



Voyageur Trek

Leaders' Guide - Blue Ridge Scout Reservation



Ready for a challenge?

For nearly 300 years, the French fur trade was dominated by two groups of men: the Coureurs de bois or “wood-runners” and the Voyageurs or “travelers.” While the Coureurs de bois were men who learned Indian ways and trails to assist with their fur trade, the Voyageurs were experts in knowledge of waterways, shooting the rapids, and portaging heavy loads. The Voyageur, who was slurred as a “pork eater” by the Coureur de bois, was a vital part of the highly profitable fur trade of the New World. Living on salt pork and dried peas, the Voyageur could paddle all day, carry double portage, and sing a rollicking French song all the while.

Last Updated: January 16, 2019

Program Goals

- To provide a challenging high adventure opportunity for those Scouts who are at least 13 years old and have completed the 8th grade.
- Demonstrate a marked improvement in canoeing abilities.
- Gain an appreciation of nature’s most powerful force—water.
- Learn and practice the principles of Leave No Trace camping.
- Discover what life must have been like for the 18th century Voyageurs.
- Have a blast!

Before Camp

Prepare for Your Trek

- Hone your canoeing skills by practicing on flat water and moving water before arriving at camp.
- Practice lighting and using a camp stove.
- Knowing how to pack for a trip is truly the mark of an experienced camper. Begin gathering your gear at least one week prior to your trek and consider having a “shakedown” with a knowledgeable person from your unit. The attached list details our recommendations for personal and crew gear for the trek. As you pack, your goal should be to bring the minimum amount of equipment necessary to be safe and comfortable regardless of weather or unexpected swims. Remember that you will have to portage your gear at several places!

What We Provide

- Canoeing Gear – canoe, life vests, paddles, and helmets
- Safety Equipment – first aid kit, z-drag kit, throw bags
- Trowel and Toilet Paper
- Cooking Gear – food, polar pure, water dromedary, cooking pots, backpacking stoves. We will provide you with 3 meals per day and a small snack for the river. If you have any special dietary needs, please complete the Special Needs form in the Reservation Guide and submit in advance of your arrival.

Administration

- Complete and bring the BSA National Medical Form (Parts A, B, and C)
- Remember to bring proof of Accident and Sickness Insurance (for out-of-council units)
- Print and bring two copies of your completed Voyageur Roster (page 5).
- Consult the **Reservation Guide** for other administrative details, forms, and duties.



All camps and programs offered at the Blue Ridge Scout Reservation have been nationally accredited through the Boy Scouts of America’s National Camp Accreditation Program.

Schedule

Arrival

Voyageur Trek participants should arrive at Camp Powhatan between 1:00 and 2:30 p.m. to allow ample time to complete medical recheck and the swim check before dinner. Voyageur participants should meet at the gazebo near the Trading Post at 4 p.m. on Sunday. Plan on backpacking your gear into the camp. Vehicles should be parked in the Hunter's Parking Lot for "dead" storage for the week. Crews will spend all nights (Sunday through Friday) under their trail shelters.

Sunday

After registering with the Camp Director, proceed to medical check and then swim checks with your gear. At 4 p.m. be at the Camp Powhatan Gazebo to meet your staff (if you are travelling from another camp, please make sure you will arrive at Powhatan on time). Here, you will meet with one of the Voyageur staff who will guide you through the rest of your day. Plan on setting up your tent for the night and wearing your Class A uniform to dinner. After a shakedown, there will be an opportunity to return excess gear to your vehicle. The night will conclude with a campfire in Hemlock Grove.

Monday - Thursday

Monday - Thursday Your group will spend Monday through Thursday canoeing the New River. While on the river, a support vehicle will shadow the trek moving gear to each day's camping area. Participants will only carry personal items such as water, food, and rain gear on the river—we do recommend a small dry bag for this purpose. Due to summer water levels and dam construction there are some discontinuities in the voyage that require both man and vehicle-assisted portages so be prepared to work hard both on and off the river. After a quick trip down the river on Thursday, your group will be transported to West Virginia where you will spend the night. Bring a little spending money as the group will stop somewhere along the interstate.

Friday

After rafting the New River Gorge, the group will return to Camp Powhatan late in the evening, but in time for the closing campfire.

Opportunities and Advancement

- Participants will complete requirements for the Canoeing and Whitewater Merit Badges as they learn to read the river, shoot the rapids, and calmly handle any emergencies the river might present. Please let staff know if you wish to earn these merit badges. Please note that First Aid Merit Badge is a prerequisite for the Whitewater Merit Badge.
- In keeping with the Voyageur theme, participants will have the opportunity to make a period-appropriate leather project satisfying many of the requirements for the Leatherworking Merit Badge.
- During the trek, there will be ample time for Scouts and Scouters to cast their lines and angle for one of the many species of fish that abound in the New River. Please see the requirements for fishing licenses on the following page.
- Depending on group interest and availability of service projects, there will be an opportunity to earn the 50 Miler Award during the trek.

