

RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH WILDERNESS TRAVEL

You are preparing for a trip into a remote wilderness area. There are certain inherent known risks and perils, as well as unknown and unanticipated risks, associated with wilderness canoeing and camping trips which could possibly endanger the health and lives of the members of your party. Your safety is important to us. We want you to be aware of the possibility of the following known dangers:

DROWNING: Wear your life jackets at all times while on the water. We repeat: Wear your life jackets at all times while on the water!

STAY OUT OF MOVING WATER SITUATIONS: Use all of the portages all of the time!

LIGHTNING: Get off of the water! Stay away from tall trees (especially red or white pines) as well as cliff faces! Never hold a fishing rod during a lightning storm!

HIGH WIND: Get off of the water! Avoid standing or setting up a tent under dead limbs or next to dead trees!

DOMESTIC FIRE: Be careful with wood fires. Do not stand too close; remember that synthetic cloth is very flammable. Drown wood fires dead out ... cold! Fuel your stoves before lighting ... never fuel a hot stove. Move away from any spilled fuel. Make sure fuel bottles are tightly capped and keep them away from flames. Give stoves time to cool before touching or packing. Keep in constant attendance of all fires (wood or stoves). While cooking, make sure that fire grates are level and sturdy. Stoves should be level and not wobble. Spilled pots of boiling water, or pans of hot grease, can cause severe burns.

WILDFIRE: If you accidentally start a brush fire, try to put it out ... but your safety should be the first consideration. If you cannot extinguish the fire quickly, get away. Contact other campers, the US Forest Service, county sheriff, and/or North Country Canoe Outfitters as soon as possible. If you smell smoke, familiarize yourself with alternate travel routes. Note the wind direction. Do not go into dead-end routes (lakes with only one way in and out). Do not try to put out a forest fire!

FALLING OBJECTS: In camp, be aware of trees & branches that are overhead. Do not paddle within the drop zone of a cliff face. Never throw rocks or other objects from cliffs.

TRIP HAZARDS: Wilderness terrain is uneven. Never run in camp or on a portage. Watch for exposed rocks and tree roots, both in camp and on portages. Never step on exposed tree roots if they are wet ... they become VERY slippery.

WILDLIFE & PLANTS: Give all wildlife plenty of room; do not block their escape routes. Never approach the young of any specie (especially moose, bears, and eagles). It is OK to yell and throw sticks and rocks to chase a bear out of camp, but do so from a maximum distance. Never chase any animal. Remember some area wildlife (such as eagles), and some plants (such as lilypads) are under Federal or State protection. Poison ivy is indigenous, but rare. Do not eat any plants unless you are sure of their identity.

LACK OF QUICK RESPONSE MEDICAL HELP: You are your own primary care physician! As in most any outdoor camping situation, medical help is not readily at hand in a wilderness environment. Hospital facilities can be hours, or possibly even a day or two away. If split-seconds count in a severe trauma situation, the subject may not make it to help in time. Seek help from other wilderness visitors or US Forest Service / Quetico Park personnel. If the patient can be safely moved, head for the nearest BWCAW / Quetico Park Entry Point. There won't necessarily be immediate help there, but the odds are greatly increased. If the patient cannot be moved, send for help; but never leave an injured person alone! Emergency evacuation by float plane can be very costly, and is the financial responsibility of the party.

In addition, lakes, rivers, and the forest itself, present a constantly changing environment. Re-evaluate your surroundings regularly.

Each party member (and the parents or guardians of minors) must not only be aware these risks exist, but also accept them as a possible eventuality to themselves and / or the other members of the party. It is impossible for the owners, management, and staff of North Country Canoe Outfitters to warn the members of the party in detail about all of these or similar types of risks, or other possible eventualities which the party or any of its members may encounter. It is the responsibility of the party leader(s) to evaluate all situations as they occur, and to advise all members of the party as to the proper course of action.

While traveling and camping within a wilderness environment, there are also normal situations and occurrences which may present physical and / or mental stress to a member or members of your party. These situations are magnified if each member of the party has not been properly conditioned to cope with activities associated with wilderness travel.

It is recommended that each member of the party have a physical examination by a licensed physician before embarking on the trip. It is further recommended that the results of this examination be supplied to the party leader(s).

The owners, management, and staff of North Country Canoe Outfitters are not in a position to be able to judge the physical and/or mental abilities of your group as a whole, or that of any individual party leader or member. It is the responsibility of the party leader(s) to be aware of any deficiencies of each party member, and to take these deficiencies into consideration while participating on this wilderness canoeing and camping trip.

If you have any questions about this material, or if you would like to discuss risk in more detail, please contact us at: 218 - 365 - 5581.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION - ALL INDIVIDUALS PLEASE NOTE

Only party members for whom a signed liability release is on file in our office will be allowed to participate in any wilderness canoeing and camping activity utilizing any services or equipment provided by North Country Canoe Outfitters. Any and all subsequent associated travel and/or lodging costs of non-participating individuals are the responsibility of the party leader(s).

WE CANNOT MAKE ANY EXCEPTIONS TO THIS POLICY FOR ANY REASON.

- ✓ADULTS, 18 years of age and older, may sign in advanced (witnessed) or upon arrival at our base.
- ✓PARENTS OR GUARDIANS ACCOMPANYING their minor children may sign in advanced (witnessed) or upon arrival at our base.
- ✓PARENTS OR GUARDIANS NOT ACCOMPANYING THEIR MINOR CHILDREN must sign for each of them prior to their child's departure from home. Signatures must be dated and witnessed (preferably by a participating adult leader of the child's group). Special note should be made to the paragraph concerning Limited Power Of Attorney for health care of unaccompanied minor children.

REPRODUCE ADDITIONAL NEEDED COPIES LOCALLY: One copy for each person participating in the canoe trip.

Specifically ensure that a copy of this risk information is made available to any parent(s) or guardian(s) who will not be accompanying their minor child on this trip.