2027 Leader's Guide

Trek I

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Dear Scouter,

Welcome to Swamp Base and thank you for being a part of our 15th summer of Scouting America high adventure treks through Louisiana's Atchafalaya Swamp! This Leader's Guide is for "Trek 1," our 61.6-mile program. In this Leader's Guide, you will find the pertinent information needed to prepare for and enjoy your time in the swamp. Your trek promises to be a challenging and eye-opening experience!

Over the last several years we have seen thousands of Scouts and leaders from all corners of the country travel to Louisiana and conquer the swamp. The constituency of people that now understand, appreciate, and support the swamp has grown beyond what we could have ever hoped. And when it comes down to it, that's the mission of our program. As a Scout trek camp, we have the responsibility to make a positive impact on the environments that we participate within, and there's no more deserving environment than swamps.

But our greatest successes are witnessing the transformation of youth and adults alike as they learn more about themselves, push to new limits, come to appreciate an environment they once were apprehensive of, and accomplish something they never thought possible. It's a remarkable sight to behold.

We're extremely excited about this upcoming season as we make huge leaps forward with our program. We make improvements to our program and experience every year and cannot wait to share them with your crew.

To make sure you have the best possible time on your trek, we ask that you read this entire guidebook, so that you'll also *Be Prepared!* This Leader's Guide provides you with much of the information you'll need to plan and prepare for your high adventure trek.

We look forward to having you witness the wonder of the Atchafalaya Swamp firsthand and hope that your understanding and appreciation of this special place will grow during your journey.

Yours in High Adventure,

Ben Pierce
Executive Director

Atchafalaya SWAMP BASE Louisiana

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Scouts paddling through the dense cypress forest on their first day in the swamp.

MISSION STATEMENTS

Scouting America - Mission

The mission of Scouting America is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law.

Swamp Base - Mission

Fostering appreciation for Louisiana's swamps through immersive and educational experiences.

Outdoor Code

As an American, I will do my best to -
Be clean in my outdoor manners.
Be careful with fire.
Be considerate in the outdoors.
Be conservation minded.

Swamp Base Grace

Bless the waters that bring life to this land.
Bless this journey to see the swamp firsthand.
Bless the birds, the fish, and the trees.
Bless this food that strengthens me.
Bless the friendship and fellowship we feel,
As we gather in the swamp for this meal.
Amen.

Misty Bayou Benoit morning.

ATCHAFALAYA SWAMP OVERVIEW

Sunset from the Floating Pavilions in the Henderson Lake area of the Atchafalaya Swamp.

From its majestic cypress and tupelo covered wetlands to the egrets and alligators inhabiting its skies and waterways, the Atchafalaya embodies swamp life in Louisiana. Pronounced “uh-CHA-fuh-LIE-uh,” the Atchafalaya gets its name from the Choctaw phrase for “Long River.” An unmatched American wonder, the Atchafalaya encompasses 1.4 million acres between Lafayette and Baton Rouge, LA. As the nation’s largest river swamp, the Atchafalaya serves as an important distributary of the Mississippi River Valley, relieving some 30% of the big river’s flood waters before they reach critical ports in Baton Rouge and New Orleans. The water that is directed down the Atchafalaya River through the swamp spillway flows through an ever-changing landscape of hardwood forests, farmlands, swamps, and marshes on its way to the Gulf of Mexico. As one of only six land developing river deltas, and the only such delta in North America with stable coastal wetlands, the Atchafalaya is a critical feature of the sustainability systems of Louisiana’s wetlands and the Gulf Coast.

Originally inhabited by the Chitimacha Tribe around 500 A.D., the Atchafalaya has for centuries shaped the lives of those who have chosen to make homes there. The Chitimacha built roofs and made baskets with the swamp’s verdant palmetto leaves; they hunted and fished the Atchafalaya’s alligators, crawfish, and numerous fish species to provide food. Their stories, myths, and legends focused on the wetlands around them.

When French and Spanish settlers arrived in the Atchafalaya in the late seventeenth century, they adopted the Natives' ways for surviving in the swamp, and those customs still exist—to a lesser degree—among the Cajun and Creole cultures for which the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area is well known today.

Despite the fact that humans have lived in the Atchafalaya for centuries, the swamp remains shrouded in mystery. Access to the swamp is limited and land ownership is difficult to decipher. Once inside, landmarks are nearly non-existent and with the addition of fluctuating water levels that change dramatically with each season, the landscape transforms on a monthly and sometimes weekly basis. Land turns to water and wading areas quickly turn to swift moving bayous. This constant state of change makes recreational activity in the area difficult to pursue, but for those who have the right tools and experience, however, the Atchafalaya Swamp offers endless beauty and countless possibilities for exploration.

For Scouts, the Atchafalaya presents *the* ideal adventure. Scouts will test their abilities and determination as each one of their senses soaks up the swamp's sights, sounds, textures, and flavors. Where the casual outdoorsman sees impassable bogs, frightful wildlife, and the daunting unknown, we Scouts see opportunities to learn, to appreciate, and to have fun!

Scouts paddling through the ancient cypress trees of Lake Fausse Pointe on the final day of their trek.

HIGH ADVENTURE - RISK ADVISORY

High Adventure is a rugged outdoor experience and everyone should "Be Prepared" to meet the challenge. Swamp Base strives to minimize risks to participants and adult leaders through emphasizing proper safety precautions. To avoid injury during their adventure, participants should be aware of the risks involved and exercise proper safety precautions. To attend a trek through the Atchafalaya Swamp you should be **physically fit**, have proper clothing and equipment, be willing to follow the instructions of your trek guide, work as a team, and take responsibility for your own health and safety. By studying this leader's guide and the *Guide to Safe Scouting*, a trek crew can be properly prepared for the contingencies that may arise during its adventure.

Parents, leaders, and participants should be advised that despite our best attempts at risk management, it is not possible to remove ALL risk from a wilderness expedition.

Parents, guardians, adult leaders, and participants are advised that Swamp Base's program can involve exposure to accidents, illness, and/or injury associated with a physically demanding high adventure program conducted in a sometimes-hostile aquatic environment. Swamp Base's trek involves long distance paddling which may expose participants to severe weather conditions such as high heat and humidity, thunderstorms, and intense southern sun. This exposure can lead to sunburn, heat exhaustion, heat stroke, dehydration, asthma, and heart attacks. If you are prone to any of these illnesses, please reconsider participating in our high adventure treks.

We are trained for emergencies and able to act in an expedient manner. Furthermore, professional medical services such as EMTs and paramedics will be on call in case of an emergency.

We hope this information will motivate parents, guardians, adult leaders, and participants to be prepared and informed. By *being prepared*, we can all enjoy a safe Swamp Base experience.

PREVENTION OF PROBLEMS

Three safety issues merit special emphasis:

1. **Sunburn** – A major concern for all participants, sunburn, can easily ruin a great trip. ***A severe sunburn may cause a participant to be removed from the trek.*** Due to the sustained exposure to the sun during the day, adequate attention must be given to attire and proper application and reapplication of sun block (a rating of SPF 30 or higher is strongly recommended). Participants are asked to bring a wide-brimmed hat and quick drying zip-off long pants and shirts to aid in sun protection. ***Swamp Base offers an excellent long sleeve shirt option that is UPF 40+, moisture-wicking, and includes Insect Shield®. Please contact us for more information about these shirts.***

2. **Dehydration & Other Hydration Issues** – Balancing proper fluid intake while paddling is a challenge, but one that can save your life. Paddlers can and have died from dehydration, heat exhaustion, and even electrolyte loss from over-drinking water. More commonly, these conditions can lead to fatigue, cloudy thinking, poor performance and errors in judgment that may put all participants at risk. Fresh water will always be made available; however, all participants must bring

their own water container (bottles like wide-mouth Nalgene® or other similar products work great) and electrolyte powders.

3. **Other Motorboats** – The swamp is an active environment, full of people enjoying its recreational opportunities, as well as those that make a living off the swamp's resources. With the vast size of the swamp, the main form of travel is by motorboat. Extreme caution must be taken when paddling to avoid an accident with a motorized boat. Paying attention to your surroundings, keeping all canoes close together, and proper signaling (with both paddles and safety whistles) will help to alert others that paddlers are present and keep everyone safe.

- **Know First Aid**
  Make sure your crew is trained in First Aid and carries the required first aid kit. ***A minimum of one advisor in each crew must have a card proving current CPR training and First Aid. American Redcross Wilderness First Aid or equivalent course preferred.*** The most commonly treated ailments are sunburns, cuts, sprains, blisters, burns, headaches, stomachaches, constipation, diarrhea, and embedded fishhooks. Dehydration and hyponatremia (drinking too much water) are also concerns.

- **Purify All Drinking Water**
  All water from all-natural sources including bayous, rivers, and lakes must be purified by filtering, bringing it to a rolling boil or treating with chemical purification agents. ***However, fresh water is provided at all overnight locations. Do not drink natural water without speaking with a Swamp Base staff member, and then properly treating it. Removal from the trek after getting sick is a possibility.***

- **Wash Hands, and Wash and Rinse Dishes Thoroughly**
  Protect the health of your crew by thoroughly washing hands with soap and water, and washing dishes using the three-pot method (hot soapy water, warm rinse water, cold bleach water rinse). Let dishes and utensils air dry.

- **Tobacco**
  Adult leaders should support the attitude that they, as well as youth, are better off without tobacco in any form and may not allow the use of tobacco products at any Scouting America activity involving youth participants. This includes the use of electronic cigarettes, personal vaporizers, or electronic nicotine delivery systems that simulate tobacco smoking.

  Because of fire danger in wilderness areas, smoking is allowed only at designated sites and established camps near a fire grate or ring. ***No smoking is allowed in the presence of youth participants.***

- **Alcohol and Drugs**
  Possession or use of alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs or the misuse of prescribed drugs is expressly prohibited. Groups or individuals found in violation of this National Scouting America policy will be sent home, as arranged with their home Scouting America Council office or parent.

- **Abuse**
  Physical, sexual, or emotional abuse (including hazing) of a participant by his or her peers or by an adult leader is unacceptable anywhere. The local, parish, or state authorities as well as the Scouting America Council representatives will be contacted if abuse is suspected.

- **Prescription Drugs and Medications**
  If an advisor or crew member is on regular medication, their physician should be consulted. It is a good idea in this case to carry twice as much as is needed and split it between two packs.

- **Wasp/Bee Stings and Other Insect Bites**
  If a crew member is sensitive or allergic to wasp/bee stings, be sure the individual carries their anaphylaxis kit (bee sting kit) with them. ***In some cases, wasp nests are built on low lying tree branches. Attention must be paid when paddling amongst trees, as to not disturb the nests.*** Participants should NEVER use their paddles to hit a nest. This type of activity can place the whole crew in danger if people are stung or forced into the water. If crew members are sensitive to other insect or spider bites, it is highly recommended to bring an antihistamine or a doctor recommended medication. Insect repellent and proper clothing is recommended for protection against horse flies and mosquitoes.

