



INFORMATION ON

The Charles L. Sommers Wilderness Canoe Base

REGION TEN BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA
238 Minnesota Building
St. Paul, Minnesota

CHARLES L. SOMMERS WILDERNESS CANOE BASE

Sponsored by: Region Ten, B.S.A.

SPECIAL INFORMATION

It is designed to help you in promotion for preparation toward, and participation in, the program at the Charles L. Sommers Wilderness Canoe Base located in Northern Minnesota, approximately 6 miles from the Canadian border in the Superior National Forest, 22 miles northeast of Ely, Minnesota.

Please make certain that this information is placed in the hands of the staff member responsible for coordinating your trip to the Charles L. Sommers Wilderness Canoe Base.

I GENERAL INFORMATION

- A. Cost--ten day expedition is \$475.00 per crew of ten or less, plus one adult advisor who is a guest of the Canoe Base....Additional Explorers or Leaders--\$47.50 each....Canadian fishing license included in fee for all boys....Adults, all 21 years of age and older must purchase their own from Canadian Ranger.
- B. Registration--\$50.00 per crew reservation fee necessary to definitely hold space and date...Not refundable if cancelled after April 1....Reservations open at anytime if space available.... Only 12 crews per starting date will be accepted.
- C. Schedule of fee payments--\$50.00 registration fee upon application--\$200.00 due April 1, and \$225.00 due 4 weeks before arrival at Base.....\$47.50 for each additional crew member above a total of 11, payable at the Canoe Base upon arrival.
- D. Method of registration--Send reservation fee and attached application through your local council.....When sending additional fees to apply to specific crews, be certain to give crew number....The crew number indicates, month, date and crew - (Example 711A - July 11, Crew A.)
- E. Promotional brochures are sent to each registered crew free of charge...Additional small quantities available on special requests.. Wilderness Voyageurs booklet for each Explorer, 4 Wilderness Cookery booklets, and Minnesota map are included in the Advisor's Kit (after \$200.00 paid in addition to the \$50.00 registration fee) sent out several weeks before a crew is to arrive at the Canoe Base..... Additional copies available through the trading post at the Canoe Base or the Regional Office.

II. WHO CAN COME

Any registered Scout or Explorer who has reached his fourteenth (14) birthday.....Crews may come as chartered units under their regular leadership--as provisional crews under leadership selected by the council--as a combination of both types, traveling in one bus to pool transportation.

Upon arrival at the Charles L. Sommers Wilderness Canoe Base, each crew embarks on a separate canoeing and portaging trip into the wilderness.. No minimum size of crew....Maximum number is usually only one to two extra per crew...Every crew, regardless of size, must have an adult leader (advisor) 21 years of age or older.

NOTE: This is a very rugged experience.....Boys who are not physically or mentally equipped to take good care of themselves in the wilderness under these conditions should not be included in these crews.

III. COMMUNICATIONS

Mailing address for crew members is: Scout/or Explorer _____
Crew No. _____ c/o Charles L. Sommers Wilderness Canoe Base, Box 509,
Ely, Minnesota.

Eighteen hours after arrival at the Canoe Base, until eighteen hours before departure for home, all crew members are out of reach in the wilderness and will NOT receive mail, telegrams or messages....All mail and telegrams are kept at the Canoe Base until the crews return from the trails.

The Charles L. Sommers Wilderness Canoe Base maintains a radio-phone for emergency use only.....Telegrams are sent to Ely, and delivered daily at the Canoe Base with the mail picked up by the truck driver.

IV. WHAT THE CHARLES L. SOMMERS WILDERNESS CANOE BASE IS

The Charles L. Sommers Wilderness Canoe Base is very rugged canoeing and camping experience for boys or men....Good physical condition is a must.....Canoeing and portaging every day....Weather from hard rain to beautiful sunshine, from high wind to the calm deep reflections..... Temperature from high forties to eighties in the early and late season.. Crews do all their own cooking, with advice and help of the guide, except the first two, and the last two meals while in the Base....Tentage, food, cooking utensils, individual equipment and canoes are all carried on their backs over the portages, and paddled in the canoes.....This all adds up to a real test of personal endurance, courage and self reliance.

The Charles L. Sommers Wilderness Canoe Base is located in the world's greatest canoe country.....Hundreds of beautiful lakes to explore-wild and rugged terrain-an efficient business operation-owned and operated by the Boy Scouts of America, Region Ten.....Dedicated to Scouting's objectives of character building, citizenship training and physical fitness....The Canoe Base reflects the adventure of old - the Indian, French Voyager and Explorer of this Wonderous Northland Canoe Country.

V. LEADERSHIP

All leadership should be in good physical condition while 21 years is the minimum age requirement there is no maximum....Age is not always a determining factor.....Good physical examination a must.....Men should be informed about type of experience and what to expect from the physical standpoint.....It is rough and rugged wilderness.

