

Name: Wyatt McAllister
Project Name: Buffalo River O.L. Trip
Advisor: David Heroy
Date: 2/16/2011

Outdoor Leadership II

Buffalo River Arkansas Trip

By:
Wyatt McAllister



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Project Week Preliminary Proposal

Project Name: Buffalo River Outdoor Leadership Trip

Project Collaborators (if applicable): The Outdoor Leadership I group.

One sentence description of your project: I will go on an 6 day canoeing trip with the Outdoor Leadership I group as a Teaching Assistant, helping David to lead the trip and see to any other needs.

One paragraph explanation of why this project is important to you and/or the community.

I love the outdoors, especially the water. This project will give me the chance to enjoy the beauty of the Arkansas Buffalo River on an 6 day canoeing trip. It will be challenging and fun. I will also get a chance to practice my skills in both leadership and the outdoors by serving as a teaching assistant and giving support to the people in the Outdoor Leadership group.

What do you anticipate will be the biggest challenge in executing your project?

Being as young as I am, I am not confident that I have the respect from the older kids in the outdoor leadership group that I will need to lead them successfully. I have been in the outdoors all my life, taken and passed a wilderness first aid class and graduated from a month long NOLS program in which I both took care of myself in the outdoors and underwent leadership training. I am confident that I have the skills required to lead the trip, just not in my peer's ability to listen to me. I will try to earn the respect of my peers by being calm and level headed, showing my knowledge in the subject without appearing pompous and generally trying to contribute to the group.

What traits or characteristics will you need to have to be successful during this project?

I will need to be **calm** so that I do not appear flustered and incompetent. I will need to be **respectful** so that I can earn respect. I will need to be **vigilant** so that I will not miss a chance to help in an emergency situation. I will need to be **kind** so that people will know they can trust me. I will need to be **trusting** so that I can promote a team mentality.

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Project Planning Timeline

What will I need to have done to be ready for my Project Week?

Action	By When	Results Produced	Date of Completion
Bring in \$450 check	2/25/2011	Pay for trip	2/25/2011
Pack for trip	3/7/2011	Pack for trip	3/7/2011

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Materials Needed

I have been camping many times before so I do not need to buy anything. The materials list is on the next page for your reference

Material Needed	Where to get it	Cost
Clothes	My closet	N/A
Camping Gear	My garage	N/A

Equipment List

Mandatory Equipment:

Personal Equipment

River shoes (2 pair, may be an old pair of sneakers, sandals, something that can protect your feet and wear with a wool or synthetic sock, you don't mind getting and staying very wet, and will stay on your foot in white-water. One needs to double as a hiking shoe for short day hikes.)

Large duffle bag (we will be moving ALL our equipment and clothes into large dry bags called "Bills Bags the first night)

Sleeping Bag (synthetic)

Sleeping Pad

Water bottles (at least 2 quarts. Old 2 liter soda bottles are ideal as they are practically indestructible. We will be purifying river water.)

2 Flashlights/headlamps with one set of extra batteries each

Mess kit (light weight cup, bowl, spoon at minimum)

Knife (swiss army or similar)

Sun hat or cap

Sun block and/or lotion if it's sunny

Chapstick

Toiletries (toothbrush, toothpaste, medications, pads/tampons, etc.)(put in a gallon ziplock bag)

Sunglasses (with UV protection)

Small notebook/journal and pencil/pen

Whistle for solo and if you become lost

Bandanas 1-2 or rag of some sort, for sun, bathing, washing dishes

Clothing Bottoms

Long pants waterproof (WATER PROOF. You cannot go in jeans! Coated nylon is best.)

Long pants insulating (synthetic, such as polypro)

Long underwear 1 pair *synthetic*

Underwear 1-2 pair

socks 2-3 pair for warmth.

Shorts 1 pair, quick drying synthetic

Swim trunks/suit for hot days

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Clothing Tops

Wind/water proof coat/jacket (WATER PROOF, will help keep you warm when paddling whitewater)

Warm fleece synthetic or wool

Long underwear tops synthetic

Long sleeve sweater/shirt to keep warm (no cotton!)

Wool or synthetic hat for cold nights and sleeping (no cotton; most of your heat is lost through your head)

Gloves quick dry recommended for cold/wet morning paddles

T-shirts 1-2 pair

Strongly Recommended Equipment

Garbage bags tough and large to organize keep dry

Camera waterproof

Ziplock bags (for everything, including journal and pen/pencil, book for car, toilet paper, sanitary napkins-we'll carrying it in and out)

Stuff sacks or bags for organization

Compression sack for sleeping bag

Cord/rope/straps for tying down sleeping pad, tarp on solo, etc.

