, and fees, call the main Los Angeles office at 310-445-9900. Training is conducted at community pools throughout the county and is quite comprehensive.

If none of these suggestion sound attractive, or if the do not offer the specific type of instruction that you want, check with REI, A-16, or Sports Chalet. As they sell aquatic equipment, they may have referrals to local, qualified persons. Before deciding to use him/her, ask about qualifications and any state or local trade associations to which he/she belongs.

The training for some specialized activities, such as whitewater rafting and tall ship sailing, will probably be as a part of the outing and provided by the outfitter/guide service. When you discuss such an outing with one of these services, be certain that they understand that the persons participating are untrained, unskilled, and, mostly, teenagers. If they are unaware of the BSA Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat programs, send them a copy. The BSA-National Council requires that Unit Leadership enforce them for the duration of every aquatic activity, even when using an instructor or guide service.

When renting just equipment from an outfitter, such as canoes for the Colorado River, check for what instruction it provides as a part of the deal. If it normally does not, ask for a brief review of watercraft handling, safety, and rules of the road. Require every person on the outing to participate; it is a matter of due diligence.

Where To Go

“Water, water, everywhere ...”; any direction from Los Angeles there is some suitable for an aquatic activity. The question of where is conditional to deciding what you want to do. A good way to determine the interests of your Scouts is to spend a weekend at one of the local Council aquatic camps and sample what it offers. However, there are aquatic activities beyond those. These include tall ship sailing, ocean and river kayaking, and flat and whitewater rafting. Southern California, and beyond, has a complete universe of aquatic opportunities.

Canoeing-fresh water.

- ◆ Lower Colorado River.
- ◆ Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.

Canoeing-salt water.

- ◆ Mission Bay, San Diego.
- ◆ Los Angeles Harbor.
- ◆ Catalina Island.

Kayaking-fresh water.

- ◆ Kern River.
- ◆ Lower Colorado River.

Kayaking-salt water.

- ◆ Channel Islands Harbor, Oxnard.

Rafting-flat water.

- ◆ Lower Colorado River.
- ◆ Green River, Utah.

Rafting-whitewater.

- ◆ Kern River.
- ◆ Upper Colorado River.
- ◆ Merced River.
- ◆ Green River, Utah.
- ◆ Lots of other locations throughout California and the West.

Sailing.

- ◆ LAAC-Cabrillo Beach: small boats.
- ◆ Orange County Council-Newport Sea Base: small boats. High Adventure aquatic program.
- ◆ BSA-Florida National High Adventure Sea Base: tall ships and other watercraft.
- ◆ The Los Angeles Maritime Institute: tall ship. 310-833-6055
Berth 84, Foot of 6th Street, San Pedro, 90731 www.lamitopsail.org

When seeking ideas about where to go, check with the folks at REI, A-16, and Sports Chalet. Also, look for ads for outfitters in Sierra and other outdoor magazines. The Tour Books published by the Auto Club identify aquatic activities in its coverage of recreational opportunities for areas within each state. The Where To Go section of the Bibliography lists several books that identify locations within California and beyond.

Lower Colorado River Canoe Trip Plan

Overview

The Needles area of the Colorado River is a very good location for a Unit to begin a canoeing program. There are a number of put-in and take-out points along the 65 miles of relatively quiet water from Davis Dam (just north of Laughlin) to Havasu Lake Landing. Plus, the area is served by a reliable outfitter who is experienced in dealing with Scout Units.

This portion of the river encompasses a wide variety of desert scenery. South of Needles, it flows lazily along the edge of Topock Marsh. South of the City of Topock, it passes through Topock Gorge, which is accessible only by boat. Emerging from the Gorge, the river enters the broad, placid expanse of Lake Havasu (habitat of numerous wild creatures).

The following trip plan was prepared by Rich Hoesly in 1998, based upon his experience with Troop 849, Manhattan Beach. Other outfitters are available in this area. Jerkwater Canoe is identified because of the good service this Unit has received.

