



Expeditionary Canuck Canoeing

Features of the Expeditionary Canuck Canoeing Trip

- Participants entering 12th. Minimum age: 17
- Group size: 4-6 participants and 2 leader
- 45 days canoeing in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut
- On the water paddling most days for up to 12 hours
- Mostly undeveloped campsites
- Extended river travel including whitewater
- Weather dependant challenges; high winds, waves, temperatures, etc.

The Expeditionary Canuck takes place in the tundra of Nunavut and Northwest Territories. This trip involves paddling big white water, portaging over large distances and paddling over large remote lakes. Past trips have seen musk ox, caribou, grizzly bears and many mosquitos. This 45 day adventure starts at Manito-wish where participants will practice whitewater canoeing, pack food and gear, and start forming their small group. The group will then travel north and get float planed into where their trip starts paddling. The expedition will end in Baker Lake, where the group will travel back to Manito-wish to close their experience.

This trip involves challenging paddling over windy lakes, long portages, and tricky whitewater paddling as well. They should feel comfortable with trail life and be ready for the many environmental and physical challenges that the tundra provides. Due to the remoteness of this expedition participants should consider health risks before signing up. Portaging can be very hard on backs, knees, and ankles. These issues often cannot be treated in the field. While in the field, participants will hone their paddling skills, learn to facilitate their trip group's activities, read and assess whitewater, and develop inter and intrapersonal skills.

The waters of these large arctic rivers are incredibly clear, and amazing to paddle. Although the lakes and whitewater can be tough, the waterways heading to the Hudson Bay are some of the most beautiful and rewarding.

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 practices. 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
- Whitewater paddling and safety 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

Expeditionary Canuck trip groups paddle routes that involve long stretches of river travel punctuated by huge lakes and arduous portages around deep canyons. Participants should be strong swimmers, ready to learn whitewater techniques, and willing to embrace the challenges of tundra travel.

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 grizzly bear population is present in the tundra, 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.

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 three full days of structured time in preparation of departure on the fourth 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 three days, the group will cover basic first aid and emergency procedures, pack their food and equipment, spend time on the low challenge course, learn paddling skills on Boulder Lake and whitewater skills on a nearby river. After these first days, groups will drive north and fly into the tundra by float plane either from Points North or Yellowknife!

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.