Group Equipment:

Tent (lightweight or a tarp with rope will do for desert)

Camping stove and fuel (~1 quart per night)

Lighter/matches

Pots and pans

Serving utensils

Soap for dishwashing

Do not bring:

MP3 player

Gaming device

Unprescribed drugs or alcohol (this is a Khabele event)

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Pre Project Schedule

	Monday, March 7	Tuesday, March 8	Wednesday, March 9	Thursday, March 10
8:00 - 9:00 am	Drive to Steal Creek	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
9:00 - 10:00 am	↓	Drive to put in at Ponka	Break Camp	Break Camp
10:00 - 11:00 am	↓	Do a shakedown and get everything ready	Paddle on the river	Paddle on the river
11:00 - 12:00 pm	↓	↓	↓	↓
12:00 - 1:00 pm	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH
1:00 - 2:00 pm	Keep driving	Get on the river and paddle.	Keep paddling	Keep paddling
2:00 - 3:00 pm	↓	↓	↓	↓

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3:00 - 4:00 pm	↓	↓	↓	↓
4:00 - 5:00 pm	Camp at Steel Creek, dinner, work on journal, sleep	Stop, camp, dinner, work on journal, sleep	Stop, camp, dinner, work on journal, sleep	Stop, camp, dinner, work on journal, sleep
Results Produced	Get to Steel Creek and finish journal for day 1	Paddle on the river and finish journal for day 2	Paddle on the river and finish journal for day 3	Paddle on the river and finish journal for day 4

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Post Project Schedule

	Monday, March 7	Tuesday, March 8	Wednesday, March 9	Thursday, March 10	Friday, March 11
Before 8:00 am	6:00 Arrive at school 6:30 Leave school and drive to Steal Creek	6:30 Wake up, breakfast of oatmeal and cereal, break down camp	7:30 Wake up, breakfast of oatmeal and cereal, breakdown camp, pack, load canoes	7:00 Wake up, breakfast of oatmeal and cereal, pack, break camp, load canoes	Solo
8:00 - 9:00 am	↓	8:45 Load van	↓	↓	↓
9:00 - 10:00 am	↓	9:00 Drive to put in, meet up with people from Outdoor Center, grab life vests and paddles, get canoes 9:30 Drive to Outdoor Center, rent wetsuits and boots	9:30 Get on the river and paddle in the miserable cold and rain	↓	↓
10:00 - 11:00 am	↓	10:15 Drive back to put in, run errands, pack Bill's Bags, organize van, load canoes	↓	10:00 Get on the river and paddle in the cloudy drizzle	↓

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11:00 - 12:00 pm	↓	12:00 Get on the river and paddle in the clouds and drizzle	↓	↓	↓
12:00 - 1:00 pm	12:30 Arrive at Wendy's, have lunch, pick up some gear at Academy	↓	12:00 Lunch of sandwiches, fire, burn clothes, clean up, rest	↓	↓
1:00 - 2:00 pm	1:30 Leave Wendy's and keep driving	1:45 Lunch of sandwiches	1:00 Hike up to tallest waterfall in Central United States	1:00 Lunch of sandwiches, set up tents at base camp, pack bags	1:00 End solo, pick people up and take them back to base camp, fill up water bottles, eat a snack of sandwiches
2:00 - 3:00 pm	↓	2:45 Get back on the river and keep paddling	2:00 Get back on the river and paddle in the cold	↓	2:00 Group meeting discussing solo 2:30 Pack up, load canoes
3:00 - 4:00 pm	↓	↓	↓	3:00 Group meeting discussing solo 3:45 Take people to solo sites	3:00 Get on the river and paddle in the bright sunlight

