



## Canoeing Merit Badge at Riverbend Park

Welcome to the Canoeing Merit Badge program at Riverbend Park. This program is held at the Riverbend Visitor Center located at 8700 Potomac Hills Street, Great Falls, VA 22066. Alternate FCPA locations maybe used, which may be communicated to you prior or during the class. Please review your confirmation email or call the park at 703-759-9018 for location.

### **Important general Merit Badge information for parents:**

Be sure that you are familiar with the requirements for the merit badge your scout has selected. Some badges may take considerable time and planning to complete and may not be appropriate for younger scouts. Blue cards must be signed by your Troop Leader prior to attending the merit badge class. Park staff will not sign off on any blue cards missing this signature.

Most merit badges are not designed to be completed in a single session with an instructor, so it is not always possible to walk away with a completed and signed blue card at the end of a program. Every badge requires some independent work by your scout.

FCPA-Riverbend Park will provide staff, meeting BSA Youth Protection guidelines for male and female scouts, and supervision ratios. Parent/guardian **MUST** sign-in, and sign-out each participant(s) from the class. If you provided your own transportation, you may sign-in and sign-out yourself from the class. There is no fee if adults wish to stay during the class.

### **Below is the recommended homework to be completed before the program:**

There are some useful links at the end of some questions; however, scouts are encouraged to find their own sources (library, internet etc.).

You **MUST** provide proof of your **BSA SWIMMER TEST** at the beginning of the class. Riverbend merit badge counselors are not able to assess the skills required for the BSA Swimmer Test at the venue. Scout(s) will **NOT** be able to enter or go out on the water without a **COMPLETED** BSA Swimmer Test.

1. Do the following:
  - a. Explain to your counselor the most likely hazards you may encounter while participating in canoeing activities and what you should do to anticipate, help prevent, mitigate, and respond to these hazards.
  - b. Review prevention, symptoms, and first-aid treatment for the following injuries or illnesses that could occur while canoeing: blisters, cold-water shock and hypothermia, dehydration, heat-related illnesses, sunburn, sprains, and strains.

- c. Discuss the BSA Safety Afloat policy. Tell how it applies to canoeing activities.
2. Before doing the following requirements, successfully complete the BSA swimmer test: Jump feetfirst into water over the head in depth. Level off and swim 75 yards in a strong manner using one or more of the following strokes: sidestroke, breaststroke, trudgen, or crawl; then swim 25 yards using an easy, resting backstroke. The 100 yards must be completed in one swim without stops and must include at least one sharp turn. After completing the swim, rest by floating.
3. Do the following:
  - a. Name and point out the major parts of a canoe.
  - b. Describe how the length and shape of a canoe affect its performance.
  - c. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the different materials used to make canoes.
4. Do the following:
  - a. Name and point out the parts of a paddle. Explain the difference between a straight and bent-shaft paddle and when each is best used.
  - b. Demonstrate how to size correctly a paddle for a paddler in a sitting position and a kneeling position.
7. Do the following:
  - a. Discuss what personal and group equipment would be appropriate for a canoe camping trip. Describe how personal and group equipment can be packed and protected from water.
13. Discuss the following types of canoeing:
  - a. Olympic canoe sprint
  - b. Flatwater and river touring
  - c. Outrigger
  - d. Marathon
  - e. Freestyle
  - f. Whitewater
  - g. Canoe poling

**Requirements to be demonstrated, practiced and assessed during the class by counselors**

7. Do the following:
  - b. Discuss what personal and group equipment would be appropriate for a canoe camping trip. Describe how personal and group equipment can be packed and protected from water.
  - c. Using the containers and packs from requirement 7a, demonstrate how to load and secure the containers and other equipment in the canoe.
8. Using appropriate knots, including a trucker's hitch, tautline hitch, and bowline, demonstrate how to secure a canoe to a vehicle or a trailer, or if these are not available, a rack on land. With a companion, use a properly equipped canoe to demonstrate the following:
  - a. Safely carry and launch the canoe from a dock or shore (both, if possible).

