

Lake Superior Environment

Kayaking among the Apostle Islands can be an awe inspiring experience. Deep, clear waters, white sand beaches, historic light-houses, and 23 islands all in relatively close proximity make this one of the country's premier sea kayaking destinations. Even the weather during the summer months, for the most part, is conducive to paddling for beginners. (The average winds for July and August hover around 6 miles an hour while air temperatures range from the 50's to the 80's.)

You may wonder then: Why all the urgency around the Basic Safety Course? The fact is that Lake Superior is cold – very cold. Water temperatures average 38 degrees F on an annual basis. Although the surface temperature may reach the 70's during the months of July and August, this applies only to the top two or three feet of the water. A steady south breeze can reduce a tolerable temperature by 20 degrees in less than a hour. (Most people cannot swim 100 yards in 50 degree water, and without the aid of protective clothing they will lose functional consciousness within ten minutes.) The average wind speeds mentioned above are only that – averages. Squalls can appear out of nowhere and can produce gusts in excess of 60 miles per hour. These are not easy conditions to paddle in.

These facts are not presented to scare you, but only to make you aware of the real risks involved. Granted, the odds are that you will not encounter these extreme conditions, but the possibility still remains. Besides explaining paddling techniques, rescue scenarios, and specific hazards to watch out for, our Basic Safety Course will give you a means by which you can evaluate your abilities and hopefully plan accordingly.



Basic Safety Course



The Basic Safety Course is geared to prepare you for paddling on the Great Lakes. This course covers essential information about sea kayaking and covers other safety considerations to keep in mind before you explore the beautiful, yet sometimes unpredictable waters of the Great Lakes. The Basic Safety Course will include paddling strokes and techniques, “wet-exits,” re-entry rescues, and weather awareness.

Where To Meet: All trip participants should meet at Trek & Trail's outfitting center at the Old Cooperage building in Bayfield on the day of your course

Accommodations: To find lodging we recommend contacting the Bayfield Chamber of Commerce for accomodation information: 800.447.4094.

Weather: Weather is always a factor that demands attention when going out on Lake Superior. In terms of weather, sea kayaking is a very versatile activity; if you're prepared it's easy to enjoy the more mystical lake atmosphere provided by light rain or cloud cover. In fact, inclement weather provides a better learning environment for this course.

Prior Conditioning: Trek & Trail strives to provide you with an enjoyable experience. Pre-trip conditioning and physical activities will help prepare you for your trip. Suggestions for conditioning include: sit-ups, push-ups, cycling, rowing, canoeing, swimming, and calisthenics that strengthen your shoulders, arms, and abdominal muscles. Persons with health problems, particularly heart problems, are required to consult their physician prior to participating.

Your Account: Any remaining balance on your account is due 45 days prior to your course. Please be sure you have an accurate understanding of our cancellation policy.

A Little About Bayfield: Bayfield is a comfortable town with the look of a New England fishing village. While here, take time to visit Bayfield's museum and some of the local shops. The ferry ride to Madeline Island is an excellent day excursion. Ask the Bayfield Chamber of Commerce (800.447.4094) for information about potential evening activities. Great views and magnificent sunsets, vast orchards and exciting charters make up part of the beauty and special allure of this area -- while you're here take time to enjoy it!

Questions? Please Call: 800.354.8735



A Few Other Considerations:

* Please make your guide aware of any pertinent medical conditions you may have -- i.e. allergies, specific medications you're taking, etc. If you have any questions concerning your personal fitness or your ability to participate, please be sure to consult your physician.

* Generally children under 13 do not participate in the Basic Safety Course. Please make sure, if you are bringing children, that you have appropriate means to take care of them while you are on the water. We would love to accommodate your family by having you participate in one of our family programs.

* Please remember that if you are late for a trip you are not the only one affected. Our trips are normally fully booked. Your promptness affects everyone's allotted time on the water. Please plan accordingly.

* We cannot control the weather. Occasionally we are forced to alter our trip routes. Please be understanding.

* Any remaining balance on your account is due 45 days prior to your trip. Please be sure you have an accurate understanding of our cancellation policy:



PO Box 906, Bayfield, WI, 54814
<http://www.trek-trail.com>

Basic Safety Course Itinerary:

You'll start the course with a basic introduction to paddling on the Great Lakes. Your guide will discuss weather, wind, waves and what conditions you can expect during a day paddle, or a week-long excursion on the lake. You will discuss topics such as: proper dress, hypothermia, and what to do if harsh conditions present themselves while you are on the water. After your safety discussion your guide will instruct you in the forward, sweep, and turning strokes, and equipment nomenclature. Once you've practiced on the beach you will head out onto the water to get a feel for paddling your kayak. There you will work on your basic strokes and then discuss and practice 3 different re-entry rescues (the paddle float, T and HI rescues). Be prepared to get wet! Each individual taking the safety course is required to wet-exit and try each of the different rescues.

This course will not make you a proficient paddler; however, after you've successfully completed the safety course you will be ready to rent from Trek & Trail and explore the area on your own. You will also come away with a better understanding of Lake Superior's varying conditions and the course will augment your ability to make sound judgments and decisions when you are on the water. We, and veteran Basic Safety Course participants, feel this course is beneficial even for those with paddling experience because it provides an orientation to paddling on the Great Lakes, and is a good technical refresher course for experienced paddlers. Trek & Trail has maintained an impeccable safety record during our 20 years of business and we feel our Basic Safety Course has been instrumental in providing first time and experienced paddlers with pertinent safety information.

If you have concerns regarding equipment you'd like to bring along, or your Basic Safety Course in general, please call us at 800.354.8735. We want you to have an enjoyable and memorable experience.

Equipment & Clothing List

During the Basic Safety Course you will participate in wet-exits and rescues. Trek & Trail provides your wetsuit, but for your safety and comfort you should come prepared with a change of clothes for after your course as well as the following:

___ Long underwear top (Capilene or polypropylene works best)

___ Wind/Rain Jacket or paddling top

___ Shorts (ideally of the "quick-dry" variety)

___ Footwear (sandels wetsuit booties are ideal)

___ Light Stocking Cap

___ T-Shirt

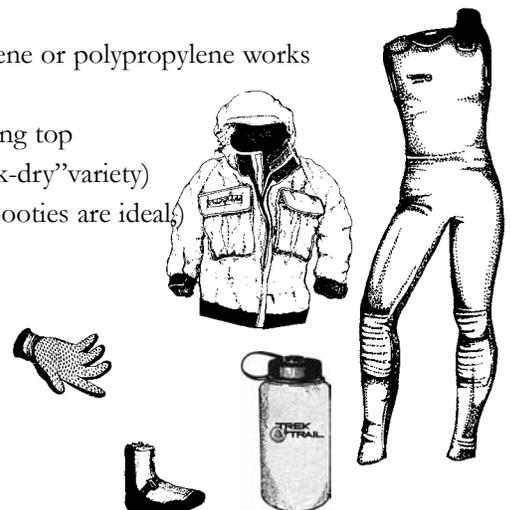
___ Swimsuit

___ Sun Hat

___ Sunglasses

___ Water Bottle

___ Sunscreen



Trek & Trail Provides: Kayak, sprayskirt, paddle, PFD, paddle float, bilge pump, and farmer bill wetsuits (if needed).

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