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4:00 - 5:00 pm	↓	4:30 Get to camp on rock overhang cave, make fire, unpack, make dinner	↓	4:15 Solo	4:15 Get to put out, unpack canoes and leave on beach, collect wet suits and boots, set up tents, set up camp, make fire, make dinner
After 5:00 pm	6:15 Arrive at Steal Creek campsite, make fire, organize food bags, set up tents, make dinner. 7:30 Dinner of amazing pesto pasta 8:15 Group meeting 8:35 Clean up, bedtime/ hang out by fire	6:30 Dinner of nasty potatoes from Satan 7:30 clean up, organize camp, bedtime/ hangout	5:00 Make camp at beach place by woods, unpack, set up tents, get warm, build fire 6:00 Sit by fire and make dinner 7:00 Dinner of yummy pasta with red sauce, sausage, mushrooms and onions 7:45 Group meeting 8:00 Clean up 8:30 S'mores 9:00 Bed/hang out	↓	6:00 Dinner of tacos with flour tortillas, rice, beans and onions 7:00 S'mores, group meeting discussing highs and lows of the trip, acknowledge people 8:20 Say goodbye to Wyatt, Melissa, Orion and Michael, bedtime/hang out Next Mourning Drive home after breakfast
Results Produced	Get to Steel Creek	Paddle on the river and experience the beauty of nature	Paddle on the river and experience the beauty of nature	Paddle on the river and experience the beauty of nature, have solo	Paddle on the river and experience the beauty of nature, have solo, debrief the trip

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Project Week Final Proposal

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Project Collaborators: The Outdoor Leadership I group.

One sentence description of your project:

I will go on an 6 day canoeing trip with the Outdoor Leadership I group as a Teaching Assistant, helping David to lead the trip and see to any other needs.

One paragraph explanation of why this project is important to you and/or the community.

I love the outdoors, especially the water. This project will give me the chance to enjoy the beauty of the Arkansas Buffalo River on an 6 day canoeing trip. It will be challenging and fun. I will also get a chance to practice and develop my skills in both leadership and the outdoors by serving as a teaching assistant and giving support to the people in the Outdoor Leadership I group. These skills will be useful throughout my life, both in leading groups of people and exploring the outdoors.

What traits or characteristics will you need to have to be successful during this project?

I will need to be **calm** so that I do not appear flustered and incompetent. I will need to be **respectful** so that I can earn respect. I will need to be **vigilant** so that I will not miss a chance to help in an emergency situation. I will need to be **kind** so that people will know they can trust me. I will need to be **trusting** so that I can promote a team mentality.

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Buffalo River, March 7-12, 2011

Itinerary and General Information

Itinerary: we will be driving to the Buffalo River (www.nps.gov/buff/index.htm) on Monday, March 7th, **meeting at: 6:00 AM** behind the high school; it is roughly a 11 hour drive. Camping at Steel Creek. We will put in at Ponca and be on the river for the next 4 days and 4 nights, camping on the river banks. We will be driving from early morning after returning the canoes on March 12th, arriving back at Khabele late Saturday night.

Notes: Bring all of the following mandatory clothing, personal equipment, and group equipment (if applicable). If you do not have some of the following equipment, you will need to find some way to borrow or buy it. This is essential for your safety and for the safety of the group as a whole.

The challenge of a river trip is staying **DRY**. Dry equals warm. Good water-proof layer tops and bottoms is a must. This means no cotton, and you may not bring jeans on this trip. Cotton does not insulate you in the cold as the fabric is hydrophilic and absorbs moisture from your body and loses its insulating properties. Any synthetic fabric is fine, wool or silk will work well. I recommend not bringing down bags. Highs should average in the 60's, **lows in the 40's**. We will be in some beginner **"White Water"**, so people will get wet and some will likely go swimming!

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Journal-Day 1

Monday, March 7

I arrived at Khabele at 6:00. I had my packed Bill's Bag (a big dry bag that people use on the river, invented by a guy named Bill), my small dry bag for my day equipment, my pesto sauce for the meal on the first day, and a rope I lent to David for the trip. I got to school a little early and waited around until everyone got to school. We all loaded the van and started our 12 hour drive to Arkansas.

We stopped at several gas stations along the way, both to fill up the van's tank and to get snacks, since most of us had not eaten breakfast yet. At the first gas station, I bought drugs. Yes, drugs! I marched up to the back of the store and snatched a big greasy hot dog off the heat rack. I munched it down, and just like I thought, I slept for the rest of the day. Yet, I had not anticipated how long I would sleep. I slept for the whole car ride, and I was groggy and dizzy when I had to wake up to do chores like setting up my tent and making dinner. I decided I would never do hot dog drugs again.

In the early evening, we got to Steel Creek. It was a nice campsite, by the river, with good tent space, fire pits and bathrooms. The first thing we did was set up our tents and make a fire.

My partner for the trip was Oscar. He is in seventh grade and he joined Outdoor Leadership for this trip. We slept in the same tent, canoed together and hung out for the whole trip. He is cool. He had a giant Bear Grills knife with a five inch blade. He got it confiscated about an hour after we got to camp because he was using the hilt of the

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knife to hammer in tent stakes when the knife was not in a sheath. He has been camping his whole life. He is just an all around bad ass.