Equipment List

Storage

- (1) Small, inexpensive dry bag with roll-down clip closures to protect your lunch and personal gear while on the river.
- (1) Backpack or duffel bag to store gear in the support vehicle.

Clothing

- (1) Swim suit
- (1) Pair of dry shorts (no jeans)
- (2) T-shirts (to wear around camp, can be cotton)
- (1) Wicking shirt to wear on river (poly pro, etc)
- (1) Fleece or wool jacket or vest
- (1) Rain jacket and rain pants (no ponchos!)
- (3) Pairs of socks (wool or wicking synthetic)
- (3) Pairs of underwear
- (1) Wide-brimmed hat
- (1) Pair of sturdy river shoes. We recommend old tennis shoes or Teva/Chaco-style sandals.
- (1) Pair of shoes to wear around camp.

Daytime temperatures range from 70-100° F
Evening temperature range from 50-75° F

Eating Utensils

- (1) Plastic bowl
- (1) Spoon
- (1) Plastic cup
- (2) Water bottles with covered mouthpieces, at least 32 oz. each

Optional Gear

- (1) Fishing license: A 5-day VA Permit (www.dgif.virginia.gov/licenses) is needed before arriving at camp. A permit is required for all VA Residents 16 and older and all non-residents 12 and older if you want to fish.
- (1) Fishing equipment: a small pocket-sized tackle box is more than adequate.
- (1) Knee pads
- (1) Pair of gloves for paddling
- (1) Small binoculars
- (1) Personal first aid kit

Personal Items

- (1) Bandana
- (1) Small towel no longer than 2' x 4'
- (1) Pocketknife
- (1) Lip balm
- (1) Toothbrush and toothpaste
- (1) Pair of sunglasses – very important, consider bringing two cheap pairs
- (1) Whistle
- (1) Sleeping Bag – bags should be compact and rated for around +30 degrees. Pack the bag and extra clothing in a compression bag. Place all this in a heavy weight plastic bag.
- (1) Sleeping Pad – closed cell or waterproof
- (1) Ziploc bags and ditty bags for gear
- (1) Small flashlight or headlamp
- (2) Carabiners to clip water bottle in canoe
- (1) Backpacking tent(s) – hammocks are not recommended

Sharable "Crew" Items

Consider bringing only one of each per group.

- (1) Bottle of Insect Repellent
- (1) Bottle of sunscreen (SPF 50 or higher)
- (1) Baby powder
- (1) Box of waterproof matches
- (1) Deck of cards or small game
- (1) Camera – small & waterproof is recommended
- (1) Pack of wet wipes
- (1) Trowel (for cat holes)

For more information on the Voyageurs, read:

The Voyageur's Highway by Grace Lee Nute
The Voyageur by Grace Lee Nute

Voyageur

Shirt Order Form

Those interested may purchase a shirt like those worn by the voyageurs. Though these shirts are not required, they do offer excellent sun protection. Please place your order as soon as possible as the shirts are custom-made and require time to assemble. This form and payment must be received at the address listed above by April 26th, 2019.

Dates attending camp: _____ Unit Number: _____
Participant Name: _____ Unit Type: _____
Email: _____ Council: _____
Address: _____ Participant Weight (lbs): _____
City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____ Participant Height: _____
Preferred Phone Number: _____ Needed to ensure correct size.

Cost is \$25 per shirt

Return by April 26th, 2019 to:

Camp Registrar
Blue Ridge Mountains Council, BSA
2131 Valley View Blvd., NW
Roanoke, VA 24012

Or via email to:
shirleyn@bsa-brmc.org

Card Number: _____

Name on Card: _____

MasterCard

VISA

Discover

American Express

Exp. Date: _____

Code: _____

Amount: _____

Check # _____ All checks can be made to BSA-BRMC.

Dates attending camp: _____ Unit Number: _____
Participant Name: _____ Unit Type: _____
Email: _____ Council: _____
Address: _____ Participant Weight (lbs): _____
City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____ Participant Height: _____
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Name on Card: _____

MasterCard

VISA

Discover

American Express

Exp. Date: _____

Code: _____

Amount: _____

Check # _____ All checks can be made to BSA-BRMC.

Voyageur Roster

Dates attending camp: _____ Unit Type: _____ Unit Number: _____

	Name of Participant	Date of Birth	Address	Phone Number
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