

Salmon River Kodiak Adventure

by Kelly Kiernan

Venturing Crew 502, Virginia Beach, Virginia

"Get out of the way!" The guide screamed at the kayaker who was surfing the 10-foot wave. The man in the kayak turned his head and realized a little too late that a collision with the on-coming raft was unavoidable. The kayak smashed into the side of the raft. Our crew abandoned ship to evade being skewered by the prow. Five rafters were stuck in the middle of a huge rapid as the guide and I scrambled to pull them back into the boat.

That was only the first day.

I've been a part of Venturing Crew for the past two years and it has been a phenomenal experience. Venturing is a parallel program to Boy Scouts and appeals to an older, co-ed group of scouts because they do more high adventure activities. They also teach skills such as Leave No Trace and Kodiak Leadership. On July 7, I took off a week from interning at Bentley, Exton and went with my crew to Washington state. I spent seven days white water rafting down the Salmon River, camping and participating in leadership training.



During the day, the crews would travel about 20 miles down the river, through Class 2 and Class 3 rapids on inflatable rafts. Sometimes we would travel just in a life vest, particularly after being thrown from the raft in a big rapid.

At night, we would go through experience-based training on how to lead others based on values, decision-making, and cooperation. My crew gave a presentation on Leave No Trace survival, teaching the others about outdoor ethics and respecting nature. We discussed

leaving nature undisturbed, where to put toilets so they will not spoil the local water supply, and respecting your fellow campers by distancing tents and controlling noise level. You learn incredible things about human interference. For instance, we learned that touching coral reef with a human hand can destroy the whole environment, and we learned about the effects of removing petrified wood.



Washington, Oregon, and Idaho have absolutely gorgeous countryside. We traveled through the Nez Perce Indian reservation and heard their story of Chief Joseph, who said the famous lines "I will fight no more, forever."

I am grateful for the opportunity I had to adventure into the breath taking wilderness of the Northwest. I highly recommend to anyone to take the chance to travel out there, as it is such a beautiful place. The exhilarating feeling of riding down the rapids is not one I will soon forget. Just remember to pack your floaties.