

Patrick Rodriguez (right) helps prepare kayaks for an upper McKenzie River excursion.



OUTDOORS

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In addition to the regularly scheduled excursions, many other trips are planned a few days in advance throughout the summer. They may include everything from rafting and windsurfing to hiking or rock climbing.

"People can come down at any time to see what trips are in the works," Mason said. "Sometimes there's just four or five days notice."

Trip sheets are posted throughout the Outdoor Program office, EMU Room 23. Many of the trips are initiated by program volunteers, and those wanting to participate can visit the office and sign-up. Mason said the Outdoor Program staff helps organize and plan these trips, provides equipment, sets up transportation and oversees other details.

The expenses vary, with some day trips costing only a few dollars for transportation.

The Friday whitewater rafting trips, for example, generally cost participants \$7 to \$9, Mason said. The afternoon journey usually takes place on the McKenzie or Umpqua River.

"It's designed for people who've never been boating before," Mason said.

Jackie Curran, visiting Eugene for the summer, took advantage of the rafting opportunity last Friday.

"It was my first time. I'm really glad I had the experience," she said. "Now I have more options available to me when I go out on the river. It was beautiful. For people who

are outdoor enthusiasts, it's definitely something to try."

An introductory class on whitewater rafting will be sponsored by the Outdoor Program July 10 at 7:30 p.m.

Mason said serious accidents are a rare occurrence because coordinators use every precaution.

"It's probably a lot safer than driving to the store," he said. "If you use common sense and go with a group, accident rates are quite low."

"We discourage macho, show-off" behavior, he added. "There's a lot of that out there, but we take a more mature approach."

The Tuesday mountain biking trips, which begin at 9 a.m., are geared toward beginner and intermediate level bikers. The cost is generally only a few dollars, Mason said, but participants must supply their own bikes.

Thursday windsurfing classes were scheduled to start July 11, but have been postponed for a week or two. Afternoon trips begin at 12:30 and take place at Dorena Reservoir. Along with the cost of transportation, a \$15 fee will cover the cost of renting a board. A one hour lesson is included.

"Most of the people who make use of this are total beginners," Mason said.

Mason also encourages people to use the Outdoor Program's vast resources.

"We're used to a huge degree for our resources," he said. "We have maps, a large video library, we can help people plan where to go. Anyone can come down here for help. That's an important part of our program."

Dan Geiger, Heidi MacLennan and Patrick Rodriguez (right) unload a kayak before heading downriver.



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