

RIVER TRIP FAQ (2024)

Who is leading the trip?

Rob Hoell is leading this trip. Rob is our Site and Facilities director, a certified Red Cross Lifeguard, also certified in First Aid and CPR. He has been camping and kayaking for over 25 years, as well as having led rustic camping experiences and river trips at other camps in the U.S. He is excited to lead Skyline's third trip down the Pere Marquette river.

Why the Pere Marquette River?

This river runs through the beautiful Manistee National Forest and is known for its clear water, moderately fast current, trout, steelhead and salmon. It offers campers multiple landings on the river to swim, rest and recreate as well as enough challenge to feel accomplished at the end of the day. The Pere Marquette River is a great canoeing river for the beginner to intermediate paddler.

How deep and how wide is the river?

The average depth of the Pere Marquette River is between two and four feet, with deeper holes on the bends. The average width is between thirty and forty feet.

Transportation?

We will take a van from Almont to Baldwin, Michigan and then back again. Rob Hoell will be driving.

Where will you stay overnight?

On Sunday and Thursday nights, we will lodge in cabins at Skyline. Along the Pere Marquette River we will set up camp at group sites in rustic riverside campgrounds and also wilderness (aka "dispersed") camping in the Huron-Manistee national forest. Rustic means pit toilets that are pretty well maintained by the rangers. There may be a site we choose that requires wilderness toileting. Some sites have water, but we will filter all water, whether from the river or faucets.

What kind of lodging is provided?

While on the trip, campers and staff will stay in hammock-tents and/or tents. While at Skyline, campers and staff will stay in cabins.

What about their gear? Who hauls it?

Once we unload our bags from the van, each camper will be responsible for their gear. They will transport the bags from campsite to campsite in the canoes they row. The group as a whole will share responsibility for communal gear and food. When we arrive at a new site, campers will haul the gear to the campsite, set it up, take it down, etc. Each camper will be issued one wet bag that is large enough to protect their personal gear in case of a canoe tip.

What will the campers eat for meals?

For breakfast, we will have a few packets of hearty instant oatmeal, along with dried fruit and nuts. For lunch, we will have peanut butter, tortillas, meat sticks, cheese, energy bars, and other trail snacks. For dinner, we will have simple freeze-dried meals from Mountain House and Backpackers Pantry.

How will health and safety be ensured on the trip?

- Water: We will purify and drink a lot of water. Our water will come from the Pere Marquette River and be filtered with a Lifestraw Mission filter.
- Food Safety: Our staff is trained in food safety, proper dishwashing and sanitizing practices, and will train the campers as well. We will wash/sanitize our hands before and after using the communal stoves and water filter.
- Stretching and Rest: We will hike only as much as it is safe for our team, and rest when it is needed.
- Sun Protection: Sunscreen will be applied early and reapplied often.
- Bugs: It can be buggy in the evenings. Campers will be encouraged to wear bug repellent. Campers will also be reminded to check for ticks while they are getting ready for bed.
- Arrangements have been made with the health care supervisor to have health care screenings prior to departure and upon returning for all campers on the trip. The staff will obtain copies of health history and signed permission-to-treat cards from the health care supervisor.
- Staff is certified in the appropriate level of First Aid/CPR. Staff will carry a first aid kit, and have cell phones in order to obtain emergency assistance. Health Care will be provided in accordance with our Standing Orders which are reviewed by a healthcare professional each year.
- Camper Supervision / Ratio: ACA Accreditation Standards recommends trips of any length having a minimum of two (2) staff members, with at least one of them being an adult. This trip will have two (2) Skyline staff members, both being adults. The ratio of this trip will be 2:10. Staff are trained in camper supervision, and participants will go over our supervision policy during their trip orientation.

How many hours will the campers paddle each day?

3-5 hours

How much experience do campers need to have with canoeing?

Campers must be willing and able to spend 3-5 hours rowing in the sun each day. A certain degree of experience in canoes/kayaks will be helpful, but is not necessary. Physical strength, endurance, flexibility, good communication skills and an open & willing attitude are all required.

Emergency Access Numbers / Communication Plan?

We will preserve battery life by having Rob's cell phone mostly off as there is no electricity available. If we need to be reached in an emergency, please call our Executive Director at 248-830-5655, who will get in touch with Rob. We will check messages when we have service.

What to pack:

See Packing List on Skyline's Website