- b. Safely land the canoe on a dock or shore (both, if possible) and return it to its proper storage location.
  - c. Demonstrate kneeling and sitting positions in a canoe and explain the proper use for each position.
  - d. Change places while afloat in the canoe.
9. With a companion, use a properly equipped canoe to demonstrate the following:
- a. In deep water, exit the canoe and get back in without capsizing.
  - b. Safely perform a controlled capsize of the canoe and demonstrate how staying with a capsized canoe will support both paddlers.
  - c. Swim, tow, or push a swamped canoe 50 feet to shallow water. In the shallow water, empty the swamped canoe and reenter it.
  - d. In deep water, rescue a swamped canoe and its paddlers by emptying the swamped canoe and helping the paddlers safely reenter their boat without capsizing.
10. With a companion, use a properly equipped canoe to demonstrate the following paddling strokes as both a bow and stern paddler:
- a. Forward stroke
  - b. Backstroke
  - c. Draw
- For stern paddling only:
- d. J-stroke
  - e. Pushaway
  - f. Forward sweep
  - g. Reverse sweep
  - h. Rudder stroke
  - i. Stern pry
11. Using the strokes in requirement 10, and in an order determined by your counselor, use a properly equipped canoe to demonstrate the following tandem maneuvers while paddling on opposite sides and without changing sides. Each paddler must demonstrate these maneuvers in both the bow and stern and on opposite paddling sides:
- a. Pivot or spin the canoe in either direction.
  - b. Move the canoe sideways or abeam in either direction.
  - c. Stop the canoe.
  - d. Move the canoe in a straight line for 50 yards.
12. Use a properly equipped canoe to demonstrate solo canoe handling:
- a. Launch from shore or a pier (both, if possible).
  - b. Using a single-blade paddle and paddling only on one side, demonstrate proper form and use of the forward stroke, backstroke, draw stroke, pushaway stroke, forward sweep, reverse sweep, J-stroke, and rudder stroke. Repeat while paddling on the other side.
  - c. Using a single-blade paddle and paddling only on one side, demonstrate proper form and use of a combination of a forward stroke, rudder stroke, and stern pry by canoeing to a target 50 yards away. Repeat while paddling on the other side.
  - d. Make a proper landing at a dock or shore (both, if possible). Store canoe properly (with assistance, if needed).

**What to bring to the program:**

- Bring your completed homework. It is OK if you cannot complete the homework before class. You can bring completed homework in at a later date for sign-off.
- Come prepared to discuss and present your homework. As we move from one topic to the next during class, scouts will be asked to present homework elements completed. It will be more important to prove that you have understood a requirement orally rather than just presenting written information.
- Bring your blue card signed off by your Troop Leader. (Riverbend does not have blue cards.)
- Sunscreen, hat, synthetic quick drying clothing, ready for full immersion, insulating layers (fleece, wool, neoprene), rain jacket, closed toed footwear which strap to feet ( NO FlipFlops or Crocs)
- Dry clothing to change into afterclass
- Bring/wear weather appropriate clothing/outerwear.
- Bring a pencil and pen.
- Bring a flashlight, if the program is held after dusk.
- Download the merit badge worksheets from meritbadge.com and bring these worksheets to class.
- Bring a food, snacks, or drinks and waterbottle. Bring more substantial food if your program is longer than four hours.

**Work completed after the program:**

During the program, the merit badge counselor will do a demonstration or explain the process for completing the final merit badge requirements. Your scout must provide evidence of completion in order to obtain blue card sign-off. Digital photographs of your scout doing the element and a picture of the completed requirement will be sufficient evidence, unless otherwise stated.

If your scout needs blue card sign-off after the class date, please call 703-759-9018 to arrange a time to meet with a merit badge counselor.

We're looking forward to working with your scout.

Riverbend Park  
 703-759-9018  
 8700 Potomac Hills Street  
 Great Falls, VA 22066  
<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend-park/>