Undisturbed, nests in the swamp can become the home for hundreds of wasps.

- **Mosquitoes** (Family *Culicidae*)
  With the higher prevalence of mosquitoes during the summer months, it is best to understand what attracts them. ***Note: No disease carrying mosquitoes have been identified in the Atchafalaya Swamp.***

  1. Mosquitoes are their most active between dusk and dawn when winds are typically calm. Seek shelter in a hammock or building as the sun sets to avoid their dining hours.
  2. Mosquitoes tend to stay away from large bodies of water, including lakes and bayous, because food sources are less abundant on the water. During the day while paddling, one will experience very few mosquitoes.
  3. Mosquitoes are attracted to dark colors. Wear light colored clothing to reduce their attraction.

4. Most mosquito prey can be found in shady areas (dark). Avoid standing along tree lines or dense wooded areas where mosquitoes are abundant.
5. Avoid wearing or using floral fragrances. Colognes, perfumes, soaps, shampoos, and detergents as mosquitoes are attracted to these types of smells.
6. Before coming to Swamp Base, consider treating your clothes with Permethrin, as it is a great alternative to using insect spray. It is a highly effective way to keep mosquitoes and other insects away. ***Note:*** *Make sure to properly follow directions on how to properly treat clothes. Permethrin may cause some side effects to people who are allergic. Make sure to test for allergic reactions prior to arriving to Swamp Base.*
7. Swamp Base offers a long-sleeve shirt that is treated with Insect Shield®. Contact us for more information about how this shirt can limit the nuisance of mosquitoes.

- **Snakes**

Avoiding snakes while canoeing or fishing is similar to avoiding snakes on land, in that you want to stay away from areas that the snakes use for sunning. This means to avoid drifting underneath overhanging tree branches. Many types of water snakes like to sun on tree branches and then drop into the water when they detect movement.

Most snakes prefer to flee rather than fight, but if they feel threatened, or if they are accidentally stepped on or provoked, a snake (venomous or non-venomous) may bite. If you are bitten, it is helpful to identify the snake that bit you. ***Don't capture or kill it.***

1. Cotton Mouth – *Agkistrodon piscivorus*

a. Identification: Dark tan, brown or nearly black, with vague black or dark brown crossbands; side of head black with a white line from the eye to the angle of the mouth; underside dark with large blackish blotches; scales keeled and in 25 rows. Juveniles have a bold pattern of dark brown crossbands on a pink or orange background, with a yellow tail. Some adults retain the juvenile pattern.

b. Habits: Cottonmouths frequent swamplands and pond, lake and stream borders, especially those with dense canopies. They often remain coiled near water, or on log jams in water, rarely ascending shrubs or palmettos. They frequently travel between streams, even over low ridges, and may be found in almost any habitat. Upon provocation, cottonmouths will coil, open their mouths to expose the white lining, and shake their tails. They feed on fish, frogs, water snakes and small mammals.

Cottonmouth snakes spend the majority of their life in or around water.

2. Copperhead – *Agkistrodon contortrix*

a. Identification: Beige, tan or pale gray, often with a dull pink or orange tint above, with broad, darker brown, hourglass-shaped crossbands that slightly paler on the lower sides; underside whitish with dark brown blotches; scales keeled and in 23-27 rows. The head is patternless, often with a faint orange tint on the top, dull yellow on the sides. Young copperheads have a bright yellow tail.

b. Habits: Copperheads frequent wooded areas. They are unaggressive but create a potential hazard by lying motionless and camouflaged. During the summer they are active at night and very early in the morning. They feed on frogs, cicadas and rodents.

Copperheads prefer to live in wooded areas, near fallen trees, and around streams or ponds.

- **Alligators** – *Alligator Mississippians*

Alligators live in waterways throughout the southern United States. Females can occasional reach up to 10 feet in length, while large males can grow to 16 feet. Once endangered, they are now enjoying stable populations.

Alligators have fantastic hearing which is why you may hear one splash off into the water before catching sight of it. When you happen on a gator, it will almost certainly run right into the water. Although it appears to be charging, it is just trying to get into the water where it feels safest. If an alligator begins to hiss at you, it's a warning you that you are too close.

Tips for Recreating in Alligator Habitats:

1. Though you will often see alligators during the day, they are usually more active at dusk and dawn, as darkness gives any predator an advantage
2. It is always smart to pay attention to the surrounding waters while paddling. Understanding preferred areas for alligators to hide or rest will allow you to be more confident while paddling. In the warm months do not cut around waterway bends too closely, as these are the strategic spots where alligators like to lay hidden and keep an eye out for prey. Shallow waterways in the Atchafalaya Swamp are also favorite places for alligators to nestle down. Avoid the chance you may unsettle them. Although alligators are shy, they don't like being surprised and will often show themselves with a loud splash of their tail.

3. Do not camp near the water and take care going to the shore for water while camping. This includes fishing along the shore. Most people are accidently bitten by alligators while pulling their fish out of the water.
4. It is not uncommon for alligators to bask along the banks of a lake or bayou for extended periods of time. These alligators are usually warming their bodies; they are not actively hunting. Oftentimes a basking alligator may be seen with its mouth open; this is a way to cool its body temperature down, since alligators do not pant or sweat. An approaching human should cause these alligators to retreat into the water.
5. Although an alligator that slips off a bank on your approach is somewhere underneath you, and may even follow you a little, stay calm and know that it will not "thump" you from underneath or lunge out of the water at you. Keep paddling, be wary, and if you are a spooked, bang your paddle on your boat or the water a few times to intimidate it.
6. If you come across small alligators with yellow stripes, you have found JUVENILES, which means the mother is somewhere nearby. Baby alligators stay with mothers for up to a year. Don't stop to observe them or try to touch or catch one. ***The protectiveness of mother alligators cannot be overstated.*** A female protecting her nest might charge a person who gets close to the nest, but she will quickly return to the nest after the intruder has left.
7. Do not hunt, harass, or feed them. This is illegal and can cause future safety problems for both paddlers and the alligators.

Alligators can be found throughout the trek. Always practice caution when in or on the water.

- **Severe Weather**
  Participants should be moved from the water when possible to a safe location whenever lightning or thunderstorms threaten. Spread your group out 100 feet from each other if possible. Stay away from tall, isolated trees; flag poles; totem poles; or other tall objects. If you are in a forest, stay near a lower stand of trees. Wait at least 30 minutes after the last lightning flash or sound of thunder before leaving shelter. Stay away from water, wet items, and metal objects. Water and metal are excellent conductors of electricity.

- **Poisonous Plants**
  Poisonous plants are found throughout the United States, and anyone who has suffered a poison ivy outbreak knows that the itchy, sometimes painful rashes that result from contact with certain poisonous plants can easily derail outdoor recreation and high adventure plans. The swamps and woods of the Atchafalaya Swamp are home to two species of poisonous plants that all Scouts should be aware of.

  1. Poison Ivy – *Toxicodendron radicans*
  a. Identification: Poison Ivy's leaves are trifoliate—meaning that each stem has three leaves. Poison Ivy's leaves have a red tint in the spring and are vibrant green in the summer. Its vines can grow along the ground and up trees or structures. The vines are frequently covered in reddish hairy, furry textures.

Poison Ivy

  2. Poison Oak -- *Toxicodendron pubescens*
  a. Identification: Poison Oak is an upright shrub that can grow to 1 m (3 ft) tall. Its leaves are 15 cm (6 in) long, alternate, with three leaflets on each. The leaflets are usually hairy and are variable in size and shape, but most often resemble white oak leaves; they usually turn yellow or orange in autumn. The fruit is small, round, and yellowish or greenish.

Poison Oak

RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING CHRONIC ILLNESSES

- **Cardiac or Cardiovascular Disease:**
  Adults who have had any of the following must undergo a thorough evaluation by a physician before considering participation in a Swamp Base program:
  1. Angina (chest pain caused by coronary artery disease or congenital heart disease)
  2. Myocardial infarction (heart attack)
  3. Surgery or angioplasty to treat coronary artery disease
  4. Stroke or transient ischemic attacks
  5. Claudication (leg pain felt during exercise; caused by hardening of the arteries)
  6. Family history of heart disease in individuals under age 50
  7. Weight in excess of recommended guidelines

  The physical exertion during a high adventure trek may cause a heart attack or stroke in susceptible people. Adults 40 years of age or older, or any person who has experienced any of the conditions above, must speak with their doctor about an exercise stress test with thallium (a metallic element that helps in the diagnosis of stress) within three to six months before the scheduled trip to assess the adequacy of the heart muscle's blood supply. It is recommended that an adult who is over 40 years of age who has not experienced any of the conditions above have an ordinary stress test without thallium. ***Even if the stress test is normal, the results of testing done without the exertions of a high adventure program do not guarantee safety.*** If test results are abnormal, the individual will not be allowed to participate.

- **Hypertension (High Blood Pressure)**:
  The combination of stress and heat appear to cause a significant increase in blood pressure in many individuals participating in high adventure. Occasionally, hypertension reaches such a level that it is no longer safe for an individual to engage in strenuous activity. People with mildly increased blood pressure (greater than 140/90) may benefit from treatment before coming to a high adventure base and during the program. Individuals who are hypertensive (having blood pressure greater than 160/100) must be treated and have normal blood pressure (less than 140/90) before arriving. Medications must be continued during the high adventure program.

- **Diabetes:**
  Exercise and the type of food eaten affect insulin requirements. Any individual with insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus must be able to monitor personal blood glucose and know how to adjust insulin doses based on these factors. The diabetic person also must be able to give a self-injection. Both the diabetic person and one other person in the group must be able to recognize indications of excessively high blood sugar (hyperglycemia or diabetic ketoacidosis) and to recognize indications of excessively low blood sugar (hypoglycemia). The diabetic person and at least one other individual in the group must be able to begin the appropriate initial responses for these conditions. Arrangements for cool storage of insulin can be made upon your arrival.

  A diabetic person with frequent hospitalizations for diabetic ketoacidosis or who has frequent problems with hypoglycemia may not participate in a high adventure program until control of the diabetes has been achieved.

- **Seizure Disorders or Epilepsy**
  A seizure disorder or epilepsy does not exclude an individual from participating in high adventure. However, the seizure disorder must be controlled by medication. A seizure-free period of at least one year is the minimum. Exceptions to this guideline may be considered by medical staff and will be based on the specific type of seizure and the likely risks to the individual and to other members of the crew.

- **Asthma**
  It is expected that an individual with asthma will have consulted a physician in order to establish control of the condition. Asthma must be controlled to essentially normal lung function with the use of oral or aerosol bronchodilators. There is no power available for nebulizers during the day or at the primitive campsite. The patient must bring ample supplies of medication for the entire program. Individuals undergoing allergic desensitization therapy who require injections during their adventure must bring their medications upon arrival. At least one other crew member must know how to recognize an asthma attack, how to recognize the worsening of an attack, and how to administer bronchodilator therapy. Any person who is approved to go to Swamp Base who has received medical treatment for asthma within the past six years must carry a full-size prescribed inhaler for the length of the program. ***Asthmatic individuals whose exercise-induced asthma cannot be prevented with bronchodilator pre-medication, who require systemic corticosteroid therapy, or who have required multiple hospitalizations for asthma will not be allowed to participate.***

MEDICATIONS

Each high adventure participant who has a condition requiring medication should bring an appropriate supply in a locked pouch. In certain circumstances, duplicate supplies of vital medications are appropriate. Leaders must be aware of medications needed and monitor their use. An individual should always contact the family physician first about the advisability of participation. The staff of Swamp Base reserves the right to make medical decisions regarding any individual's participation.