Trip description

The trip begins and ends with a 300-mile (5-6 hour) drive between Los Angeles and Moabi Regional Park, about 15 miles south of Needles on Interstate 40. The outing is for two and a half days, with about 30 miles on the river. On the morning after your arrival, the outfitter picks up the Unit at its campsite and transports it up river to Needles Marina Park. After checking out canoes and safety instruction, the Unit is on its own. The balance of the day is easy paddling down 10 miles of river. This allows plenty of time to learn to handle the canoes and enjoy the water. As the day ends back at Moabi Regional Park, you need only carry safety equipment lunch and other supplies for the day.

The next day's canoeing starts here and continues down river. It is much longer, covering 17-20 miles, so an early start is desirable. Before leaving, the Unit clears camp, packs the camping gear in the vehicles, and leaves them in the outfitter's lot at Moabi. Once again, the Unit need only carry safety equipment, lunch, and supplies for the day. The Unit comes off the water at Castle Rock, on the Arizona side, where the outfitter waits. They transport you back to Moabi for your drive back to Los Angeles. This portion of the river is within the Havasu National Wildlife Refuge and is patrolled by Rangers. Camping is not permitted along its banks.

If the Unit feels more adventurous, this trip may be extended to three days on the water. In this scenario, you do not pull out at Castle Rock, but continue down river and camp on its bank (check with the Havasu National Wildlife Refuge for acceptable locations). The next day, you paddle to London Bridge at Lake Havasu City and are met by the outfitter. For this trip, all food and equipment are carried in the canoes on the second and third days. The per person cost increases for the additional day's canoe rental and food.

Season for trip

As the trip is in the desert, the best time is spring and early summer. Troop 849 has done it in October and has had tolerable weather. Daytime temperatures for these periods are normally in the 70's to mid-80's; overnight, they drop into the mid-50's. Regardless, there is plenty of sun, so be prepared.

Approximate cost

These amounts are for each person's share of common costs. Additional expenditures for Unit or personal gear may be necessary.

| | | |
|--------------------------|------|--------------------|
| Vehicular transportation | \$15 | Drivers do not pay |
| Canoe rental | \$50 | |
| Food | \$12 | Six meals |
| Campground | \$3 | Two nights |
| Total | \$80 | |

Reference

Trek Aid 101, "Canoe The Colorado River", Desert Pacific Council-High Adventure Team.

Contacts

- Jerkwater Canoe and Kayak Co. (outfitter) 520-768-7753/800-421-7803
P.O. Box 800, Topock, AZ 86438 www.jerkwater.com
- Moabi Regional Park 760-326-3831
Park Moabi Road, Needles, CA 92362
- Havasu National Wildlife Refuge 760-326-3853
P.O. Box 3009, Needles, CA 92362

Master schedule

- Day one
 - 5 pm Meet at Unit assembly point.
 - 6 pm Depart for Colorado River, via Interstate 40.
 - 12 am Arrive at Moabi Regional Park.
- Day two
 - 6 am Reveille.
 - 8 am Jerkwater personnel arrive at campground, take Unit upriver, and conduct safety orientation.
 - 10 am Depart Needles Marina Park.
 - 12 pm Lunch and fun along the river.
 - 4 pm Arrive at Moabi Regional Park.
- Day three
 - 6 am Reveille.
 - 8 am Depart Moabi Regional Park.
 - 12 pm Lunch and fun along the river.
 - 4 pm Arrive at Castle Rock; Jerkwater personnel pick up Unit.
 - 5 pm Back at Moabi Regional Park.
 - 6 pm Depart for Los Angeles.
 - 12 am Back home.

Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) Trip Plan

Overview

This long-term canoe trip is in the northern lake country of Minnesota once traversed by the Sioux (before they were pushed west) and Chippewa tribes. There are three options to being outfitted, with substantial differences in cost. This plan provides for 8 days on the water, plus two days for travel between Los Angeles and Ely, Minnesota. Rich Hoesly prepared it, based on his experience in 1996, using an outfitter to supply only canoes and associated aquatic

gear. This option requires more effort on the part of the Unit, as compared to using Charles L. Sommers High Adventure Base or an outfitter to supply canoes, food, and the other necessary equipment. It is fine for the Unit that has done extensive canoeing, has the associated equipment, and knows how to organize and conduct itself on the water. A Unit just beginning a canoeing program is advised to use Sommers, as it supplies a guide, as well as the food and most required equipment.

Trip description

The canoeing portion of the trip begins and ends at Ely. For the intervening 8 days, the Unit paddles and portages on and between a number of lakes that comprise the BWCAW. This is generally along established routes, to selected campsites. Backpack food and stoves are used, as cans and bottles are prohibited in the Wilderness. Expect lots of sun and bugs, along with daytime temperatures in the 80's.

Cost

These are for a crew of 15 persons making this trek in 1996. They are representative of the kinds and approximate minimums that a Unit can expect to pay now.

| | <u>Total</u> | <u>Per person</u> |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| - Common trip costs | | |
| Airline, LA-Minneapolis | \$3045 | |
| Bus service, Minneapolis-Ely | \$1200 | |
| Bunk house, one night | \$128 | |
| Maps | \$129 | |
| Permits and usage fees | \$115 | |
| Banquet | \$241 | |
| Taxes and tips | \$32 | |
| Total | <u>\$4890</u> | <u>\$326</u> |
| - Outfitter cost-canoes only | | |
| Canoe rental, 8 days | \$672 | |
| Food (Unit buys here and takes) | \$785 | |
| Equipment (Unit buys here and takes) | \$215 | |
| Entry point transportation, Ely | \$150 | |
| Total trip cost | <u>\$6712</u> | <u>\$447.50</u> |
| - Charles L. Sommers cost | | |
| Total charge, 8 days | <u>\$3600</u> | |
| Total trip cost | <u>\$8490</u> | <u>\$566</u> |
| - Outfitter cost-full service | | |
| Total charge, 8 days | <u>\$4200</u> | |
| Total trip cost | <u>\$9090</u> | <u>\$606</u> |

References

Beymer, Robert, Boundary Waters Canoe Area, Vol. 1: The Western Region, Wilderness Press, Berkeley, CA, 1994.

Boundary Waters Canoe Area, Vol. 2: The Eastern Region, Wilderness Press, Berkeley, CA, 1991

Duncanson, Michael, A Paddler's Guide To The Boundary Water Canoe Area.

Maps: Fisher F Series and McKenzie Series; available from BWCAW outfitters.

Video tape: Northern Tier/Pack and Paddle, produced by Z, Incorporated, Middleton, WI, 608-831-8600; available through the Charles L. Sommers High Adventure Base.

Contacts

Your first contact should be the Ely Chamber of Commerce. It can provide a variety of materials that are useful to planning and arranging a trip, including a listing of all local outfitters.

Ely Chamber of Commerce 800-777-7281/218-365-6123
1600 E. Sheridan, Ely, MN 55731 www.ely.com

Northern Tier High Adventure Bases 218-365-4811
P.O. Box 509, Ely, MN 55731 www.ntier.org

Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness 877-550-6777
BWCAW Reservation Center
P.O. Box 462, Ballston Spa, NY 12020 www.bwcaw.org

Voyageurs National Park
Superintendent 218-283-9821
3131 U.S. 53, International Falls, MN 56649-8904 www.nps.gov/voya

Canadian Waters 800-255-2922
An outfitter experienced in working with Scout Units. www.canadianwaters.com

Canadian Border Outfitters 800-247-7530
14635 Canadian Border Road, Ely, MN 55731 www.canoetrip.com

