



Voyageur Sea Kayaking

Features of the Voyageur Sea Kayaking Trip

- Participants entering 9th or 10th grade. Minimum age: 14
- Group size: 4-5 participants and 1 leader
- 9 days sea kayaking in the Apostles Islands
- Paddling most days for up to 12 hours
- Designated campsites
- Weather dependant challenges; high winds, waves, temperatures, etc.

Voyageur sea kayakers venture north to the beautiful Apostle Islands National Lakeshore in Lake Superior. This island network, set in the deep blue waters of America's greatest lake, provides kayakers with amazing scenic vistas, rugged shorelines and fascinating sea caves to explore. An unforgettable trip filled with natural beauty, adventure and challenge.

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, sea kayaking, 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, sea kayaking 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
- Safe launching and landings in various conditions
- Basic paddling strokes; forward, reverse, sweep, draw, low and high braces
- Basic self and assisted rescues
- Coastal paddling; wind, waves, weather and open water crossings
- Safe group travel and use of safety equipment
- Organization and care 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

Lake Superior can be a frigid environment. 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 large waves that have the power to adjust itineraries.

As the bear population is high in the Apostles, it is vital to practice safe bear camping principles. The groups will utilize the bear boxes when available or hang their food. They will also keep a meticulously clean cooking area. The National Park Service closely monitors the islands and works to keep safety a priority.

Kayaking is a unique way to experience on-water travel. When paddling, the kayak rides low in the water and moves with each wave. This exhilarating experience can be hard on people who get motion or sea sick. Kayaking can also be strenuous on one's back muscles. These health risks are difficult to manage in the field and should be assessed before signing up for a kayaking adventure. 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.

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 the rustic Voyageur tent village. These are large canvas walled tents with bunkbeds tucked away in the woods near an outhouse and group fire ring.

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 get out on the water to go over basic paddle strokes and rescues. After these first three days, groups will drive to the Apostles and embark on 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 begins to give feedback.
- 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.