- **Arthritis or Other Mobility Limiting Diseases**
  Due to the nature of the program and that they occur on boats that are almost constantly moving, all participants should have the ability to pull themselves out of the water and be comfortable on a moving vessel for days at a time.

- **Sleep Apnea**
  For individuals using a CPAP machine for the medical condition of sleep apnea, you should know that the arrival and departure nights, and Camp Atchafalaya have accommodations that include 110-volt power plugs nearby. ***During the nights of primitive camping on The Turtles and Rougarou Island, you will not have access to electricity for your CPAP machine. (2 total and consecutive nights)***

If you will be bringing medication that must be kept cold (e.g., insulin, certain injectables, etc.), please note the following requirement:

Participants must **bring a personal thermos, insulated bag, or small cooler** capable of keeping medication at the required temperature. This container should be compact and easily portable, leak-proof and durable, and clearly labeled with the participant's name

You will have access to **shared coolers** to **recharge cold packs on Day 2, 3, and 4** of the program. Please bring enough cold packs to maintain appropriate temperatures for at least 24 hours at a time. If you have any specific concerns or require assistance, please contact our team in advance so we can support.

WEIGHT GUIDELINES FOR SWAMP BASE ACTIVITIES

Each participant and adviser who will take part in Swamp Base activities is required to meet the guidelines in the height-weight chart below. Swamp Base treks involve paddling an average of 15 miles per day in the heat of South Louisiana's summers. Treks include one or more portages with 100+ pounds of canoe and gear weight. Participants who fall within the guidelines are more likely to have an enjoyable trek and to avoid incurring health risks. (Allowances beyond the height-weight requirement can only be made under the direction of Swamp Base leadership.) Due to program and rescue equipment, no one over 295 lbs. can be permitted to attend.

The right-hand column shows the maximum allowable weight for participating in Swamp Base. For your own health and safety, anyone who exceeds these limits should talk with their physician prior to arriving, seriously consider losing weight prior to attending Swamp Base, and speak with Swamp Base leadership.

Recommended Swamp Base Participant Weight (lbs.) [1]

Height	19-34 Years	35+ Years	Maximum
5'0"	97-128	108-138	166
5'1"	101-132	111-143	172
5'2"	104-137	115-148	178
5'3"	107-141	119-152	183
5'4"	111-146	122-157	189
5'5"	114-150	126-162	195
5'6"	118-155	130-167	201
5'7"	121-160	134-172	207
5'8"	125-164	138-178	214
5'9"	129-169	142-183	220
5'10"	132-174	146-188	226
5'11"	136-179	151-194	233
6'0"	140-184	155-199	239
6'1"	144-189	159-205	246
6'2"	148-195	164-210	252
6'3"	152-200	168-216	260
6'4"	156-205	173-222	267
6'5"	160-211	177-228	274
6'6"	164-216	182-234	281
6'7"+			295

[1] This table is presented in the Scouting America's Passport to High Adventure and is based on the revised Dietary Guidelines for Americans from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Department of Health and Human Services.

MEDICAL TREATMENT

Swamp Base requires that each crew bring its own **first-aid kit.** A first-aid kit well-stocked with the basic essentials is indispensable. Choose one that is sturdy and lightweight, yet large enough to hold the contents so that they are readily visible and so that any one item may be taken out without unpacking the whole kit. Keep a list of contents available for easy refilling. Keep the kit in a convenient location. Quantities of suggested items for your first-aid kit depend on the size of your group and local conditions. Your first-aid kit should be in a waterproof box or bag. It will get wet.

This first-aid kit is for the treatment of minor injuries. All Swamp Base guide vessels will carry an additional first-aid kit as well. The treatment of minor injuries is up to the crew leader or the crew's trained first-aid provider. The decision for treatment of more serious injuries will be referred to the appropriate staff leader or medical person.

FIRST AID KIT

All trek crews must bring one first aid kit (one per crew if having multiple crews). The kit can be personalized to meet the demands of the crew. The following items are recommended by the Scouting America National Health and Safety Committee to be used by Scouting and Venturing units doing high adventure activities. The crew's first aid kit should be stored in a waterproof container and should contain the following items:

- Adhesive bandages (assorted sizes)
- Knuckle and fingertip bandages
- Steri strips
- Moleskin/molefoam
- Second skin
- Gauze pads—3" x 3"
- Adhesive tape—1" x 15'
- 1" or 2" roll of gauze
- 4" elastic bandage
- Oval eye patch
- Antibiotic ointment
- Disposable alcohol wipes
- Triangular bandage
- Acetaminophen
- Ibuprofen tablets
- Cold caplets
- Steroid cream
- Anaphylaxis kit
- Throat lozenges
- Small bar soap
- Lip balm
- Thermometer
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Safety pins
- Side cutters
- Medical gloves
- Barrier device for resuscitation
- Sunscreen
- First aid manual
- Antacids
- Antihistamine

The following items are recommended additions for your first-aid kit:

- Aloe Vera cream
- Seasickness medicine
- Insect repellent
- Medicated powder
- Swimmer's eardrops

REMOVAL FROM THE TREK

In some rare circumstances, due to health-related issues or other unforeseen personal circumstances, individuals may need to be removed from their high adventure trek.

For those being removed for health and medical related issues, the Swamp Base health officer will decide whether it is appropriate or necessary for the individual to be taken off the trail. Due to the remote nature of the trail and the resources needed to remove an individual, ***once removed for a health-related reason, the individual must seek professional medical attention either at an urgent care facility or hospital emergency room.***

In severe cases, or health issues that happen late in the afternoon or evening, it may be necessary for the individual to be checked into the Wingate Hotel.

Please note: *Receiving approval from a physician to participate does not guarantee that the individual will return to their trek. This determination will be made by a Swamp Base Director. In some instances, it is logistically impossible for Swamp Base to shuttle participants back to the trail. Refunds will not be made for time missed on the trail. Additional fees may be charged to the individual for resources used and overnight stays at the hotel.*

Additional removal notes:

- If removed from the trek, please bring all personal gear with you. Returning to the trek in the same day or at all is not guaranteed.
- If a youth is removed, an adult leader MUST accompany him/her. The adult is to remain with the youth at the physician's office, hospital, and hotel. The adult will not return to the trek unless the youth is sent home or cleared to return to the trail by a physician and a Swamp Base director.
- Once removed, the Swamp Base health officer will contact the individual's emergency contact person to inform them of the situation.
- Additional costs incurred by Swamp Base for participant removal may be applied to the crew's damage deposit.

Trek Guides discuss safety procedures before launching at the trail head.

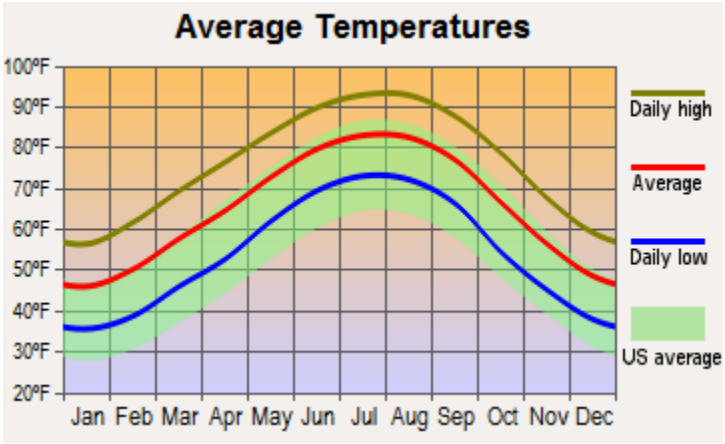
GENERAL CLIMATE CONDITIONS - SOUTH LOUISIANA

Louisiana has a humid subtropical climate. The subtropical characteristics of the state are due in large part to the influence of the Gulf of Mexico, which at its farthest point is no more than 75 miles (120 km) away.

Summers in Louisiana have high temperatures from mid-June to mid-September averaging 90° F (32° C) or more, and overnight lows averaging above 70° F (22° C). Temperatures above 95° F (35° C) are commonplace as the summer progresses. High humidity levels can make the soaring temperatures feel even warmer and steamy.

The summer season also brings frequent thunderstorms to Louisiana, often during the afternoons. Rain is frequent throughout the year, although the summer is slightly wetter than the rest of the year.

Prevailing winds are from the south or southeast. During the summer and fall, tropical storms and hurricanes frequently batter the state, especially along the coast. Hurricane season in the Atlantic begins June 1st and ends November 30th.



General temperatures for South Louisiana.

PHYSICAL CONDITIONING

To safely enjoy a high adventure paddle trek everyone must arrive physically prepared. Due to the requirements of the 61.6-mile trail, including paddling up to 19 miles a day into sometimes windy conditions, and carrying as much as 100 lbs. across a levee portage; participants will need to physically condition their bodies prior to arrival.

Conditioning your body not only improves your endurance – it helps prevent injuries, sore muscles and strains. Paddling will require the use of the arms, upper body, and torso, while the portage will require additional back and leg strength. It is important that everyone be in very good condition so that both youth and adults can participate in the level of adventure that they deserve.

- A regular program of physical conditioning and acclamation to heat prior to the trip is very strongly recommended. Plan some type of aerobic exercise, to be completed outdoors in the heat, for 30 to 60 minutes a session three to five times a week. Jogging, running up and walking down hills or flights of stairs, and hiking with a full pack are excellent methods of physical preparation. Other aerobic exercises such as swimming, bicycling, stationary cycling, and aerobic exercise classes can supplement your training. Start slowly and gradually increase the duration and intensity of your exercises.

- It is also important to perform workouts that target muscle strength. These include back strengthening, shoulder strengthening, and forearm and wrist strengthening. Setting a workout routine that includes upper body exercises such as pushups, weight training, pull ups, or best of all – paddling, can strengthen the muscles that will be most used during the trek. ***Remember to check with your physician before starting any physical fitness program.***

- You must get a physical examination from your physician within 12 months (ideally, within 30 days) of your Swamp Base expedition. Complete the health history and schedule a time for the physical exam. **MAKE SURE FORMS ARE SIGNED BY A PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN FOR ALL YOUTH UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE!**

- Anyone with significant hypertension (160/100 or higher) should be treated before coming to the Swamp Base to reduce their blood-pressure as close as possible to normal (135/85). They should continue on blood-pressure medication while participating in the expedition. Hypertension can increase the risk of angina or stroke. While we do not operate at high altitudes like Philmont Scout Ranch, participants will be carrying heavy loads over the levees and will experience strenuous activity in remote areas.