Canoe Country Outfitters 800-752-2306/218-365-4046
P.O. Box 30, Ely, MN 55731 www.canoecountryoutfitters.com

Tom and Wood's Outfitters 800-322-5837
P.O.Box 358, Ely, MN 55731

Master Planning Calendar

| | |
|----------|---|
| Summer | Start talking about trip. Get literature and maps for Boundary Waters. |
| Fall | Talk to potential outfitters (unless using Sommers). Develop preliminary travel route in BWCAW. Talk with BWCAW-Reservation Center about applying for permit, or, if using Sommers, find out about applying for reservation. Develop preliminary list of participants. |
| December | Select outfitter. Finalize canoe route. |
| January | Apply to BWCAW or Sommers on earliest date for making reservations. |
| March | Final list of participants. Make airline reservations, LA-Minneapolis. |
| May | Make charter bus reservations, Minneapolis-Ely. Day of canoeing and water safety instruction - all participants. Confirm swimming ability - all participants. Collect partial payment from participants. |
| June | Canoe trip. Prepare and issue clothing and equipment list. |

- July
 - Prepare menu, unless using Sommers or full service outfitter.
 - Apply for National Tour Permit.
 - Weekend backpack trip.
 - Collect and pack Unit equipment.
 - Confirm charter bus service.
 - Buy and pack food, unless using Sommers or full service outfitter.
 - Collect final payment, permission slip, emergency medical release, liability release, and BSA Form 4412A, Personal Health and Medical Record, for each participant.
- August
 - Meeting with all participants: establish/review rules of conduct, safety, etc.
 - Trip
 - Buy stove fuel upon arrival at Ely.



Equipment and Guide Service Providers

As a general rule, the Unit will want to acquire equipment and services, unless it has its own, in the immediate vicinity of the aquatic activity. Transporting watercraft any distance can be an expensive, hazardous, and time-consuming process. Below are just a few outfitters from among the many who are available throughout the West.

As you travel in locations with rivers and lakes, stop at the Chambers of Commerce and Visitor Information Centers. They will certainly have advertising brochures for local outfitters and may have other materials of use in planning and arranging an outing. Another possible source for outfitters are the trade associations (see the following section).

Ask a prospective outfitter or guide service the following questions:

- ◆ How old is the company and how long has it operated in the locale of the aquatic activity?
- ◆ To what state or national trade associations does it belong?
- ◆ What are the backgrounds and experience of the guides?
- ◆ Who trains the guides?
- ◆ How old are the boats and other equipment? How often are they replaced?
- ◆ Can it provide references?
- ◆ Is it aware of the BSA-National Council's Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat programs; Will it enforce them on the outing?

Expect that an outfitter or guide service will require that each participant sign a release of liability before agreeing to rent equipment and/or provide guide or instructional services.

Arizona

- ◆ Back Bay Canoes & Kayaks 888-KAYAKEN/520-758-6242
1450 Newberry Drive, Bullhead City, AZ 86442
Canoeing/kayaking on the Colorado River. Boy Scout group rates.
- ◆ Bob's Canoe Trips-M & B Sales 982-855-4406
P.O. Box 421, Lake Havasu City, AZ 86405
Canoeing and rafting on the Lower Colorado River.
- ◆ Hualapai Indian Nation 888-255-9550
900 Route 66, Peach Springs, AZ 86434
Rafting on the Colorado River.

- ◆ Jerkwater Canoe and Kayaking Co. 800-421-7803/982-768-7753
P.O. Box 800, Topock, AZ 86436 www.jerkwater.com
Canoeing, kayaking, and rafting on the Lower Colorado River.
- ◆ Rivers and Oceans 800-473-4576/928-526-4575
12620 N. Copeland Lane, Flagstaff, AZ 86004 www.rivers-oceans.com
A travel service that provides reservation service for 16 outfitters of rafting trips on the Colorado River.