Oscar and I set up my tent and then collected fire wood for the fire. We piled the wood up and then Tanner, I long time hunter who had made fires all his life, started the fire. Then, after we had done the fire, the whole group got all the food bags and organized them. Each person in the group got a food bag with some individual snacks in it, and some group food.

After we had organized all the food and set up camp, we had dinner. As the TA for the trip, I made a list of all the food we would need, organized it by meal, and wrote down the proportions everyone would need. I let other people in the group buy the food, but I bought and made the ingredients for the first meal. I made pesto sauce so we could have pesto pasta with chicken. This was a good treat and everyone liked it. All the girls cooked the meal, as they did for the whole trip. We ate up, had a small group meeting where we discussed the day and talked about the trip to come. After that, we went to sleep.

The big challenge for the day was the car trip. I was bored, drugged and dizzy for the whole time. I read my book some and that was good. I also caught up on sleep so I was not too tired. Another challenge was that since I slept so much in the car, I did not go to sleep until 12:00 and I was tired the next day. Maybe that was just the hot dog? I don't know. I got through the car trip fine. I also decided that hot dogs are an actual form of drug. They have nasty chemicals in them.

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The success of the day was the dinner that I arranged. Everyone liked it and we had a lot left over for snacks and breakfast. I ate in for a midnight snack before I went to bed. It made me feel great that I had done something right for my group. It made me feel like a good TA and that felt good.

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Journal-Day 2

Tuesday, March 8

I woke up this morning tired. The combination of little sleep and hotdog drugs made me dizzy. Oscar and I took down the tent. We loaded the van and drove to Ponka, where we met up with the people from the Buffalo Outdoor Center who brought us our canoes. We each got life vests and paddles and piled them on the canoes before getting back in the van.

We then drove to the Outdoor Center and everyone rented wetsuits and boots so they could stay warm while on the water. I am a SCUBA diver so I brought my SCUBA wetsuit and slept while people were trying on wetsuits. I got up and bought s'mores material so that everyone could have a nice treat on the river. I have learned from experience that absolutely nothing, not even the kindest action, can earn the respect of an outdoor group more than organizing s'mores.

Just before we finished up and drove back to Ponka, I got a Doctor Pepper and the caffeine woke me up. We met up with the people from the Outdoor Center again and started to get ready to go. Soon, we realized that we needed to run some errands in town. Almost everyone went in the van back to town. Oscar and I stayed behind and Oscar chopped a dead tree in half with his pocket knife and got it confiscated too. I read until everyone got back.

Shortly after everyone got back, Melissa, a humanities teacher from my school, her husband, Michael, and her son, Orion, arrived. Melissa and her husband are longtime campers and they helped David to lead the trip. Melissa and Michael turned

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out to be good leaders. Michael is really funny and witty. Melissa is really lively. Orion is smart and funny. They were a good addition to the trip.

After everyone got back, we packed our Bill's Bags. Some people had trouble fitting everything in. I helped a few people stuff their bags. I told them the trick of rolling their sleeping pads around the inside of their bags and stuffing everything inside it. It gives the bag shape, makes it harder for anything to rub on the inside of the bag and create a tear, and makes the sleeping pad take up less space.

We got on the river in the early afternoon after loading the canoes. It was cloudy and drizzly. We paddled for about two miles. We stopped for an hour on a rocky beach along the way and had sandwiches. There was tuna and peanut butter and jelly. This was pretty much the same everyday.

Even though the weather was bad, the river was beautiful. There were huge soaring cliffs on one side, and woods on the other. Oscar is a climber and when we came to a big cliff, he said that he wanted to go and check it out. He was not going to climb it, but he wanted to see it up close to see what it would be like to climb it. We were near the front and so we had the time to stop. We pushed the canoes up close to the bank, got out and walked to the base of the cliff.

When we looked up, we saw an amazing thing. At the top of the cliffs there were more woods, with dirt on the ground covering the rock. The water from the drizzle had soaked through the dirt and run down the rock until it got to the edge of the cliff. The limestone was shaped in such a way that it made the streams of water break up into individual droplets. The droplets then plummeted out over the cliff and down to the

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ground. Because of the size of the droplets and the height of the cliff, they seemed to fall slowly. We stared up into the steel gray sky, up at the towering cliff and saw the millions of little droplets slowly falling down to our faces, as if they were suspended in time. This was the coolest thing I saw on the trip. It is one of the coolest things I have ever seen in nature.