DATES, FEES, & REFUNDS

Two Swamp Base Trek 1 crews begin daily, June 6th through July 15th. The program lasts for 6 days and 6 nights, and participants paddle 61.6-miles through the swamp. Five days and four nights of the program happens within the Atchafalaya Swamp, with the remaining two nights being at the Wingate Hotel in Lafayette. Trek Crew sizes are 8 to 11 people in size and require a minimum of two adult leaders per crew. Scout units can reserve more than one crew.

Participation deposits and fees are charged to Scout units, not individual Scouts and leaders. Each unit's participant fees must be paid in full by the deadlines set by Swamp Base.

TREK CREW #:

Once the trek deposit has been paid, your trek crew will be assigned a Trek Crew #. This number will include your arrival year, month, and day (YYMMDD), the number "01" for Trek 1, and either "A," "B," or "P," and an abbreviation for the program you're participating in ("ST" for Swamp Trek). For example, the second crew arriving on June 10th for the Swamp Trek will be assigned **270610-01B-ST.**

STANDARD TREK CREWS:

Swamp Base's most popular form or participation. Scout units, multiple units participating together, or Council or District contingents can reserve a high adventure trek crew.

Participation Fees:

- Trek crews of 8 to 11 = $795/person
- Trek crews with less than 8 people are required to pay the total amount due for a trek crew of 8 people ($6,360).

Payment Schedule:

- **Trek Deposit** – At the time of registration
    - $500 non-refundable deposit per trek crew is required to hold a trek date. No participation numbers or roster numbers are needed at this time.
    - The deposit can be paid with a credit card by calling 337-235-8552 or through a mailed check made out to *Louisiana Swamp Base*. ***If mailing a check, please call (337) 235-8552 to inform Swamp Base staff that a check is in the mail. This will ensure that a date is not taken while the check is in the mail.***
- **1st Payment Due** – October 1, 2026
    - $2,500 non-refundable per crew is due at this time. No participation numbers or final roster is needed at this time. Please pay 1st Payments by check only, made out to *"Swamp Base."*
- **Final Payment Due** – March 3, 2027
    - Remaining balance/complete payment and final roster is due on this day. Please pay Final Payments by check only, made out to *"Swamp Base."* ***Note:*** *The Final Roster will determine the remaining balance owed.*
- **Damage Deposit Due** – March 3, 2027

- $500 refundable per crew is due at this time. The entire fee will be refunded if it is determined that no damage has been incurred to Swamp Base gear.
- Partial refunds will be made, minus the cost of the damage. If costs exceed $500, then no refund will be given.
- Please send in a **separate check** from the Final Payment to cover the Damage Deposit.

PROVISIONAL PADDLER PROGRAM:

A provisional crew is made up of separate individuals from across the country that are placed together as a crew. The provisional trek date available is June 18, 2027.

Participation Fees:

- Up to 11 individual person spots are available = $795/person

Payment Schedule:

- **Trek Deposit** – At the time of registration
  - $100 non-refundable deposit per person is required to hold a provisional trek spot. No roster information is needed at this time.
  - The deposit can be paid with a credit card by calling 337-235-8552 or through a mailed check made out to *Louisiana Swamp Base*. ***If mailing a check, please call (337) 235-8552 to inform Swamp Base staff that a check is in the mail. This will ensure that a crew spot is not taken while the check is in the mail.***
- **1st Payment Due** – October 1, 2026
  - $250 non-refundable per person is due at this time.
- **Final Payment Due** – March 3, 2027
  - Remaining $445 per person payment and final roster is due on this day. ***Note:*** *The Final Roster will identify names, genders, and youth or adult status.*
- **Damage Deposit Due** – March 3, 2027
  - $50 refundable per person is due at this time. The entire fee will be refunded if it is determined that no damage has been incurred to Swamp Base gear.
  - Partial refunds will be made, minus the cost of the damage. If costs exceed $50, then no refund will be given.

REFUNDS:

- **ALL FEES (TREK DEPOSIT, 1ST PAYMENT, AND FINAL PAYMENT AS INDICATED IN FEE PAYMENT SCHEDULE) ARE NON-REFUNDABLE.**
- Only the 1st Payment and Final Payment are transferable to the balance of fees in the event of cancellation or substitution of trek to another Scout unit. ***Trek Deposits cannot be transferred amongst Scout units.***
- If a participant is unable to attend, payments may be transferred to a substitute participant that is replacing a member of your Trek Crew. ***Refunds will not be given for members that do not attend or leave the crew.*** Please confirm with the Swamp Base director if you plan to substitute any trek crew member. Failure to confirm with a director and update a Final Roster may result in the participant being unable to attend.
- **Be cautious of making reservations or paying fees for those who have not made a financial commitment!**

Possible Individual Refunds:

- Medical Exclusion by Doctor – 50% refund of fees paid less deposit – documentation required
- US Military Deployment – 100% refund of fees paid
- Death – 100% refund of fees paid (or 1st degree relative within 30 days of trek arrival)

In the unlikely event that weather conditions beyond our control (hurricanes and tropical storms) prevent the completion of your scheduled trip, an alternative program may be offered. In the case of cancellation due to extreme weather conditions, fees will be refunded based on the percentage of the programs cancelled. Crews that did not participate in any part of their program will be refunded 100 percent of their fees paid, except for participation fee deposits**. ***Note:*** *Swamp Base is not able to refund any fees related to meals, lodging, or transportation incurred as a result of an evacuation. These expenses remain the responsibility of the crew.*

***In advance of the season, Swamp Base commits financial resources to employ staff, purchase food and program supplies, and rent gear to prepare for the high adventure treks.*

Damage Deposit:
Each crew is ***required to post a $500 refundable damage deposit*** prior to arriving to Swamp Base. If you have multiple crews, you must have a deposit for each one. These deposits are due as a separate check on March 3, 2027.

The damage deposit must be in the following form:

- Check, made out to *Louisiana Swamp Base*

If damages have been incurred, the remaining balance of the damage deposit will be returned to the crew, less damage expenses. Please allow for the remaining balance to be returned by September 1, 2027. Crews that did not incur damages, will have their checks shredded by Swamp Base at the conclusion of their trek.

Expenses for damaged or lost equipment:

- Wenonah canoe – Depending on damage, up to $500
- Canoe paddle – $150
- Astral PFD – $120
- Other damaged/lost item expenses will be at the discretion of the Swamp Base Professional Staff.

REMEMBER TO "LEAVE NO TRACE" ON YOUR GEAR!

ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility for all participants (youth and adult):

1. Must be a registered Scouts, Venture Scout, Sea Scout, Explorer or adult leader.

2. Participants must be at least 13 years old on or before the date of arrival to Swamp Base. ***Age requirements for the Swamp Base cannot be relaxed. Please do not request or expect exceptions. All youth participants are required to present proof of age before participating in the program.***

   Appropriate proof of age includes a copy of **one** of the following:
   - School photo ID (if date of birth is included) or
   - Birth certificate or
   - Passport or
   - Valid government-issued ID

   Those individuals who do not meet the minimum age requirements or do not present appropriate proof of age will be sent home, no exceptions. Help prevent a tragedy by adhering to the age policy and by bringing proper proof of age.

3. Must pass the Scouting America Swim Test as a "Beginner" or "Swimmer" before arrival.

4. Must be in good health as evidenced by a Scouting America Annual Health and Medical Record filled out and signed by your doctor within the past 12 months. ***Only the most current*** **Scouting America** ***Health and Medical Record will be accepted. Medical Record must include Parts A, B, and C.***

5. Must know and use the Scout Oath and Law as their guide to appropriate behavior during their trek.

Swimming Ability:

All participants (youth and adults) are required to pass the standard Scouting America Swim Test before arriving to Swamp Base. Swamp Base requires that all participants pass the Scouting America Swim Test as a "Swimmer" or "Beginner." Those only passing the test as a "Learner" will not be able to participate.

Swimmers *must demonstrate the following:*
Jump feet first into water over the head in depth, level off, and begin swimming. Swim 75 yards in a strong manner using one or more of the following strokes: sidestroke, breaststroke, trudgen, or crawl (no dog-paddle); then swim 25 yards using an easy, resting backstroke. The 100 yards must be completed in one swim without stops and include at least one sharp turn. After completing the swim, rest by floating for one minute.

Beginners *must demonstrate the following:*
Jump feet first into water over the head in depth, level off, swim 25 feet on the surface, stop, turn sharply, resume swimming as before, and return to starting place.

REQUIREMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Trek Advisor (Adult Leader)

Congratulations for having accepted the leadership of a Swamp Base trek crew! This reflects great credit on you and your leadership ability. You have assumed a great responsibility. Parents are entrusting their youth to your care. Scouting America is placing its faith and confidence in your leadership. Most importantly, the young people in your crew are depending on you to realize their hopes, aspirations, and dreams of a successful Swamp Base high adventure experience.

Trek Advisor Responsibilities:

1. Recruit Scouts and Venturers who meet the participation requirements; this includes passing the Scouting America Swim Test. A minimum of two adults are required per crew.
2. Organize the expedition.
3. Designate a youth crew leader prior to arrival. This youth will work with you and our staff in order to have a successful trek.
4. Train the crew members and set a physical fitness schedule so they will be prepared for the high adventure experiences in the swamp.
5. Collect participant fees and make all payments on time.
6. Be physically fit and ensure all crew members have a current **Scouting America Annual Health and Medical Record (Parts A, B, and C).**
7. Make sure every youth participant has proof of age.

***NOTE**: The required medical history and evaluation do not always screen out participants for our high adventure program. For example, individuals who are obese will not function well in a canoe. Getting in and out of the water is extremely difficult, and the sleeping quarters are small. Individuals with physical disabilities may be able to enjoy our programs if the disabilities are known and necessary precautions are taken. Further, individuals with respiratory or heart problems must discuss with their doctors the challenges of strenuous high adventure activity.*

Trek Crew Members

Requirements and Responsibilities:

1. Exceptions to these requirements will not be made.
2. In keeping with the policies of Scouting America, requirements for acceptance and participation in Swamp Base are without regard for race, color, creed, sexual orientation or national origin.
3. All crew members must be registered members of a chartered unit, a Scouts, BSA Troop with proper leadership, a Venture Crew, or Family Troop with proper leadership.
4. At least half of the members in every Swamp Base crew must be youth.
5. All trek crews participating in Swamp Base must have *at least two* adult leaders *over* the age of 21.
6. If the Swamp Base crew is co-ed, you must have co-ed leadership.
7. If you have more than one trek crew attending, each trek crew must have at least two adult leaders with proper leadership.

