

Kodiak on the Salmon River

With Venturing Crew 360, Snohomish, Washington

In July, Venturing Crew 360 of Snohomish, Washington, conducted its fourth Kodiak Leadership Trek since the program was introduced in 2001. This time, Crew 360 hosted a group of Venturers from Virginia Beach, Virginia, Pomona, California, and Phoenix, Arizona, on the Lower Salmon River in Idaho. The forty-one member group met at White Bird, Idaho, on Sunday evening, July 9 and put in for a 75 mile whitewater trip to Heller Bar in the Southeast corner of Washington State. Due to regulations of the Bureau of Land Management limiting group size to thirty, the party was split into two river teams.



The four Venturing Crews met up at the boat ramp and campground in Whitebird Sunday night after each had driven hundreds of miles. Because of the late arrival times, many of the Venturers decided to sleep under the stars.



This turned out to be a bad choice as that evening, we got the only rain shower of the entire trip. Monday morning everyone got up bright and early, anxious to get on the river. The exercise of packing the cargo boats for the first time became a big chore, but was completed in just over an hour. Then safety talks, paddle talks, Kodiak icebreakers, and visiting took up the rest of the morning. As we left Heller Bar, each Kodiak Crew got into their

raft for a week of fun.

The plan was to camp at Lone Pine Bar campsite, a sandy beach immediately across the river from developed campground, and only 10 miles down river. Just before we arrived at



Pine Bar, however, a large group of Boy Scouts passed us, obviously heading for the same campsite. Our second choice was the developed campsite, which has a well and vault toilets. This worked out well, and a dinner of spaghetti with meat sauce was prepared during the Kodiak sessions.

The next day we traveled 18 miles to White House Bar, a very large sand beach and homestead. There were several big class II rapids and a nice set of class III's during the day, and this helped to build anticipation.

With plenty of daylight left when we arrived, a more leisurely dinner was prepared, Kodiak sessions were more relaxed, and a lot of people spent the evening exploring the homestead.

On Wednesday, immediately upon leaving the beach at White House Bar, we entered Snowhole Canyon. The rapids came in quick succession, and a fair number of people fell out of their boats. The crews had become proficient at rescuing their own swimmers, though, so no one spent much time in the water. Six miles into Snowhole Canyon is the biggest set of rapids on the Lower Salmon at this time of Year. Snowhole is a very technical class IV rapid with big rocks, big waves, and a very straightforward, but narrow route right down the middle. The first boats through the rapids set up in eddies to serve as safety boats in case anyone got in trouble, ready at once to pick up swimmers and possibly chase an upside down boat if necessary. Everyone came through just fine, though, and continued on to our next campsite at the end of Snowhole Canyon.



Thursday was another big day for rapids. A few miles below Snowhole, the river speeds up and drops to its confluence with the Snake River. We ran some very fast, fun rapids down to the confluence and had lunch on a small beach at the Pullman Copper mine just before we reached the Oregon border. We continued on to the Snake River and set our goal to camp in Washington State that night. Later, on a large set of three beaches, we had a huge dinner of steak fajitas, wrapped up our Kodiak lessons, and conducted an induction of Permanent Party to the Venturing Corps of Discovery. This is a service society for Venturers who provide service to Scouting and Venturing while promoting the Venturing program. Many of the inductees were youth who had helped staff Kodiak Courses or served as whitewater guides.

Friday morning was a little melancholy, as this was our last day on the river together. We rowed or paddles the last 12 miles to Heller Bar on the Washington side of the river, where our vehicles were waiting. Upon arrival, a team of drivers was sent on the 200 mile round trip back to Whitebird to get the bus, the cargo truck, and some private cars. While they were gone, the team packed everything up, rolled up the boats, and finished up their Kodiak assignments. Once the bus arrived back at Heller Bar, we all loaded up and drove to the nearest Pizza Hut for a celebration dinner.

Saturday morning everyone was on their way home. The Virginia Beach Crew was dropped off at a hotel in downtown Seattle for much needed showers and naps before their flight left that evening. The Snohomish Crew went home for equally well deserved showers and rest.



The Crews from CA and AZ had longer drives and did not arrive home until late Saturday night or Sunday.

Many thanks are in order to Craig Murray who put the Kodiak Course together and recruited the instructors. The adult instructors were Craig, Mark and Karla Sharp. The youth instructors were Larry Bacon (CA), Jeremiah Heywood (CA), Justin Willcox (AZ), Kim Willcox (AZ) and Mark Donahue (WA). Thanks also go out to Jim and Donna Shannon who helped with kitchen duties and lots of other river tasks while

the Venturers worked on their Kodiak lessons. Another team of dedicated helpers were the river guides: Joe Garrett and Jim Owens, (head guides), Katie Garrett, Whitney Walker, Brenna Anderst, Brian Becvar, and Suzanne Hahn. Special thanks go out to Suzanne for the outstanding job she did with the kitchen!

Crew 360 from Snohomish, WA and Crew 7 from Pomona, CA have already started planning for a Kodiak and Kodiak X course to be held on the Klamath River in Northern California near the Oregon border next summer. The dates are tentatively set for June 22-30, 2007 and the maximum group size is 30 of which 10 will be instructors and guides. The final day of the trip will be spent running the Upper Klamath river, a 16 mile stretch of class IV and V whitewater. This section will be guided by local professional guides. If you are interested in joining in, please contact Joe Garrett by email; snojo@verizon.net.