



## Pioneer Canoeing

### Features of the Pioneer Canoeing Trip

- Participants entering 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> grade. Minimum age: 15
- Group size: 4-5 participants and 1 leader
- 14 days canoeing in the Quetico Provincial Park
- On the water paddling most days for up to 12 hours
- Designated and undeveloped campsites
- Opportunities for day hikes
- Weather dependant challenges; high winds, waves, temperatures, etc.

Pioneer canoeists spend their fourteen days canoeing through the remote and rugged glacier-formed lakes of Quetico Provincial Park. Located in Northwestern Ontario, Canada, the Park provides plentiful opportunities to navigate undisturbed waterways, encounter abundant wildlife, and see pictographs. Following the routes of the French fur traders, Pioneer Quetico canoeists will paddle 8-20 miles per day and encounter a variety of portages and scenic vistas. Days will be long, but dinners cooked over a warm evening fire will be rewarding. Depending on the trip route, this trip can introduce river travel and some skills related to paddling moving water. Participants should come into this trip with prior trail experience and be ready to take on the challenge of headwinds and portages with a small group.

### What you will take away from the trip

The purpose of the trip is to develop group collaboration skills and leadership abilities including but not limited to humility, empathy, awareness, resourcefulness, resiliency, optimism, adaptability, and respect. Participants also gain exposure to wilderness skills including camping, hiking, and risk management, and explore the ecology of the area.

Each participant will practice giving and receiving feedback, reflecting on their leadership, camping skills, backpacking techniques, and working as a group to overcome challenges. Leaders will teach these skills before gradually turning the leadership of the trip over to the participants. Each day participants will take over more of the daily responsibility of the trip.

### Wilderness Skills

Wilderness skills involve camping, canoeing and Leave No Trace. These skills allow the participant to gain confidence and a level of comfort that make all of the above possible. Participants can expect to learn the following wilderness skills:

- Leave No Trace techniques
- Paddling strokes; forward, reverse, sweep, draw, pry, low and high braces, J-stroke
- Self and assisted rescues
- Portaging techniques
- Safe group travel and use of safety equipment

- Importance of equipment care
- Organization and packing of group and personal gear
- Map and compass reading including route selection
- Campsite selection and set up including tents and tarps
- Cooking meals independently including stove use and trail baking

### **Challenges of the trip**

Trips can expect rain, wind and waves coupled with cold weather. On the other hand, it can just as easily be 80 degrees and sunny where the biggest challenge is staying cool. Wind and weather can create conditions that have the power to adjust itineraries.

As the bear population is present in the Quetico, it is vital to practice safe bear camping principles. The groups will keep a meticulously clean cooking area and store food away from sleeping areas.

The Quetico has thousands of small lakes. This means that paddling throughout the day is often punctuated by portages, some quite arduous. With this in mind your pre trip fitness goals should focus on being able to sustain a moderate level of exertion for hours on end. Most active teenagers find themselves in great shape for the trip. Portages are tough on ankles, knees and backs while paddling and be difficult for those that have shoulder issues.

Depending on the weather, bugs have the potential to be particularly fearsome on this trip. It is recommended that you bring lightweight long sleeve shirts and pants and be able to comfortably paddle in buggy, hot conditions.

Camp Manito-wish YMCA works hard to ensure that each trip leader has extensive experience in wilderness travel, youth development and risk management. For the success of the group however, it is imperative that each participant has a positive attitude, makes conservative risk management decisions, works well with others who they do not get along with, and has a willingness to challenge themselves.

### **Time at Camp Manito-wish YMCA**

The time spent at Camp allows the group to begin to form and prepare for the time spent on trail. They will have two full days of structured time in preparation of departure on the third full day. While at Camp, participants will be staying as groups in Smith Leadership Cabins. These cabins are furnished with bunkrooms, bathrooms and a common area with a kitchen.

The first day is spent introducing community standards and getting to know groupmates. During the next two days, the group will cover basic first aid and emergency procedures, pack their food and equipment, spend time on the low challenge course and learn paddling skills on Boulder Lake. After these first three days, groups will drive to Quetico Provincial Park and begin their adventure!

## **Participant Expectations**

We expect each participant to best support their group and their own growth by maintaining the following:

- Embraces challenges
- Make conservative risk management decisions
- Work productively with everyone in the community
- Sets personal goals leading to personal growth as relates to self-awareness
- Develops communication skills by identifying what appropriate communication in relation to needs, effectively communicating their own needs to the entire group and listening and understanding each individual's needs
- Accepts feedback by applying and discussing suggestions from others and gives feedback to others
- Create a safe and inclusive atmosphere
- Take initiative in group tasks and self care

## **Risk Management**

Our participants are active players in risk management. Actively teaching and relying on participants for risk management minimizes injury and illness and we hope these skills translate to healthy decisions in areas outside of Camp. Objectives include:

- Recognize what group dynamics and how behavior within the group affects safety
- Understand the multitude of risks faced in the wilderness, be able to identify them and distinguish between healthy and unhealthy/unsafe risks
- Practice good personal hygiene, proper waste disposal and proper food handling situation
- Understand First Aid Kit contents and other safety equipment and be able to use basic supplies if necessary.