

Boy Scout Troop 581 experiences 50.9 mile nautical adventure

Seven days, 13 Boy Scouts, eight adults, 50.9 miles of water to be paddled on Multnomah Channel, Cunningham Slough, Scappoose Bay, Columbia River, Lewis River, N. Fork Lewis River and Lake River...to provide a lifetime of memories.

Banks Boy Scout Troop #581 paddled that 50.9 miles of water starting August 7.

In conjunction with the paddle trip, John Hamilton assembled a group of 29 people to construct a handicap-accessible trail at the Gilbert River on Sauvie's Island, as his Eagle Project.



Here's what one of the Scouts, Dallan Hamilton, wrote about the trip in his journal.

Day 1, Saturday: Alex Van Loo and Sam Wasko were the leaders today. We saw a bald eagle take a fish to its young and some deer feeding. We stopped at Coon Island.

Day 2, Sunday: Sam Wasko and I were the lead boat. We stopped for John Hamilton's Eagle project at the Gilbert River boat launch. We stopped at a cow pasture to spend the night.

Day 3, Monday: Paul Hochstetler and Trevor Curtis were the lead boat. It got to 95 degrees today and when we stopped for lunch, Dayton Vaughan was up to his knees in mud. Keith Armor got caught in the mud and couldn't get out so Dayton and I pulled him out.

Day 4, Tuesday: We stopped in Scappoose Bay for lunch, there was a little shop that had air conditioning that felt really

good. Keith Armor and his dad were the lead boat. I can see some improvement in people's strokes. After we left we saw another bald eagle.

Day 5, Wednesday: We woke up at 5:00 a.m. We canoed upstream and stopped on an island for breakfast. We stopped at Perfect Valley State Park in Washington. We ate lunch and spent the night there. Most of the parents came and spent the night there. We played capture the flag.

Day 6, Thursday: We woke at 7:00 a.m. and canoed back to the Columbia, it was a very fast day. We stopped and watched the meteor showers. We had a steelhead with dinner. It was very windy.

Day 7, Friday: Today is the last day of our 70 mile journey which is 51 nautical miles. Dylan Trussel and Chris Durbashi were the leaders. Everyone's paddling has improved, the Scoutmaster, Bob D. said. After we loaded up, we all stopped for ice cream.

Now, the adult version from Scoutmaster Bob Derbyshire.

Day 1, Saturday: On our way by 8:30 a.m. with Sam and Alex leading. Stopped for lunch and munched on blackberries. Tons of trash at the road-accessible beach where we stopped. After lunch the boys did their first of many trash sweeps toward our 10 service hours for the trip. 10.15 miles.

Day 2, Sunday: Up at 5:00 a.m., packed gear. Didn't leave until after 9:00 a.m. Eagle serv-

ice project went well, built handicap access trail along shore about 250 yds long. Along the way had a water fight, not sure who won but I was soaked. Used solar shower for the first time tonight. 6.5 miles.

Day 3, Monday: Sleep-in day. Getting on the water after 10:00 a.m. on a 97 degree day not my idea, but the boys wanted to try it. Stopped to watch a pair of eagles, saw heron, ducks, kingfishers, sandpipers and evidence of beaver on Cunningham Slough. Paul and Trevor were leading and decided to stop for lunch in probably the muddiest place on the island. I should have had them pick another site but I already vetoed a couple of others. All the boys and some of the adults ended up coated in mud. Somehow Carl and I managed to stay clean. Worked on the canoeing merit badge requirements which involved getting wet, how to swamp a canoe and get back in. Had an excellent dinner of spaghetti, salad, pudding and garlic bread. 7 miles.

Day 4, Tuesday: Up at a decent hour, breakfast of oatmeal, fruit bars and cocoa. Crossed the channel into Scappoose Bay. Ate ice cream in the air-conditioned kayak shop. Repacked our food and filled up with water. Continued north along Multnomah Channel. The closer to the Columbia River, the bigger the waves and the wind. This was the first real test

of the trip. The boys that were able to concentrate on their strokes and keep their bow in the wind had a much easier go of it. Took a welcome shore break where the boys built a sculpture with all the scrap metal they found. Set camp on Sand Island. Monster dinner of chicken, mashed potatoes, salad, green beans and pudding. 7.82 miles.

Day 5, Wednesday: Crossing day! Up before dawn, awoke group after checking river. Seems to have flattened out though the wind never stopped. Waves are 20-30 feet apart and about 1 foot high. I took lead paddling solo. Current was strong, although I was crossing at a steady pace, I made little progress up river. By the time I reached center of the channel, waves had grown to 3 feet high with about 15 feet between, had I seen these conditions we would still be on the island. Reached Washington shore directly across from starting point. Stopped for breakfast and called home to let them know we were safe. Up the Lewis River, past numerous steelhead, floating and swimming with hawks and osprey just ahead of us fishing. Spent night with families that joined us. Nice to have a real shower and flush toilets. 5.93 miles.

Day 6, Thursday: After loading canoes posed for group picture. Stopped for lunch near mouth of Columbia. This is where the work began, paddling into the wind and against the current. We traveled about three miles seeking shelter behind islands and jetties as we went. Reached a very nice camp someone built with kitchen counters and a bench, hooks for cooking tools and Kybo. Boys set up a swim area and Jim served as lifeguard. After dinner, had a nice campfire with stories about those who explored this area before us and the Indian legend of the Chinook wind. Half the group slept under the stars watching the meteor shower. 6.8 miles.

Day 7, Friday: Last day. Packed my gear before the boys awoke. Watched the sun rise as I reflected back on the trip. Seems like we started a long time ago but ending too soon. Made good time, sand bar near camp is extremely rough, pulled into a cove to bail out water. Stopped at mouth of Lewis River for lunch, we are ahead of schedule. Boys played in the sand, combed beach for treasures. Had our last meal out of the five gallon buckets. Our families awaited us at the Ridgefield Canoe dock. 6.7 miles.

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