We got to camp in the late afternoon. We camped under a giant rock overhang at the base of a cliff. It was up off the ground, dry and flat. It was a first class camping spot and it was well used. We put tarps down and then put our sleeping bags on the tarps. Oscar had a tarp so he, David and I, slept on his tarp.

Everyone put their wet clothes on rocks to dry. I had been wearing a ton of layers. I was warm, but all my clothes took up a whole row on one rock, while everyone else's took up the other row. I christened my layer choice for the day my Hobo Suit. I decided I should rethink my layers the next day. I worried about not having enough dry clothes. I had enough clothes to stay warm in camp, but just barely. I had to leave a lot of my clothes in the van because there was no room in my bag, even after packing it well. I decided to wear my wetsuit the next day, because David said professional canoers wear full body wetsuits to keep warm. I hoped my 3mm wetsuit would be enough.

Oscar and Tanner made a small fire. We did not have a lot of wood because everything was damp in the drizzle. The fire did not last very long and we did not get s'mores. Marin, Zoe, and I cooked dinner. We were having cheesy potatoes with zucchini, carrots and onions. The potatoes were freeze dried and powdered. We added

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water to reconstitute them. We then put the cheese and vegetables in. We could not get the cheese and vegetables to cook without burning the potatoes so we picked everything out and put it all in a separate pot. We then put water in that pot and heated it up. We got cheesy soup with mushy vegetables. We then added this to the potatoes and then heated that up. The result was Nasty Satan Potatoes. This was the only bad meal on the trip and it was really bad. I did not have a good experience with backcountry cooking on my NOLS trip so I decided not to help cook food on this trip again.

After we ate dinner, Ruby and I cleaned up. Someone had lost the cleaning kit so we had to spend thirty minutes scrubbing melted cheese and potatoes off the bottom of the pots with sand and grass. This was a big challenge for me. I was mad that someone lost the cleaning kit and I had to pay for it with time and energy doing a nasty task.

After Ruby and I got back, we had a group meeting discussing the day. We then cleaned up the camp and got everything organized. Then we went to bed. I got to sleep around 10:00.

The day was a big success. I was useful packing people's bags and it made me feel like a good TA. I had an amazing nature experience. I was warm and dry the whole day. I helped cook dinner even if it was a total failure. I had a very productive day.

Even though the day was generally a success, I also had some challenges. I was not impressed by the weather. It was rainy and drizzly and generally provoked a melancholy mood. I used too many clothes to keep warm and I got worried about not having enough dry clothes to wear. I also did not like cleaning melted cheese with sand.

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I also felt like a failure for not knowing how to cook the potatoes, and for planning freeze dried potatoes in the first place. All these challenges were hard, but I still had a good day. I did my best and I resolved to do better the next day.

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Journal-Day 3

Wednesday, March 9

We got up early in the morning and it was freezing cold. I was warm in my sleeping bag since I had a synthetic windproof bag over it. No one wanted to get up in the freezing cold and it was thirty minutes before everyone was up. David gave us a lecture on being slackers in the morning and slowing things down. I was up in a timely fashion though.

We had breakfast and I tried to eat leftover Satan Potatoes but I gave up and moved to cold cereal. I hate breakfast. We packed up camp and I helped people pack again. We then loaded the canoes and started paddling. It was freezing and raining. No one had a good day. David said he wanted us to paddle 9 miles but we ended up paddling 6 and stopping early.

The land was still beautiful but I didn't pay much attention to it. I had my wetsuit on and nothing else and I was cold. It was not a chilling kind of cold but it was a damp kind of cold. I was not freezing or in danger, I was just damp and chilly. Everyone was miserable. We stopped after about three miles and had lunch. We built a huge fire. Oscar and I collected a ton of firewood from high ground under trees where it was dry. Everyone tried to dry out their clothes by the fire. I dried a lot of my stuff with very minimal damage. Some people burned their clothes.

We then went on a .7 mile hike. We went up to this huge waterfall. It is the tallest waterfall in the Central United States. The waterfall was powerful but because of the shape of the limestone, the water was still coming down in individual droplets. I had to

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stand under it to say I had stood under the tallest waterfall in the Central United states. I got soaking wet. I was cold the rest of the day, but it was worth it.