Leaders' attitude most important....Constant gripers spoil trip for entire crew....Nothing pleases him, so crew is unhappy....Advise Leaders to watch personal conduct....Keep clean....Use proper language....Lead, not drive, boys....Maintain congenial atmosphere with Canoe Base staff, and other crews on the trail, on the way to, and returning from the Base, and home.

Experience should be in handling boys....Wide background in canoeing and camping not entirely necessary....We have guides who will aid in these points....Special training and help in these skills will be given by the guide after crew arrives at Canoe Base.

The Charles L. Sommers Wilderness Canoe Base is an excellent place to develop boy leaders...Let them run the crew with the advice and help of the adult leadership.

VI. FAMILY AND "IN BASE" FACILITIES

We do not have any facilities available for wives, families or extra "transportation men" of crews attending the Canoe Base trails...Please explain this to your men so they will not bring them expecting facilities and find none after arrival here...There are many camping areas, resorts, and motels within twenty miles of the base....This includes "overnight" accommodations also.

VII. ADVISOR'S KIT OF INFORMATION

Upon receipt of first-half fee payment, \$200.00 due April 1, an Advisor's Kit will be mailed to the council office....PLEASE SEE THAT THIS IS PLACED IN THE HANDS OF THE ADVISOR, WHO WILL BRING THE CREW TO THE CANOE BASE, AS SOON AS POSSIBLE....Many men say that they never receive them, yet it is mailed from here to the council office....It is an aid to the crew attending the Canoe Base, not promotional material...The kit includes a Wilderness Voyageurs booklet for each Explorer, 4 Cook books, a leader's Bourgeois' book, maps of canoeing country and Minnesota...Directions to the Canoe Base from Ely, Minnesota....Remind groups to pay "half fee" promptly, so we can mail this kit.

VIII. TOUR PERMIT

This is National policy....No units should travel without it....Consult "Tours and Moving Camps" book....Allow three weeks time to be processed.

IX. INSURANCE

The Charles L. Sommers Wilderness Canoe Base will provide Accident and Sickness Insurance on each individual while on the trails....Information on this coverage may be obtained by writing to Region Ten.

X. PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

A - Required:

plate, spoon, cup
hat or cap
sleeping bag (12" x 18" rolled)
pocket or sheath knife
raincoat or rain jacket
heavy sweater or a jacket
long pants
long sleeve shirt
belt
work boots or shoes
boot socks
towel, soap, comb, toothbrush
handkerchief
underwear

B - Optional:

mosquito dope
flashlight - 1 for each 3 campers
chap stick
camera, film - in waterproof bag
ditty bags
sun glasses
tackle
fishing rod
moccasins or tennis shoes
swim trunks
extra handkerchief
extra pair socks
t-shirt
1 extra underwear

For your trip from home to Canoe Base and return, you will need some things in addition including:

Explorer or Scout uniform or traveling.
Changes of underwear, socks, handkerchiefs, etc.
Extra towel.

Shoes or boots should be worn several times before arrival to break them in.....Remember, your boots will get wet every day.

Crews should travel to and from the Base in full uniform...Keeping clean at all times, on the road or on the trails....Morale and program participation of crews is better with uniformed crews.....Uniform should be required....Follow through must be done on unit or council level.....
SEND YOUR CREWS IN UNIFORM.

XI. EQUIPMENT FURNISHED

The Charles L. Sommers Wilderness Canoe Base furnishes all the necessary equipment needed by the crew on the trails.

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| all food | tents | shovel |
| canoes | tarpaulin | canvas bucket |
| paddles | cook kit | coil of rope |
| life jackets | reflector oven | side cutting pliers |
| Duluth packs (personal packs) | ground cloths | file |
| box packs (food packs) | saw | sharpening stone |

Each crew is responsible for loss, breakage, or excessive wear...Each crew provides its own FIRST AID KIT, a compass for each three Explorers.. Detailed map for each three Explorers from trading post.

XII ARRIVAL TIME

The crews are to arrive at the Canoe Base between 2:00 and 2:30 p.m., on the afternoon of the scheduled date....DO NOT PLAN TO ARRIVE IN THE MORNING OR AFTER DARK....Our facilities are not set up to take care of odd time arrival crews....CREWS SHOULD CHECK IN ON DAY EXPECTED..... Earlier arrivals cannot be taken care of....Lack of facilities will make it necessary for us to send crews on some where to make arrangements for the night if they arrive a day early....THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT...PLEASE INFORM THOSE PLANNING THE TRIP....Each crew has a Canoe Base number.... (Example crew number-711A) is July (7) 11-Crew A....So arrival date is crew number.....803C - August 3-Crew C.