8. There must be a registered female adult leader 21 years of age or over in every unit serving females. A registered female adult leader 21 years of age or over must be present for any activity involving female youth.
9. Scouting's Barriers to Abuse require that a buddy pair cannot be mixed gender, where appropriate a third youth must be added (for a buddy group of 3).
10. Linked male and female crews: Each participating *Troop* must have a minimum of 2 adult leaders age 21+ attending in the crew. *For example, this is a total of 4 adult leaders age 21+ years old for a Swamp Base crew composed of 1 female Troop and 1 male Troop that are linked.*
11. At least one adult leader must be trained in First Aid and CPR from any recognized agency. ***American Redcross Wilderness First Aid or equivalent course is preferred.***

Training:

1. **All registered adults must have completed Safeguarding Youth Training (SYT).**

2. Each trek crew must have at least one adult currently trained in CPR, First Aid, Safe Swim Defense, Safety Afloat, and Weather Hazards. **All adults need not be trained, and the training may be shared among the adults, EXCEPT all registered adults MUST provide proof of having Youth Protection training**.

Scouts watch the sunrise over Sandy Cove in the early morning hours of Day 5.

CREW POSITIONS

Swamp Base trek crews are predominately youth-led, with adult supervision. Please plan to arrive for your trek with crew positions already determined. <u>Please note that there is only one of each position per crew.</u> Each position will be assigned a rubber bracelet to identify their position. Crew members without a position will be given a green bracelet.

Trek Advisor (Adult): Gray
The adult leader who oversees the crew is called the Trek Advisor. They are responsible for sending trek payments and often plays a major role in helping the crew(s) plan and prepare for a successful trek. Decisions during the trek will often be made by the "Key Three", including the Trek Advisor, Crew Leader, and Trek Guide. <u>The Trek Advisor should share updates received from Swamp Base with the crew.</u>

Crew Leader (Youth): Orange
Responsible for organizing the crew, assigning duties, making decisions, and recognizing the capabilities of each crew member. They lead by example and practices servant leadership to allow the crew to have an enjoyable and successful trek. The Crew Leader should have leadership capabilities that are respected by everyone. Successful Crew Leaders exhibit the following traits: positive attitude, attentiveness to all crew members' needs, and the ability to identify and resolve conflicts before they develop into larger issues.

Chaplain's Aide (Youth): Black
Leads the crew in following the 12th point of the Scout Law, a Scout is Reverent. Leads the crew in nightly "Roses & Thorns." During Roses & Thorns, each crew member will say their rose (something they liked about the day), thorn (something they disliked about the day), and bud (what they are looking forward to tomorrow or in the near future). Each crew member should be allowed to talk uninterrupted. The Chaplain's Aide is also responsible for leading the crew in the "Swamp Base Grace" *(see page 5)* at meals. At Camp Atchafalaya there will be an opportunity for crews to lead and participate in an interfaith service. The Chaplain's Aide is responsible for leading the service.

Swamp Steward (Youth): Blue
Helps the crew understand and follow the principles of the Scouting America Outdoor Code *(see page 5)* and Leave No Trace. In addition to encouraging the crew to tread lightly in the wilderness, the Steward is also responsible to make sure that all equipment and gear is properly treated, and that all trash from meals and program locations is collected and disposed of properly. Swamp Stewards are encouraged to ensure that overnight locations are left clean for following crews.

e-Scribe (Youth or Adult): Brown
Leads the documentation of the trek by capturing video, audio, and photographs to share on social media.

Trek Guide (Swamp Base staff member): Red

Trek Guides are members of the Swamp Base staff and are assigned randomly to crews for the entirety of the trek. Guides provide crews with orientation, outdoor skills training, issue trail food and are a resource for safety, environmental awareness and historical background of the area.

SWAMP BASE - TREK ITINERARY

*** Unlike other High-Adventure camps, Swamp Base is not self-paced. In order to complete the trek, crews must paddle the scheduled daily distances. Distances and Trek are subject to changes. We will announce any official changes to all registered crews before our season starts.**

Arrival Day – Wingate by Wyndham Hotel in Lafayette, LA

Upon arriving to Lafayette, LA, ***Swamp Base participants need to meet at the Wingate by Wyndham Hotel in Lafayette at 2:00 pm to begin their Swamp Base experience. The Wingate is located at 702 E Kaliste Saloom Rd.*** Scouts will be assigned a room for the night and have their trek guide complete their trek orientation, safety overview, and gear shakedown. Please see the 'Trek Gear List' for a complete list of required and recommended gear.

Trek crew 170615-01A-ST from the Sam Houston Area Council in Texas.

Day 1 in the Swamp – 19.4 miles, Bayou Courtableau to The Turtles

The first day of paddling is spent in the Indian Bayou Area, a 28,500 acre piece of swampland operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Though the paddlers begin their day in the 4.4 mile long Grimmett Canal, the majority of the day is spent in the challenging and winding bayous of Bayou Fordoche and Bayou Fuesilier of the Swamps. A mix of large hardwood trees and shrubs line the narrow bayou providing paddlers with ample shade during the day. The day concludes paddling through the most recognized portion of the Atchafalaya, the Henderson Swamp. This 7,000 acre swamp/lake is known less for its cypress trees, but more for its cypress stumps, remnants left by the logging industry over 100 years ago. Paddlers may pass under Osprey nests and see fish jumping before reaching their 36-foot by 24-foot floating campsite in a calm alcove on the west side of the lake. Campsites will be under a roofed pavilion with cots, have a primitive toilet, and a propane stove for cooking.

Day 2 – 10.4 miles, The Turtles to Rougarou Island

Waking to a sunrise over the lake, paddlers will pack their gear, leave their floating lodging early, and paddle about 1 mile to McGee's Swamp Tours. There they'll hop on a large swamp tour boat where they'll get a chance for a close encounter with an alligator!

After their ride, Scouts will complete their first portage of the trek, which takes Scouts up and over the 25' high levee into Bayou Berard, a wide waterway that leads to the small fishing community of Catahoula, LA. ***Note:*** *This portage, though only 900 feet long, is not easy. It takes place at 10:00am when temperatures are 85 to 90 degrees. Physical conditioning prior to arriving is highly recommended.*

During their second night in the Atchafalaya, Scouts will sleep on primitive Rougarou Island. The island is equipped with a small generator for limited power and a primitive pit style toilet. The evening's accommodations are Hennessey hammocks with built-in mosquito nets. It is thought that a Rougarou, or Cajun werewolf, prowls the surrounding swamps. Be on the lookout!

Day 3 – 14.6 miles, Rougarou Island to Camp Atchafalaya

Day 3's paddle is the most diverse day of paddling, as the swamp landscape is constantly changing. Between the large live oaks that surround Rougarou Island, the quintessential cypress swamps of Bayou Grand Gueule, and south to the open waters of Lake Dauterive, Scouts will continuously be challenged by the various paddling environments. Part of this day of paddling includes a stop at Forgotten Cove, an ancient backwater swamp. During the time spent in Forgotten Cove, Scouts must follow one important rule… remain silent. Ssshhh!

In the early-to mid-afternoon, Scouts will arrive at Camp Atchafalaya aka "Camp A," in Lake Fausse Pointe. Scouts will get some much-needed rest as well as a few program opportunities to welcome them to the new location.

Day 4 – 0.0 miles, Program Day at Camp Atchafalaya

Scouts and adults alike will participate in numerous programs throughout the day. Our 9 Square in the Air program is a huge hit, but others like our stream table, baby alligator program, outdoor games, and the evening's "Zydeco Social" make for memories that last a lifetime. Three hot meals will be served during your rest day, and you are more than welcome to ask staff if any service projects are available.

Day 5 – 17.2 miles, Camp Atchafalaya to Charenton Beach

For many, the highlight of the week-long journey comes on Day 5 with most of the day being spent paddling through the grand old cypress trees of Lake Fausse Pointe and the dense water tupelo trees of Grand Lake. The north rim of Lake Fausse Pointe can be a daunting paddle, but with the low winds that are typical of the summer months, the area is a jewel to behold. Surrounding the lake are hundreds of large cypress trees, some over 1,000 years old. These trees were spared cutting due to their hollow or poor wood. These "trash" trees are some of the widest in the state and represent Louisiana's equivalent to the sequoias of California. After paddling amongst giants, the trek crew will portage over the levee at the "Swamp Stomp," a challenging 800' portage that promises an opportunity to get a little muddy. A Scout is Clean, but not afraid to get dirty! From here they will paddle through Little Pass to Grand Lake, where crews finish their paddling with us for the week, load onto the bus, and head back to civilization.

Note: *The second portage of the trek is called "Swamp Stomp." Again, it takes Scouts up and over the 25' high levee and through the woods before entering into narrow bayous that head towards Grand Lake. Though only 800 feet long, the Swamp Stomp is not easy. The trail is extremely muddy, and footing is difficult. Physical conditioning prior to arriving is recommended, and laced footwear is required.*

A crew takes a picture break after completing Swamp Stomp.

TRANSPORTATION FOR NON-DRIVING CREWS

If your crew is planning to arrive by train or fly into the Lafayette Regional Airport, you will need transportation to the hotel. There a few options for transportation, but let's first discuss the needs for transportation:

- Amtrak services the Lafayette Train Station and may prove cheaper than airfare if you have the time to spare.
- The Lafayette Regional Airport is located in town and is easily accessible to Lafayette. Only 1.7 miles separate the airport from the Wingate Hotel.
- Crew sizes are 8 to 11 people or if you have two crews, 16 to 22 people, so multiple vehicles, large vehicles, or multiple trips from the station or airport to the hotel will be necessary.
- Crews are away in the swamp for 5 days, leaving vehicles in a parking lot.

If you plan to explore more of South Louisiana or New Orleans while in the area, the airport does offer the standard rental car companies: Alamo, Avis, Budget, Enterprise, Hertz, and National. ***Please note:*** *Booking online in advance will be the best way to save money.*

The preferred option is making a SHUTTLE reservation with the Wingate Hotel by calling 337-234-3700 at least one week in advance of your arrival. The shuttle van is a FREE service provided by the hotel. Unfortunately, the van can only hold 6 to 7 people per trip, so multiple trips may be necessary.

Swamp Base is also working with ALG Executive Charter & SUV Services for temporary transportation. The owners are both Eagle Scouts and if you mention the Scouting America and Swamp Base, hopefully you'll get a great deal. Using ALG would be a preferred option for Scout units looking to explore the area for one day. To ensure transportation, please plan to book in advance.

Contact information:
ALG Executive Charter & SUV Services
Byron Holmes
Executive Director
337-233-3460
102 Magnate, Suite 102
www.acadianalivery.com
bholmes@acadianalivery.com

Luggage for Flying Crews:
For flying crews', Swamp Base provides storage for your luggage while you're in the swamp. Please take out all trek-related gear from the suitcases, and load both your trek gear and your empty luggage on to the Swamp Base trailer in the morning when the crew departs for the trailhead. Please don't leave anything at the hotel. When the trailer returns to Lafayette after dropping the crew off, we will unload the luggage and place your gear in our locked building. When the crew passes by the Swamp Base office at the conclusion of the trek, we will return the empty luggage to you.