California

- ◆ ARTA River Trips 800-323-2782/209-962-7873
24000 Casa Loma Road, Groveland, CA 95321 www.arta.org
Rafting on several rivers in the Yosemite area, plus Oregon, Utah, and Idaho.
- ◆ Chuck Richard's Whitewater, Inc. 800-844-7238/760-379-4444
11316 Kernville Road, Box w.w.whitewater, Lake Isabella, CA 93240
Kayaking and rafting on the Kern River.
- ◆ Eagle Rafting 800-375-7395/760-376-3648
610 N. Brady, Ridgecrest, CA 93238 www.eaglerafting.com
Kayaking and rafting on the Kern River. Merit badge program available.
- ◆ Kern River Outfitters 800-323-4234/760-376-3370
P.O. Box 1207, Wofford Heights, CA 93285 www.kernrafting.com
Rafting on the Kern, Toulmne, and other California rivers. Group rates.
- ◆ Sierra South Mountain Sports 800-457-2082/760-376-3745
P.O. Box 1909, Kernville, CA 93238 www.sierrasouth.com
Kayaking and rafting on the Kern River.
- ◆ South Bay Rafters 800-655-raft/310-545-8572
P.O. Box 243, Hermosa Beach, CA 90254 www.rafters.com
Rafting on the American River, etc.

Utah

- ◆ Canyon Voyages 800-733-6007
211N. Main Street, Moab, UT 84532 www.canyonvoyages.com
Canoeing, kayaking, and rafting on the Green River, Utah.
- ◆ Holiday River Expeditions 800-624-6323/435-266-2087
544 E. 3900 South, Salt Lake City, UT 84107 www.bikeraft.com
Rafting on numerous rivers in the west.

This listing of businesses does not represent an endorsement by the BSA or the LAAC-HAT



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- Gullion, Laurie, Canoeing and Kayaking-Instructional Manual, American Canoe Assn., Globe Pequot Press, Old Saybrook, CT 1993.
- Jacobson, Cliff, The Basic Essentials of Canoeing, Globe Pequot Press, Old Saybrook, CT, 1999.

- , Canoeing and Camping-Beyond Basics, Globe Pequot Press, Old Saybrook, CT, 2000.
- Krauzer, Steven M., Kayaking-Whitewater and Touring Basics, Trailside, W. W. Norton, New York, NY, 1995.
- Kugash, Gene, Fishing Basics, Stackpole Books, Mechanicsburg, PA, 1993.
- Mead, Robert D., The Canoeist's Bible, Doubleday, New York, NY, 1989.
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- Solomon, Mark, Paddle To Perfection, Aquatics Unlimited, Boston, MA, 1994.
- Tejada-Flores, Lita, Whitewater, The Sierra Club Guide to Kayaking and Whitewater Boating, Sierra Club Books, San Francisco, CA, 1978.
- Urban, John T., The AMC Whitewater Handbook For Canoe and Kayak, Appalachian Mountain Club, Boston MA, 1976.
- Publications of the BSA-National Council, Irving, TX:
 - ◆ Fieldbook.
 - ◆ Guide To Safe Scouting.
 - ◆ Outdoor Skills Instruction-Aquatics.
 - ◆ Merit badge pamphlets: Canoeing; Fishing; Life Saving; Motorboating; Rowing; Small-Boat Sailing; Swimming; Waterskiing; Whitewater.