Full time expedition is 10 days....29 meals, 10 nights....Fees cover time from "check in" afternoon, supper that evening, and breakfast at the base.. The next 25 meals are on the trail....Returning to the base in the afternoon of the ninth day on the trail....Supper that night and early breakfast the next morning....This actually means the crews are at the Charles L. Sommers Wilderness Canoe Base for part of eleven days....Sorry, no refund if the crew does not stay full time.

XIII. DEPARTURE TIME

Regular departure time is after cafeteria breakfast, served between 5:30 and 7:30 a.m., on the eleventh day, allowing an early start for daylight travel....National policy suggests no night travel....The last night at the base is spent at a fun campfire, a good nights rest and on the way home the next morning....Box lunches are not available.

XIV. TRANSPORTATION

If coming by chartered bus, make your destination the Charles L. Sommers Wilderness Canoe Base. Regular bus - Ely, Minnesota....Bus transportation for crews from Ely to Base and return can be arranged per person including all leaders....Make arrangements with Base for local bus transportation....Bus arrival in Ely, is late evening, so arrange to eat in Ely, before coming to Base....Private cars and buses may be parked at the Canoe Base parking lot....Individual transportation from base not available....Bus departure is early morning except Sundays.

XV. PROGRAM

Advisors check in at the office where they meet their wilderness guide for their crew, check registration and receive additional information... The crew and advisor, with the guide's help plan the itinerary...Prepare papers for entering Canada, plan menu, draw and pack food, pack personal gear and receive canoeing orientation before leaving on the trail sometime the next morning....There is a joint campfire put on by the guides and staff for further information and instruction on the first evening... The next nine days are spent in the wonderful Quetico-Superior Wilderness canoeing, fishing, swimming, making camps and cooking in a true wilderness not accessible any other way....Returning to the base in the afternoon of the ninth day on the trail....Clean up Sauna - (Finnish Steam Bath)....Back into uniform and a big turkey dinner with all the trimmin's and a fun campfire with the Charles L. Sommers Wilderness Canoe Base emblem presented to each crew member in the crew....Then a good night's sleep before the homeward bound journey the next morning after the cafeteria breakfast.

XVI. RELIGIOUS PROGRAM

Each crew is furnished with a special booklet titled "A Scout is Reverent" for use on the trails.....The crews conduct their own Scout service on the trail....Catholic crews secure special dispensation or arrange to attend Mass in Ely....Friday dietary regulations may be observed while on the trail....Many crews are accompanied by their own clergy while on the trails....Catholic crews may make their own arrangements to attend Sunday Mass in Ely....Ely is 22 miles from the Canoe Base.

XVII. AWARDS

Individual Awards include:

The Charles L. Sommers Wilderness Canoe Base emblem is presented at closing campfire, to every crew member who completed this ten day trip..... Not available for "outsiders" who travel the area.

Merit Badges.....Under supervision of group's own leadership....Our guides function as specialists, not counsellors, for Merit Badges.

Certificates indicating completion of some requirements available upon request.....Should be reviewed by qualified counsellor in own council.

Group Award:

Fifty-Miler.....For all crews...provisional crews can qualify....Most chartered crews can easily qualify for this award after discussing it with their guide before going on the trails.

XVIII. MEDICAL CARE

Arrangements have been made with the two hospitals in Ely and Winton... Doctors in Ely are available on call....Every one must have medical inspection before arrival at the Canoe Base....Regular Boy Scouts of America medical examination blanks to be used....Every member of the crew must bring the medical forms furnished them by council....Boys' parents will be notified by Base Director or Assistant, of any emergencies as soon as correct situation is known.

XIX. PHYSICAL FITNESS

Each member should be in good physical condition for this rugged experience....Emphasis should be placed upon crews staying clean while on the trail....Leadership sets the pace - the boys will generally do the same... Make this part of the pre-training....Instruct crews to plan a schedule that will allow time for correct personal fitness.

XX. STAFF

About 100 young men serve as guides and base staff....Must be at least 18 years, or older, for regular full season positions....("Swampers" a guide-in-training for next season, must be at least 17 years of age)... Regular salaries from \$150.00 and up per month depending on age, experience, tenure and type of assignment....No charge for board and room.... Staff members wear Explorer uniforms which they furnish....Staff must furnish own bedding....Transportation to and from Canoe Base responsibility of individuals....Records and reference investigated carefully.... Applicants apply individually with approval of your local council executive....We follow through when applications are received.

XXI. PRE-CANOE BASE TRAINING

Crews who take preparatory canoe trips or pre-training program including camping and cooking have a much better expedition than others...Extra time doing individual physical conditioning in advance will also help make the expedition a truly great - experience.

CJH/dw
9/23/64

Photo Credit: David Sitzler