HOTEL
CHECK-IN/CHECK-OUT PROCEDURES

Participants will spend their first and last night of their Swamp Base experience in Lafayette. For each night at the hotel, both Scouts and adult leaders will need to check-in with the front desk staff. This may include filling out and signing a housing identification and contact information card. The hotel staff will hand out keys but will not assign hotel rooms. Room assignments must be done by the adult Trek Advisor. Swamp Base works with the hotel to make sure that everyone is comfortable. *Please note: In some cases, Scouts may need to share queen beds.*

Per Scouting America Youth Protection standards, Scouts sharing hotel rooms must be no more than two years apart in age. Plan accordingly when identifying roommates.

No gear or personal items are to be left in the hotel rooms while on the trek. It is required for all participants to check-out every morning after a night's stay.

For morning check-out, it is required that all room keys be returned to the front desk.

A Trek Crew undergoes a gear shakedown at their arrival.

RECOGNITION AWARDS

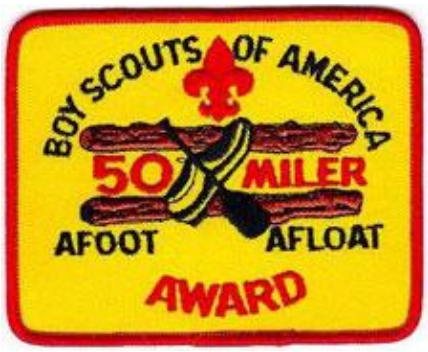
Swamp Base Trek Award:

About the Patch:
The Swamp Base Trek Award patch is presented to all participants that complete a Swamp Base high adventure trek, fill out the program exit survey, and obey the Scout Oath and Law while at Swamp Base.

The Swamp Base Trek Award patch was designed to resemble the silhouettes of the moss-covered old growth cypress trees found throughout the swamp. Included at the base of the patch is the apex predator of the area, the American alligator. The skull of a cow's head represents Tête la Vache, which means "Cow's head" in French. The Tête la Vache marks the high water mark of the Flood of 1927 and can be seen in the Indian Bayou Area on Day 1's paddle. ***Only those who conquer the swamp will earn a special addition to their patch… a real alligator tooth!***

Please note: *If a Swamp Base Trek Award patch is lost or broken, please contact Swamp Base to submit a "Lost Patch Request." This request must include your trek crew #, Scout unit #, home address, as well as a brief write-up about your trek experience and what was learned in the swamp.*

50-Miler Award:



A large part of the 50-Miler Award can be earned by satisfactory participation and completion in Swamp Base. In order to qualify, the individual member must fulfill all of the following requirements.

1. Make complete and satisfactory plans for the trip, including the possibilities of advancement.
2. Cover the trail or canoe or boat route of not less than 50 consecutive miles; take a minimum of five consecutive days to complete the trip without the aid of motors. (In some areas pack animals may be used.)
3. During the time on the trail or waterway, complete a minimum of 10 hours each of group work on projects to improve the trail, springs, campsite, portage, or area. If, after checking with recognized authorities, it is not possible to complete 10 hours each of group work on the trail, a similar project may be done in the unit's home area. (There should be no unauthorized cutting of brush or timber.)
4. Unit or tour leader must then file a 50-Miler Award application with the local council service center. This application gives additional details about planning the trip.

With the large number of Scouts participating on a Swamp Base high adventure trek each year, we ask that the 10 hours each of group work be completed in the Scout unit's hometown or Council. Swamp Base suggests working on a "conservation based project that relates to water quality and improving a watershed."

Unfortunately, Swamp Base nor the Evangeline Area Council can award the 50-Miler to individuals, it must be applied for in your own council. However, we are happy to provide supporting documentation should your council have any questions.

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Alcoholic Beverages and Illegal Substances:
There is no place in the programs of Scouting America for the possession or use of these substances. **Anyone, youth or adult, violating this policy will be asked to leave the program immediately without a refund**.

Smoking:
Smoking is confined to designated areas only. The minimum age for smoking is 21 years of age. Smoking is not allowed in the presence of youth. **SMOKING IS NOT PERMITTED ON ANY VESSEL, IN HAMMOCKS, OR IN ANY BUILDING.**

Fireworks and Firearms:
Scouting America policy prohibits possession and discharge of fireworks or possession of firearms not used in the Scout program. Fireworks or firearms found during the high adventure program will be confiscated and destroyed.

Appropriate Clothing:
All attire must be modest and Scout appropriate. It is recommended to wear quick-dry clothing due to the nature of being in an aquatic environment with occasional rain showers.

Religious Service:
Swamp Base encourages all Scouts and Scouters to comply with the 12th point of the Scout Law: "A Scout is Reverent." During your first morning at Camp Atchafalaya, your trek guide will help lead an interfaith service program. Field uniforms are not required. If your crew has specific requests for a religious service outside of what is offered at Swamp Base, please let the staff know. Your crew will then be in charge of running their own service.

Hurricane Season:
Hurricane season begins June 1st and continues through November 30th. In the event of extreme weather conditions, the Swamp Base director will make the final decision regarding whether to continue with the adventure or seek shelter.

TREK GEAR - WHAT TO BRING

Due to the daily paddling requirements necessary to complete the week-long program and the climate of south Louisiana in the late spring/early summer, the following items are recommended for all participants to bring with them, to ensure an enjoyable experience in the swamp.

Remember, BE SELF-SUFFICIENT. Don't put yourself in the position of being dependent on others. Think and plan ahead about what you will do about having enough food and water. Keep a back-up snack and bottle of water in your boat, regardless of the group's plans.

Required Paperwork:

These documents are required to be shown at your Arrival Day. Failure to provide forms will prevent crew members from participating.

- Two (2) copies of **Scouting America Health and Medical Forms (Parts A, B, and C)** and medical insurance information conducted within the last year
- **Scouting America Swim Tests** for all participants, passed as either "Beginner" or "Swimmer." No "Learners" will be allowed to participate
- **High Adventure Risk Advisories** completed for all participants with signatures on all forms
- **Signed Trek Advisor Statement of Aknowledgement and Understanding** *(found at the end of this guide)*
- For ALL adult leaders and "youth" 18 and older – Proof of completion of **Scouting America Safeguarding Youth Training**
- Proof of completion of the following trainings (one training required per crew):
    - **CPR**
    - **First-Aid (*American Redcross Wilderness First Aid or equivalent preferred*)**
    - **Safe Swim Defense**
    - **Weather Hazards**
    - **Safety Afloat**
- Proof of age/photo ID for all participants

Required Participation Gear:

These items are required in order to participate on the high adventure trek.

- Safety whistle
- 4 large-mouth Nalgene® 32 oz. water bottles
    - *Does not have to be name brand Nalgene, but must be durable and hard-sided.*
- 1 bottle non-oily sunblock and sunscreen spray (SPF 30+)
- Large sponge for removing water from canoe
- Pocket knife
- Headlamp with red light ability

Essential Paddling Gear:

- Quick dry clothes (2-3 short *or* long sleeve shirts and 1 pair of shorts)
    - ***Swamp Base offers a long sleeve, UPF 40+, 100% polyester moisture-wicking shirt with Insect Shield® for $35.95. Please contact us with questions about purchasing.***

- Lightweight zip-off long pants (for sun protection while paddling)
    - ***Note**: Dark colored clothes attract mosquitoes*
- Hat (wide-brim recommended)
- Close-toed water shoes
- Close-toed, close-heeled, cinching or lacing shoes for walking and for the "Swamp Stomp" portage
- Lightweight rain gear (pants optional)
- Sunglasses with strap (polarized are best)
- Insect repellent (containing 20% DEET)
- Powdered Gatorade or Powerade or equivalent electrolyte supplements
- 1 towel
- 2 dry bags – 20 liters each (larger dry bags are acceptable)
- "Snack pack" – 5 days of trail snacks in freezer-grade Ziploc bags. ***Snack packs should be used to supplement individuals that require more daily food than is provided by Swamp Base.***
    - ***Note**: Avoid snacks that will melt in the heat*

Camping Gear:

- Queen sized sheet or lightweight compact sleeping bag rated over 50° F
- Camp pillow
- Toiletry kit (toothbrush, toothpaste, biodegradable soap, deodorant, etc.)
    - ***Note:** Unscented soaps, shampoos, and deodorants will help reduce mosquitoes*
- Mess Kit (plastic bowl, spoon, and fork)
- One roll of toilet paper in a Zip-lock bag (remove the cardboard center for easier storing)
- Hand sanitizer

Crew Gear:

- First-Aid kit
- Baby powder or Gold Bond® (to cut down on chafing)
- Garbage bags (10 total)
- Compass
- Trek Map
    - ***Trek Map is available for purchase at Swamp Base Outfitters Online Store.***

Optional Items:

- Smartphone or camera (waterproof is optimal) for trek documentation purposes
    - *Cell phone dry bags are highly recommended*
- Canoe seat
- Paracord, rope, or straps for securing gear and water bottles to the canoe
- Bandana, small towel, rag, or a Real X Gear – Xtreme Cool towel
- Paddling gloves
- Sleeping pad for cots
- Wristwatch
- Hydration system (Camelback or Platypus)
- F.U.D (female urinary device)

- Extra money ($) for Swamp Base merchandise, souvenirs, or snacks
    - Swamp Base souvenirs can be purchased after the trek. ***Note:*** *Keep money with you on the trail, so that souvenirs can be purchased*
- Fishing gear – poles and bait box to be used at Turtles or Rougarou Island and along the trail

Health Items (if needed):

- Prescription medication(s)
- EpiPen (if required through a prescription)

DO NOT BRING THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

- Video games
- Fireworks
- Firearms
- Alcohol or Drugs
- Scout-inappropriate clothing

How to pack graphic from the Preaux Tips Blog Series

PROVIDED GEAR & SUPPLIES

Swamp Base will provide the following gear and supplies for all participants embarking on the 61.6-mile paddling trek.

- Wenonah 16'9" – polyethylene tandem canoes
- Werner and Cannon kayak paddles
    - ***Note:*** *We use kayak paddles with our canoes, as we find that it is a much more efficient way of paddling, and allows even the most unexperienced Scout to enjoy their time on the trail.*
- Astral PFD (personal floatation device)
- Hammocks for the primitive camping night on Rougarou Island
- Cots on the Turtles and at Camp Atchafalaya
- 16 meals (beginning with dinner in Lafayette on the Arrival Day)
- Fresh water refills at overnight locations

The polyethylene Wenonah Northfork is made for people who demand ruggedness— sportsmen, camps, outfitters, etc. Its stable hull feels solid when the going gets rough. It has plenty of capacity for gear, and paddles easily when loaded.

- Length – 16'9"
- Width – 37 1/2"
- Weight – 87 lbs.

FOOD MENU

Louisiana's food is world famous! People travel thousands of miles to sample the unique culinary flavors that originate from our area. Because of this, the menu for a Swamp Base trek includes several of the dishes that Louisiana is so well known for, including: jambalaya, po-boys, crawfish étouffée, chicken and sausage gumbo, and boudin!

Each Swamp Base trek crew is provided 16 meals per person, beginning with dinner in Lafayette on the Arrival Day. Mealtime supplies for each paddle day will be stocked at each camp. This allows additional space in the canoes for Scouts to carry their own personal gear instead of hauling all that food all week!