We walked back, cleaned up, loaded the canoes and started off. We canoed for another three miles and then made camp when people started to lose it. Everyone was cold, tired and hungry. We camped at a big rocky beach. Oscar and I set up the tent off in the woods. The ground was rocky but it was out of the wind and warmer than the beach where everyone else camped. I also hate sand in my gear.

Everyone helped collect firewood and we got a huge pile. Tanner and Oscar made a huge fire and we all warmed up. No one tried to dry their clothes this time. We set up a big tarp over the kitchen area to keep out the wind. Then we made dinner. It was right up there with the pesto pasta. We had pasta with red sauce, onions, mushrooms and sausage. It was great. I helped collect water, ingredients and get people organized. I did not help with dinner and I think this helped make it good.

We had a group meeting where we discussed how much the cold sucked. Then we cleaned up. Thankfully it was easy since there was nothing burned into the pots. Then, we finally had s'mores. I ate about five s'mores. Everyone was happy about the s'mores because it warmed them up. I took a s'more to Orion and now he likes me.

We finally went to bed after that. Oscar helped me find the tent in the middle of the woods. We talked for a little bit and then went to sleep.

I had a lot of challenges today. I was cold, wet and miserable all day. I was also sad because the weather was so gray and melancholy. I hated the cold and everyone else did too. No one wanted to talk and so it felt like I was paddling alone. The fire

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burned my clothes and the tuna at lunch was really cold. The hike was hard because I was wearing a wetsuit and I got hot, sweated and chafed in my wet suit. I could not even find the tent by myself.

Another big challenge was that Oscar and I kept running into the bank. We did not have a lot of weight in our canoe since we were the smallest people on the trip. We also are not as strong because of our sizes. This means that we have low force and low speed. I could not execute turns well while steering. I could turn but I did not have enough force to paddle forward so I would just slam into the bank and we would go under trees. This meant we were having to duck all the time and it was hard not to get whacked in the head.

My success for the day was that I made people's day by planning a good meal and buying s'mores to give people. Everyone loved the end of the day and I had arranged it. One of my big goals on this trip was to be successful in a leadership role. It is very hard since I am 14 and should not be in 10th grade, much less helping to lead Outdoor Leadership. I am really proud of myself that I earned the respect of the group. It felt great.

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Journal-Day 4

Thursday, March 10

Oscar and I got up late today because the person who was trying to wake us up could not find our tent. David finally found us and gave us a steam roller to wake us up. We went down to where everyone else was camped. Then everyone had breakfast. We cleaned up, broke camp, packed and loaded the canoes. We got on the river about mid morning.

Today, I decided to wear my Wetsuit, then long underwear, then a wind proof layer. I was warm and dry. The weather was still gloomy but it was a lot better than the day before. Oscar and I paddled for a long time. We saw some more cool cliffs. The trees were really big and old.

We kept running into the bank but not as much as the day before. I started turning really early and going across shallower parts of the river rather than turning in the current. This worked but we sometimes got stuck and had to get out and push.

We did get into trouble once that day. There was an unmarked rapid with some submerged logs. We came down the rapid and I had to turn sharply to avoid a log in the middle of the river. The current slammed us against a log near the edge of the river. Since it was curved, we slid up it and one side of the canoe went under water. I threw my weight to the side of the canoe which was out of the water and balance it out. We then tried to go down past the rapid so we could bail the canoe. We were low in the water because of all the water in the canoe and it was very hard to maneuver. We slammed into another log and took on more water. I jumped out of the canoe and

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hauled it onto a tiny beach right at the edge of the rapid. It was too small to turn the canoe over on so we had to bail the water with Oscar's Nalgene. We then pushed back into the river and got out of the rapid safely. We had to catch up to everyone else a ways down the river. This was the only big wreck the whole trip. No one flipped.

We stopped around early afternoon and had lunch. Next we were going to have the 24 hour solo. This is where everyone spends 24 hours alone in the woods, with only snack food and without a tent. We are supposed to reflect on our lives and come to a spiritual realization. We set up all our tents near the place we had stopped for lunch so if it rained, people could come back and get in the tents. We then filled up our water bottles, got our snack food and packed up our personal gear.

Then we had a group meeting discussing the intention for the solo. David told us that it is good to take time and reflect on our lives. He said it is good to see that we do not need all the technology, food and other amenities that society offers. The solo is a time of reflection. We should use it to think about what is important to us. We also let everyone share what they thought about the solo and how they were going to use it.

