



## Boundary Waters Canoe Expedition Teen (Parent) Information

Welcome to Chicago Voyagers' Boundary Waters wilderness canoe program. We are looking forward to sharing some fun and helping you grow in some areas, including working together, being responsible and achieving more than you thought. These are things you can "take home" with you to be a better person. This document contains things which we thought would be helpful for you to know about the program.

### What is it like?

We will canoe the lakes of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. The BWCA is a national treasure. It is the largest wilderness (1 million acres) in the central US. The area is home to many (friendly!) animals and the woodlands include birch, spruce and pine trees. This is the Northwoods! Camping will be on the lake shores. This is a great opportunity for building teamwork and persistence skills while we paddle each day.

Each morning we pack up and travel to another camp site. All sites have a pit toilet.

Paddling for 6-12 miles and portaging (carrying gear) is hard work and is tiring, but it is really rewarding to paddle into camp with everything you need to live in your canoe. You will set goals, journal and talk each day about what you are learning. You will bond with your new friends over the week and you may have an opportunity to be leader for the day. This is a great program to really get away from city life and find out who you are.

### What about safety?

This is a remote wilderness experience. We will teach you lessons to live in the wilderness. It would take some time to get to a hospital, so everyone's safety will be a priority in all decisions we make. We will have a satellite phone to call for help in an emergency. **It is very important that you follow safety instructions.**

### How do I know if this is right for me?

If you answer these questions yes, then please consider joining this program:

1. Can I keep a good attitude, even if it rains or there are bugs?
2. Can I do without a shower for 5 days?
3. Can I follow the rules and directions of the adults?
4. Do I want to go?
5. Am I free of recent convictions for violent behavior and sexual abuse/assault?
6. If I have mental health struggles, have I been stable, including my meds, for six months?
7. Am I physically fit? You will need to paddle a canoe for several hours at a time and portage (carry) a heavy 60 pound pack or canoe for short distances.
8. Am I looking for a fun time and opportunities to grow as a person?

If you are unsure about any of these, talk to your agency leader.



**How about transportation?**

The drive is about 10 hours. Everyone, your agency leader, your friends and our leaders, will drive together in a van.

**What is the agenda?**

- Day 1. Travel - after meeting up, we drive to our first night's lodging (a front country camp) outside Ely, MN. We will make dinner and have a campfire discussion before heading to bed.
- Day 2. Depart for wilderness.
  - a. Up early – breakfast & pack up
  - b. Drive to trailhead/BWCA (~45 minutes)
  - c. We will head into the wilderness this day, paddling a full day.
  - d. Evening: set-up camp, journal, activity, dinner, evening discussion
- Day 3. This will be a full day of paddling, with breaks for snacks, water and lunch. We will try to camp by late afternoon.
- Day 4. A full day of paddling, traveling to a new camp site.
- Day 5. Last full day on the water – we travel back towards our entry point.
- Day 6. Up early to paddle out. We drive back to base camp and enjoy a celebration meal and trip awards.
- Day 7. Up early for the long drive back to Chicago.

**What do we do?**

- 1. Paddle a canoe
- 2. Talk about our lives
- 3. Hang out in camp
- 4. Sleep in tents
- 5. Build friendships
- 6. Viewing stars – including the Milky Way
- 7. Look for wildlife
- 8. Lead the group
- 9. Learn a lot, like how to navigate with a compass and cook outdoors.

**Can I bring my cell phone?**

Our program is about doing something different and giving you a break from your regular life so you can focus on your personal growth. We ask you to leave your cell phone behind – it won't work in the wilderness.

**What about weather?**

We canoe in all weather and will provide rain jackets/pants and other warm clothing. We can stay safe in all sort of weather and will take refuge from storms if needed.

**What about wildlife?**

The animals aren't interested in people, so they typically stay away. We just need to protect our food as it would make a good meal for them.



### What do we need to bring?

Everyone should bring:

- The **CV release-[English/Spanish](#)** and **CV Participant Medical Form ([English/Spanish](#))** if you haven't given us one before this year
- Pair of sandals with heel strap (we have a pair you can borrow, just let us know).
- 1 pair wool or non-cotton socks (we can give you a pair if you need one)
- 1-2 pairs athletic shorts (like basketball or soccer shorts)
- 1 swimsuit
- 1-3 pairs underwear
- 1-2 spandex or nylon sports bras (girls)
- 1-2 T-shirts (nylon dries faster than cotton)
- 1 visor/baseball cap
- 1 bandana
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen
- Bug spray – best: Picaradin 20% (Sawyer Fisherman's or Natrapel). Also good: Repel Lemon Eucalyptus 30%. 15% to 25% DEET (Repel family, Deep Wood Off) works, but can damage our tents and rain gear.
- Personal care items
  - Small toothpaste/toothbrush
  - Deodorant
  - Feminine hygiene products (for girls, even if you think you won't need it)
  - Chap stick or other lip protection
  - Prescription medications, if needed, in a container with pharmacy label
  - Extra inhaler if you use one
  - Extra pair of glasses if you need them
  - Strap to keep your glasses on your head
- Clean change of clothes for the ride home (to be left in the van)
- Shower items (small towel, shampoo, soap) (to be left in the van)
- Luxury item such as camp shoes, comb or camera
- Meals on the road: ask your agency leader how these will be handled.

### What does Chicago Voyagers supply?

Chicago Voyagers will supply these items – let us know if you have any of these items you can bring:

- sleeping bag and sleeping pad
- tent to share
- fleece jacket
- waterproof jacket and pants
- Long underwear top and bottom
- Warm hat
- 1 bowl, cup, & spoon
- 1 water bottle
- Group equipment such as stoves and pots.
- Food for the backcountry and celebration meal.

Please ask your agency leader any questions which you still have. We hope you decide to join us for this great adventure.