Our trek food is, by necessity, a high-carbohydrate, high-calorie, and high protein diet made up of shelf-stable items. ***The Swamp Base menu is planned for "normal consumption" by people participating in paddling activities. If you require more than average food to feel "full," please supplement the menu with more food in your "Snack Pack."*** Once we publish the menu for this upcoming trek season, we will email a copy to each crew so they can plan supplements accordingly.

FOOD ALLERGIES & DIETARY RESTRICTIONS

If an individual in your crew is allergic to some food products, requires a special diet, or has specific religious food needs; please let our Professional Staff know and we can discuss further. Swamp Base makes its best efforts to create an accommodating menu for all parties. However, due to the logistical difficulties of suppling food in a swamp, it is unlikely that food other than what is provided on the menu will be provided. It is the individual's responsibility to bring the food needed to supplement meals/snacks.

When completed, please review the Swamp Base menu and ingredient list and determine which items in each meal will cause a problem and prepare to provide your own substitute food for the specific items in the meal. Every participant will still be provided the standard trek menu and it will be up to the individual, not Swamp Base, to remove the items that pose a problem.

****Food menus are subject to change. These changes can range from single items to entire meals. Menu will be released to Trek Advisors when completed in late April to early May.***

CANOE SAFETY

Below is a basic list of Do's and Don'ts for safe and enjoyable paddling. It is not complete, nor is it a substitute for experience, training, and practice.

- Enter low – The lower your center of gravity, the more stable your canoe. When entering, exiting, or changing positions, always stay low and proceed with one hand on each gunwale. It is important to maintain three points of contact to maintain balance when moving in a canoe.

- Caught in bad weather on the water? In a storm, remain seated in the canoe. The trek will continue through the rain, but if lightning is present crews must seek shelter.

- Personal Flotation Devices (PFD) –Law requires that a Coast Guard approved personal flotation device be available for each occupant in your canoe. Paddlers are required to wear their lifejackets when on the water.

- Should You Capsize or Swamp – In open water such as lakes or very slowly moving water, stay with your canoe. Use other boats to help right the capsized canoe.

- Avoid structures in the water.

- Respect anglers and other boaters. Paddle toward the shore opposite of their lines and pass by quietly.

- There must always be at least two canoes (buddy boats) traveling together. If part of the group is fishing away from camp or on a day trip away from the rest of the group, there must be at least two boats together. The Youth Protection guidelines must also be followed so there is never a "one-on-one" situation between youth and adult.

- Performing regular head counts while on the water is always a good idea.

- Always stay within eyesight of the boat immediately in front and behind you.

- Never get ahead of the assigned lead boat or behind the assigned sweep boat.

- The **Lead Paddler** should be a strong paddler, with experience and a good idea of where you are going. It is his job to:
    - Lead the group, making decisions on where to go and where not to go
    - Paddle at a pace that everyone in the group can keep up with
    - No one in the group should pass the leader.

- The **Sweep Paddler** should also be a strong experienced paddler who might be inclined to paddle at a slower pace. The Sweep Paddler will most likely be this person who will have to assist a

paddler in distress. He or she should have experience in canoe rescue techniques. It is the responsibility of the sweep paddler to:

- Have a well-stocked supply of safety and signal devices
- Not let anyone fall behind them.
- Keep an eye out for the paddlers ahead of them
- Maintain the pace of the slowest paddler

Safety Whistle Communication

A safety whistles is an essential item required in order to participate on the high adventure trek. Because of the meandering nature of many of the bayous in the swamp, sometimes audible signals are the only way to communicate with members of the crew. It is required to know the following whistle blasts before beginning a Swamp Base trek.

- One (1) Blast - Attention
- Two (2) Blasts - Come Back or Gather
- Three (3) Blasts - Internationally Recognized Distress Signal (Help or Emergency)

Canoeing through Bayou Alexander on the way from Rougarou Island to Camp Atchafalaya.

PADDLING TIPS

Before arriving to Swamp Base, it is highly recommended that Scouts and adult crew leaders spend some time on water paddling with a kayak paddle in a tandem canoe. This will make paddling strokes more efficient, promote teamwork needed to paddle together, and help identify the best pairing of individuals in the canoes. ***Paddling with a kayak paddle in a canoe is an untraditional form of paddling and takes a little getting used to. However, you will find that it propels the canoes much faster through the water and allows for corrective strokes to happen without slowing the boat or losing any efficiency.***

The best way to ensure a successful Swamp Base trek is to arrive prepared for the challenges of the 61.6-mile paddle trek. It is estimated that each participant will paddle over 31,000 strokes to complete the journey.

Holding the Paddle:

1. Picture the width of your shoulders. That width, or a little less, is the amount of space that should separate your hands when holding the paddle shaft.
    - If your hand spacing is too wide, you'll gain power, but tire out rapidly because this hand position requires a lot of upper-body strength to pull the paddle through the water.
    - If your hand spacing is too narrow, you risk having no strength in your stroke.
2. Avoid applying too tight of a grip on the paddle shaft. It will quickly cause fatigue in the hands and arms and could lead to hotspots or even blisters. Instead, it is preferred to use a relaxed grip. Open your fingers slightly and create a loose handhold.

When your hands are in the correct position:

- Knuckles are pointed up.
- One of the blades is vertical (this makes it your "power hand").

Forward Stroke:

The forward stroke is the most fundamental paddling motion and involves more than just arm power. A well-executed forward stroke is a collaborative effort that combines upper arms and core muscles (back, abdomen and glutes). Intertwining these muscle groups allows you to efficiently propel your boat while minimizing arm and shoulder fatigue.

> *Tip: Think of the forward stroke as putting your blade in the water and moving past it rather than pulling a paddle's blade through the water. This allows greater paddling efficiency.*

There are several ways commonly used to describe the stages of a forward stroke, but here is a popular way:

> Phase 1 (catch): Wind your torso into the stroke. Dip your paddle on one side of the boat and "catch" a blade's worth of water. (Note: Sometimes the "catch" is considered part of the second, "unwinding" phase.) If placing the blade on the boat's right side, the right side of your rib cage should be angled toward the bow (front).

Phase 2 (propulsion): Unwind, or rotate, your torso as the blade pushes the water behind you. Use core muscles to push past the blade rather than pulling the blade through the water with your arms. This boosts efficiency and reduces fatigue.

Phase 3 (recovery): As the paddle pops out of the water, you're now wound up for the next stroke, with the opposite side of your rib cage angled toward the boat's bow.

Overall, the forward stroke is a continuous, simultaneous push-and-pull motion—a push with the upper hand, a pull with the lower, all resulting in smooth torso rotation.

To add power to your forward stroke:

1. Think of your hands as extensions of your body.
2. Imagine throwing a punch with one hand.
3. Gripping the paddle, position one hand about shoulder height.
4. From your shoulder, throw an imaginary punch for an extra burst of power. Add aggressive torso rotation for an extra power boost.

In paddling, good technique is more beneficial overall than sheer upper body strength.

Sweep Stroke (for Turning):

What's the simplest way to turn a moving boat? Just drop a blade into the water on either side of the boat. The boat will immediately turn in that direction—but you will lose much of your velocity as you turn. To turn while sustaining forward momentum, use the sweep stroke.

Phase 1: Lean the boat toward one edge while maintaining a comfortable balance. Extend your arms forward and dip in the blade near your feet to begin your sweep.

Phase 2: Sweep the blade in a wide arc toward the rear of the boat (the stern). The most effective part of this stroke is the rear 20° to 30°. Put some power into your body's rotation to optimize the stroke.

Phase 3: Finish the stroke by lifting the paddle after it comes near or touches the stern. The result should be a Draw Strokes (for Pulling Close)

Draw strokes are used to move your boat sideways so you can pull close to a dock or another boat. The basic draw stroke, sometimes called a T-stroke, works as follows:

1. Use your arms to extend the paddle away from you.
2. Place a blade in the water about 2 feet or so from you; the shaft should be on a slight angle with the lower blade tilted away from you.
3. Use your lower hand to pull the blade straight toward you.

To repeat, twist the blade 90° so the blade can slice through the water away from the boat. The slicing motion is also known as feathering.

If the blade begins to get sucked beneath your boat, resist the urge to apply a prying motion. You could cause your boat to tip. So simply let go and start over. Keep this little rhyme in mind: Don't pry; better to retry.

Sculling is a more powerful and effective draw stroke that requires a little more technique. The motion is like using your blade to spread peanut butter on bread.

1. Extend the paddle away from you.
2. Place a blade in the water about 2 feet away; keep the shaft as vertical as possible.
3. Rotate your wrists so the blade face repeatedly opens and closes as it moves across the water.
4. Maintain a "climbing angle" with the shaft by pushing gently toward the bow when the face is open, toward the bow when it is closed.

Reverse Forward Stroke (for Stopping):

1. Drop a blade in the water on one side of the boat then the other to slow your momentum.
2. Begin to back-paddle as needed. This is simply a reverse of the forward stroke.
3. Remember to rotate your torso while you back-paddle.

Paddling Tips courtesy of REI: www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/paddling-strokes.html

FISHING IN LOUISIANA

Louisiana is known as the Sportsman's Paradise due in part to its world class fishing. Among the freshwater fish populating lakes and bayous are bass (striped, smallmouth, and largemouth), paddlefish, bream, sunfish, bowfin, drum, buffalo, catfish (channel, blue, and yellow), crappie and alligator garfish, all of which are popular with fishermen.

Under new Louisiana law, no one under the age of 18 is required to purchase a Louisiana fishing license. However, adults who wish to fish on their free time are legally required to obtain at least a 5-day non-resident license. The license can be found at www.wlf.louisiana.gov/recreational-fishing-licenses.

Paddlers travel down the Grimmet Canal at the start of the trek

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ'S)

1. **What time do we need to arrive to the Wingate Hotel on our Arrival Day?**
   Trek Crews need to arrive at 2:00 pm to begin their program. Your Trek Guide will be there to greet you and accompany you through the check-in process.

2. **What are the Trek 1 arrival dates?**
   Two treks start daily from June 6th to July 15th.

3. **What does our Trek crew # mean?**
   The first six numbers of your trek crew number are the date that your crew is supposed to arrive in Lafayette for your trek. It is a YYMMDD dating format. Following the date is "01," representing Trek 1, the program you're participating on, and then "A, B, or P." "A and B" are determined by the order in which the crew has reserved their trek, whereas "P" represents the provisional crew. Lastly, the "ST" stands for Swamp Trek.

4. **What day are we supposed to arrive?**
   Please reference your trek crew number. The date of your arrival is the first six digits of your trek crew number, YYMMDD. Please arrive to Wingate Hotel in Lafayette at 2:00 pm on this date.

5. **When does the Swamp Base program officially end?**
   The program officially ends after dinner and the patch presentation after returning to Lafayette. This is approximately 7:30pm – 8:00pm. However, we do provide overnight accommodation on your final day so that you can get a good night's sleep before traveling back home the next morning.