After the group meeting, no one was supposed to talk. All the adults (David, Melissa and Michael) took people to spots around the base camp we had set up and dropped them off with their personal gear. I got a spot which had a rocky beach, then some dead trees and then a grassy area before the woods started. I camped in the grassy area and laid my wet clothes out to dry.

I had a synthetic bag which I put my sleeping bag and sleeping pad in. This would keep me warm if it got cold in the night. I read in my book, organized my gear and

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dozed until it got dark. Then I packed up all my wet clothes into a garbage bag and stowed them away in my dry bag. I organized my camp and read a little until a went to sleep.

My major challenge today was almost tipping when Oscar and I hit the log. I handled it really well. I kept the canoe from taking on water. I got us to shore. I made sure that we did not tip and that was great. Bailing the canoe took a long time and we had to paddle a long way to catch up with the rest of the group. We handled the rapid really well considering how hard it was.

My big success of the day was my Wetsuit and Hobo Suit combination. I was warm and dry, even after I got in the river to drag our canoe to shore. I figured out how to stay warm on a river in horrible weather. I also did a great job steering the canoe. Even if we did have the mishap with the log, I improved steering by turning earlier and paddling harder. I think I would have had a worse time with the log if I had hit it at the beginning of the trip.

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Journal-Day 5

Friday, March 11

I woke up several times in the night. One time I noticed that there was frost all over my synthetic bag and I thanked myself for bringing it. Another time I looked at the stars. They were really beautiful. There was not a lot of light pollution. Another time I ate a bunch of food. The last time I sat up and listened to the woods. There was a lot of noise. An interesting thing about nature is that it is never silent. There is always the rustle of leaves in the wind, the movement of animals, the rushing of the river. When things are silent in nature, you know everything is very wrong.

I woke up around midmorning and found that it was sunny and beautiful. I got out of my sleeping bag because it was hot and fell asleep on my synthetic bag. I woke up later to find my clothes soaked in sweat and myself lying in a puddle of sweat on my waterproof bag. I had a big drink of water, ate some food and read until I finished my book. I then went for a small walk around early afternoon. I went down to the river and put my feet in the water. I sat there for a while until I saw David. He was picking people up from their solos. I went back to my camp, packed up all my stuff and put on my Wetsuit. I decided it was too hot to put on anything else and I was still a little hot.

David picked me up and we canoed down to base camp. After everyone got back, we filled up our water bottles and had a snack of left over sandwich material. We then had a group meeting discussing what we got out of the solo. I just said that I had a time to relax.

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I work really hard at school. I am taking about seven hard classes, including two math classes, a lot of student government stuff, Outdoor Leadership, and whatever else I have going on. I have also been sick all quarter. First I got the flue, then I got allergies, then I was tired from being sick. The solo was the first chance I got to rest.

After the meeting, we cleaned up, took down our tents, packed our bags, loaded the canoes and headed down the river. We just had a short four mile paddle until we got to the putout around late afternoon. The river was beautiful in the bright sunlight. We saw big trees, soaring cliffs, blue skies and heard birds chirping. Oscar and I even saw a river otter.

After we got to the putout, we unpacked the canoes and left them on the beach with the life vests and paddles, for the Outdoor Center people to pick up. We then collected all the rented wetsuits and boots. We then set up our tents, made a fire and made dinner. We had beans and rice with flour tortillas. Ben contributed some cheese he had bought on the first day and left in the van. He is obsessed with cheese.

My mom met us at the putout. She was there to take me on a road trip we would be having around Arkansas. She helped with dinner and the fire. After a group meeting discussing our highs and lows of the trip and acknowledgments, my mom and I left. Melissa and her family did as well. The rest of the group would be driving home the next day, but my project week was over.

The solo was a great success for me. I loved getting to read and sleep, without having to do anything or meet anyone's expectations. No one can do anything for a long period of time, no matter how much they love it, without taking a break and doing

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something else. I love school and it really is my life, but resting is important and I got that on the solo, and on the trip.

I really did not have any challenges today. The sunshine was beautiful, the nature was pristine. The beans and rice were good, especially with Ben's cheese. I loved the group meeting. Everyone acknowledged each other and I was acknowledged a lot. People really appreciated my efforts to help on the trip. I really felt respected. People were willing to accept my help without worrying about my age. It takes a really good person to accept help from someone younger than them and I think all the people on the trip were really good. Everyone helped each other on the trip and we had a really good time.