Where to go

- Beymer, Robert, Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, Vol. 1: The Western Region, Wilderness Press, Berkeley, CA, 1994.
- Cassidy, Jim and Calhoun, Fryar, California Whitewater, North Fork Press, Berkeley, CA.
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- Coale, John, Canoeing California Highlands, Changing Sky Publications, Cedar Ridge, CA, 1998.
- Dirksen, D.J., Recreation Lakes of California, Recreation Sales Publishing, Aptos, CA, 1996.
- Colorado River Recreation, Recreation Sales Publis Aptos, CA, 1994.
- Mohle, Robert, Adventure Kayaking:Trips from Big Sur to San Diego, Wilderness Press, Berkley, CA.
- Stienstra, Tom, California Boating and Water Sports, Foghorn Press, San Francisco, CA, 1996.
- Whitmer, Herschell and Scott, Lake Recreation in Southern California, Herschell Whitmer Associates, Long Beach, CA, 1996.
- Trek Aid 101, "Canoeing the Colorado River", San Diego-Imperial Council, San Diego, CA, 1996.
- Trek Aid 101A, "Old Salty Rat", San Diego-Imperial Council, San Diego, CA, 1992.

Other

- Craighead, Frank C., Jr. and John J., How To Survive On Land and Sea, U.S. Naval Institute, Annapolis, MD, 1984.
- Manhoff, David, Mosby's Outdoor Emergency Medical Guide, Beechwood Healthbooks, Inc, Wilmette, IL, 1996
- Community Water Safety, American Red Cross, Mosby-Year Book, St. Louis, MO, 1995.
- First Aid Fast, American Red Cross, Mosby-Year Book, St. Louis, MO, 1994.



Magazines and Newsletters

“American Whitewater”, American Whitewater Affiliation, P.O. Box 636, Margretville, NY 12455.
“Canoe and Kayak”, Primedia Enthusiast Publishing, P.O. Box 420235, Palm Coast, FL 32142.
“Canoe News”, United States Canoe Assn., P.O. Box 5742, Lafayette, IN 47904.
“River”, McLeod Publications, P.O. Box 1068, Bozeman MT 59715.
“River Runner”, P.O. Box 2047, Vista, CA 92083.
“River Rat News”, Jerkwater Canoe & Kayak Co., P.O. Box 800, Topock, AZ 86436. Reservations: 800-421-7803, Information: 928-768-7753. www.jerkwater.com



Instructional Videotapes

Cold, Wet, and Alive (hypothermia), American Canoe Assn., 7423 Alban Station Blvd., Suite B-226, Springfield, VA 22150; 25 min. (ACA-\$29.95).
Kayaking Basics, Vernal Productions, 1991; (REI-\$14.95).
Northern Tier/Pack and Paddle, Z, Inc., Middleton, WI, 608-831-8600. Available through the Charles L. Sommers High Adventure Base.
Paddle To Perfection, Aquatics Unlimited, Boston, MA; 58 min. (REI-\$24.95).
Path of the Paddle-Quiet Water, Northwood Press, Minocqua, WI; 54 min. (REI-\$14.95).
Path of the Paddle-White Water, Northwood Press, Minocqua, WI; 54 min. (REI-\$14.95).
Wilderness 911, Trailside, Rodale Press, Emmaus, PA; 40 min. (REI-\$19.95).

Availability and prices are subject to change.



Trade Associations

California Outdoor, Coloma, CA: 800-552-3625; www.caloutdoors.org
America Outdoors, Knoxville, TN: 865-558-3597; www.americaoutdoors.com
Arizona Rivers Outfitters Assn: 719-395-2112; www.azroa.com

Also, check the Internet for any current aquatic web site listings.





Mountain Manners For Aquatic Adventures

- ◆ Mountain manners are just as appropriate and important on the water as in the mountains.
- ◆ Enforce the Safe Swin Defense and Safety Afloat programs at all times.
- ◆ No wood fires - use backpack and camp stoves.
- ◆ Do not wash or discard anything in the water.
- ◆ Immediately release all fish that you do not intend to eat.
- ◆ Establish and aggressively enforce rules as to the what, when, and where of water play.
- ◆ Do not disturb the plants and animals.
- ◆ Perform body functions in private, well away away from the water.
- ◆ Put used toilet paper in ziplock-type bags; pack it out with trash.
- ◆ Pack out all trash, garbage, and uneaten food.
- ◆ Quiet - sound carries farther over water.