6. **What time are we allowed to checkout on our final day?**
   The Wingate Hotel requests that all crews checkout of the dorms and return their keys no later than 10:00am. Nothing is required in the checkout procedure except returning the keys to the front desk. Please note that crews are allowed to depart earlier if they so choose.

7. **Do the crews receive their Scouting America Health Forms at the conclusion of their trek?**
   No. Due to HIPAA laws, Swamp Base destroys all medical forms at the completion of the crew's trek. Swamp Base requires that all crews provide copies of the original health forms.

8. **What date does the Provisional trek start, and what is a provisional crew?**
   The provisional trek's arrival day is on June 18. A provisional crew is made up of separate individuals from across the country that are placed together as a crew. These "strangers" participate as a regular crew. Every adult in the provisional crew must have Youth Protection training, as well as certifications in First-Aid and CPR, Weather Hazards, Safety Afloat, and Safe Swim Defense.

9. **How many portages are there and what are their lengths?**
   There are two portages during the 61.6-mile trek. The canoes and paddling gear must be carried 900 ft. at the Henderson Portage and 800 ft. at the Swamp Stomp Portage. Both portages include crossing a 25 ft. high levee, the highest point in the swamp! The Swamp Stomp includes a 300' section of muddy

trail that can be difficult for some participants. It is important to wear shoes with strong soles and that lace up tightly. The mud at the portage will "eat" your shoes!

10. **Do the canoes provided have backrests?**
    They do not. If you require a backrest for your trek, please consider bringing one with you.

11. **Why are kayak paddles used with canoes versus traditional canoe paddles?**
    Many people don't realize how comfortable and efficient it is to use a kayak paddle with a canoe. When using a kayak paddle there are no wet laps from switching sides or having to use a J-stroke, it's easier to turn the boat, correct your direction, stop, and accelerate. It also allows for inexperienced paddles to gain confidence and paddle more efficiently.

    We won't prevent you from bringing your own canoe paddle, but we think you will see how enjoyable it is to paddle a canoe with a kayak paddle.

12. **Can I bring my own kayak, canoe, paddle or PFD?**
    Swamp Base only allows for participants to furnish their own paddle if they see it as necessary. The paddling gear used on our high adventure treks is top of the line equipment, and due to space and liability reasons, we cannot allow individuals to bring their own boats or personal floatation devices.

13. **Why do we need to bring four separate water bottles versus a one-gallon jug?**
    We recommend multiple water bottles so that in case of a capsized canoe or spillage, that not all of the water is lost. This method ensures that everyone always has a container to hold water. Additionally, it is less cumbersome to carry one 32oz. bottle around our program areas, then to have to drag a gallon container.

14. **Why do we need to bring two 20L dry bags?**
    Dry bags are the preferred method of carrying gear in the swamp, because they keep personal gear dry. Please do not bring backpacks or duffel bags in the swamp. We recommend using two dry bags versus one larger bag for a couple reasons: 1) Having two bags provides for better organization of gear while on the water. One bag can serve as the overnight container and the other for paddling. Additionally, it makes getting to items much easier without having to unpack and repack dry bags at every need. 2) In the event that a canoe capsizes, and a bag is not properly secured, only half of the person's items will be lost or wet, as opposed to all of their items.

15. **How dangerous are alligators?**
    Most alligators, if left alone, will move on. Alligators less than 4 feet in length are naturally fearful of humans and are generally not a threat to pets, livestock, or humans.

    Although alligator attacks in Louisiana are extremely rare, it can happen. The "attack" reports in Louisiana are usually more accurately described as "encounters." As with all outdoor activities, realize that wildlife encounters are a possibility (please see "Tips for Recreating in Alligator Habitats").

16. **Do participants paddle with food?**
    Yes. 6 of the 16 included meals are to be eaten while on the water. Crews are encouraged to bring their own "Snack Packs" if they have above average appetites. Swamp Base provides food for "normal consumption" while paddling (see "Paddling Gear").

17. **What do I do if I need to use the bathroom while on the trail?**
    If no land is around, you jump in the water of course! Your trek guide will teach you the proper way of relieving yourself in the swamp.

18. **What happens if I forget something I need for the trek?**
    Not to worry! The Evangeline Area Council has a Scout Shop that sells most of what crews will need on the trek. There is also an Academy Sports + Outdoor store and Walmart in the area.

19. **Approximately how many paddle strokes will it take to complete the trek?**
    We have estimated the amount of paddle strokes to be around 40,000.

20. **What is the payment schedule and when is the Final Roster due?**
    The 1st Payment is due on October 1, 2026. This payment is $2,500 per trek crew and is non-refundable.

    The Final Payment and $500 Damage Deposit are due on March 3, 2027. The remaining balance and final roster are due on this day. The balance paid is non-refundable. ***Note:*** *The Final Roster will determine the remaining balance owed.*

    Please note: *If your crew signs up after the October 1st payment date, we will work with your crew on a payment plan.*

21. **What certifications are required?**
    All registered adults must arrive providing proof that they have completed Safeguarding Youth Training. At least adult leader must be trained in First Aid and CPR from any recognized agency (American Redcross Wilderness First Aid or equivalent preferred) and also in Safe Swim Defense, Safety Afloat, and Weather Hazards.

22. **Can we take our Swim Test at Swamp Base?**
    Unfortunately, no. Scouting America Swim Tests must be completed prior to arriving at Swamp Base and signed off by one of the following council-approved resource people: Aquatics Instructor, Scouting America; Lifeguard; Scouting America Swimming & Water Rescue; or other lifeguard, swimming instructor, etc.

23. **Can I use my CPAP machine?**
    Due to the nature and environment of the activity, those who need a CPAP should be prepared to have no electricity on the 1st or 2nd night of their trek. All other nights will have 110- volt power plugs (see "Medications"). Please bring a 25' extension cord with you if you require a CPAP machine.

24. How hot is it in the summer in South Louisiana?

"Il fait chaud!" (It is hot!) June/July high temperatures average in the low 90s Fahrenheit with average humidity levels at 78% (see "General Climate Conditions").

25. What do crews flying to Swamp Base do with their luggage?

For flying crews', Swamp Base provides storage for your luggage while you're in the swamp. Please take out all trek related gear from the suitcases, and load both your trek gear and your empty luggage on to the Swamp Base trailer in the morning when the crew departs for the trailhead. Please don't leave anything at the hotel. When the trailer returns to Lafayette after dropping the crew off, we will unload the luggage and place your gear in our locked building. When the crew passes by the Swamp Base office at the conclusion of the trek, we will return the empty luggage to you.

26. When can we buy Swamp Base merchandise?

Swamp Base merchandise can be purchased at the end of the trek on Day 5, prior to returning to the hotel. Please bring your money with you on the water so that you have funds available when you get to the Evangeline Area Council's Scout Shop. Swamp Base offers Nalgene® bottles, shirts, stickers, belts and buckles, snacks, and many other cool items! Gear can also be purchased at www.swampbaseoutfitters.org.

27. You require Parts A, B & C of the Scouting America medical form. Do you also require one of the supplemental Scouting America National Base high adventure risk advisory forms be shared with a medical provider during the physical?

Because we are not a National Office High Adventure Base, we do not require their Risk Advisory, however, we do require that all crew members read and sign the "Swamp Base High Adventure Risk Advisory." This form, along with other required forms, can be found at www.swampbasebsa.org/required-forms. For Scouts, failure to have the Risk Advisory signed by a parent or guardian may delay participation.

28. Can I or should I bring my smartphone on the trek?

Yes, it is encouraged to bring your smartphone on the trek to document your experience through social media. Please understand that Youth Protection Guidelines for using phones applies in all instances, whether images plan to be uploaded to the internet or not. Please see "Digital Privacy" below.

*When uploading images, please use **#swampbase** for all posted photos/videos from the trek. Please note that Swamp Base may "share" these photos or videos on its accounts. It is also possible that at the end of the summer, Swamp Base may use these photos for future high adventure marketing videos or brochures.*

> ***DIGITAL PRIVACY:** A key ingredient for a safe and healthy Scouting experience is the respect for privacy. Advances in technology are enabling new forms of social interaction that extend beyond the appropriate use of cameras or recording devices. Sending explicit photographs or videos electronically by cell phones is neither safe, nor private, nor an approved form of communication, and can lead to severe legal consequences for the sender and the receiver. Although most campers and leaders use digital devices responsibly, educating them about the appropriate use of cell phones and cameras is a good safety and privacy measure.*

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **Preaux Tips Blog**: A great resource to learn more about Swamp Base, trek preparation, Louisiana history, culture, ecology, and more!
    - www.swampbasebsa.org/blog

- **Swamp Base Forum Facebook Group**: The Swamp Base Forum is a discussion platform to learn more about trek preparation, gear and packing recommendations, and all questions Swamp Base related.
    - www.facebook.com/groups/963683555738391

- **Swamp Base Required Forms Webpage**:
    - www.swampbasebsa.org/required-forms

- **The Guide to Safe Scouting**: All participants in official Scouting activities should become familiar with the *Guide to Safe Scouting* and applicable program literature or manuals, and be aware of state or local government regulations that supersede Scouting America practices, policies, and guidelines. The *Guide to Safe Scouting* is an overview of Scouting policies and procedures gleaned from a variety of sources. For some items, the policy statements are complete. Unit leaders are expected to review the additional reference material cited prior to conducting such activities.
    - www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/

Scouts paddle among ancient cypress trees at sunrise on day 5 of the trek.

TREK ADVISOR STATEMENT of ACKNOWLEDGEMENT and UNDERSTANDING

As the designated Trek Advisor for a crew participating in the Louisiana Swamp Base High Adventure Program, I acknowledge that I have received, reviewed, and understand the Swamp Base Leader's Guide. I recognize that this document outlines essential leadership responsibilities, safety protocols, administrative requirements, and expectations for adult leadership throughout the trek.

By signing below, I affirm the following:

- I understand that the Trek Advisor plays a critical role in ensuring the safety, preparedness, and conduct of all youth and adult members of the crew.
- I acknowledge my responsibility to communicate all relevant policies, procedures, and expectations from the Leader's Guide Packet to the crew prior to arrival at Swamp Base.
- I agree to uphold and enforce Swamp Base rules, safety standards, and behavioral expectations, and to support Swamp Base staff in maintaining a safe and positive program environment.
- I acknowledge that failure to follow the guidelines outlined in the Leader's Guide may result in corrective action, if necessary to protect the safety and integrity of the trek.
- I agree to serve as the primary point of contact between my crew and Swamp Base staff, ensuring clear communication, timely compliance with administrative requirements, and appropriate supervision at all times.
- I understand that it is my responsibility to seek clarification from Swamp Base staff if any policy, procedure, or expectation in the Leader's Guide Packet is unclear or requires further explanation.

By signing this document, I confirm my commitment to fulfill the leadership duties of a Trek Advisor and to uphold the standards, expectations, and responsibilities required by Louisiana Swamp Base.

Trek Advisor Name: _____

Signature: _____

Crew Number: _____

Date: _____