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Final Reflective Essay

For my project week, I went on a five day long canoeing trip on the Buffalo River in Arkansas. I went with my Outdoor Leadership I group. Since I was in Outdoor Leadership last year, this year I am serving as a teaching assistant and I helped to lead this trip. I had two goals for the trip. First, I wanted to go on the trip and have a good time while experiencing the beauty of nature. Second, I wanted to help lead the trip as a successful teaching assistant, with the respect of the group. I planned to pay attention to everything and be present during the trip, both to see nature and to understand what was going on in the group and what was needed. I planned to stay calm and be respectful and kind so I could earn people's trust. If I had people's trust, then they would let me help them. My expectation was to see some amazing nature and to lead a little. I am 14 and most of the group is much older. I have never had good experiences with teaching older people and I did not think the people on this trip would like or accept my help. I planned to do my best, but I did not expect much.

I had a huge success on my project week. I was really surprised. People loved getting help from me. They let me teach them how to pack their dry bags. They let me give them tips along the way about how to do well in the outdoors. They let me help with dinner. They listened to me when I asked them to help me find something, or told them about what we would have for dinner (I planned the food for the trip). They were really nice and respectful. I was really prepared for the trip. I had the right equipment. I had experience packing bags, planning meals for an outdoor setting and camping and

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canoeing. I knew a lot and people were willing to accept my help. I got help from them too. They really liked helping each other. I enjoyed people's company. I enjoyed being respected and listened to. I really liked teaching people things and learning from them. I saw amazing natural scenes, soaring cliffs, towering trees, birds, a river otter, stars, the river and a huge waterfall. I was amazed at the beauty of the scene.

I also learned a lot. I learned more about how to steer a canoe. I learned that you need to paddle hard, turn early and always line up with the current of the water, harnessing it to your own advantage. I learned how to use layers well to survive in a wet environment. I learned how to plan food for a trip. The food needs to be easy to pack, easy to cook, good, filling and there needs to be just the right amount of it. Most of all, I learned the importance of finding a good group. No matter how hard the instructors work, how beautiful the scenery is, how well planned the trip is, you need good kids or the trip won't work. I loved the personalities of all the people on the trip and I think it is great that I got to go on a trip with them. I have decided to stop wasting my time on trips without good people on them. It is just not worth it. Next time I go on a trip, I will make sure I like the people on it. If I do not, I will leave.

My big challenge this trip was the weather. For most of the trip, the weather was really bad. It was cold, overcast and rainy. Everyone was cold and miserable and people were depressed. There was one day where everyone was just totally run down. No one was happy. It was contagious and made it so I was tired, not wanting to do the things I needed to do. Everyone handled the weather well. We learned to put on the right clothes, make big fires, stay out of the water and keep ourselves rested. Besides

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that one bad day, everything was good. I experimented with different layers so I could keep myself warm and dry and make sure I had enough clean clothes to wear at camp. I saved leftover dinner for breakfast so I could get enough to eat and store up energy. I learned to steer the canoe so that I did not get wet. I went to bed early and got enough sleep so that I was rested. I had not been on a canoeing trip where it was so cold before and it was a learning experience for me. If I had planned the trip, I would have had it in the fall so that everything would be warm and sunny. Mosquitos would not be a problem since they do not live in fast flowing water. We would just have to avoid stagnant water when we camped. If things were bright and sunny, everyone would be much happier and things would go better.

I learned a lot from this project week. I developed my skills as a leader and as an outdoorsman. I learned how to survive in the cold. Most of all, I learned that being with people you like is important to having a successful trip. Coming into the project, I did not think I was a very good leader. No one ever listened to me. I was surprised when I turned out to be a good leader on this trip. It really made me feel like I could accomplish a lot if I just found the right people to interact with and tried my best. I also realized that no matter how well prepared or experienced you are, you always have things to learn. A leader has to be willing to learn from the people they are leading. A leader has to trust the people he is leading if he expects them to trust him. On this trip, the trust went both ways. I talked to people about layers and canoeing. I worked with them to prepare dinner. I worked with them to clean and set up tents and break camp and everything. It was fun working with people. This project really helped me to become a self generated

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learner. It taught me that I am a good leader and if I can find good people to interact with, I can learn from them and learn things about myself from teaching them. Being in nature also stimulates thought and thinking makes you learn. My advice for someone trying to lead an outdoor trip is that they need to find a good group that they trust and that trusts them. They need to find a good place to go and make sure the weather is good. They need to organize the food and gear so that everyone is happy. Most of all, they need to try their best to teach people and learn from people as much as they can.