



Canoeing Merit Badge at Riverbend Park

Welcome to the Canoeing Merit Badge program at Riverbend Park. The program is held at the Riverbend Visitor Center located at 8700 Potomac Hills Street, Great Falls, VA 22066 unless otherwise indicated by park staff.

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.

Please be prepared for the possibility that you may have to stay for the program and not just drop off your scout. We encourage that one or more adults remain. There is no fee for adults and you are sure to learn something. This will allow the instructor to concentrate more fully on the difficult task of imparting all the required information and assisting the boys individually if necessary. Additionally, adults may help keep the atmosphere calm and productive. It is also in keeping with the scouting guidelines for youth protection.

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

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. Scout(s) will **NOT** be able to enter or go out on the water without a **COMPLETED** BSA Swimmer Test.

Merit badge worksheets may be downloaded from meritbadge.org and brought to class. These worksheets help scouts organize their homework and classwork.

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. *****You MUST provide proof of your BSA SWIMMER TEST at the beginning of the class*****
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 correctly size a paddle for a paddler in a sitting position and a kneeling position.
5. Do the following:
 - a. Discuss with your counselor the characteristics of life jackets most appropriate for canoeing and tell why a life jacket must always be worn while paddling.
 - b. Demonstrate how to select and properly fit the correct size life jacket.
6. Discuss with your counselor the general care and maintenance of canoes, paddles, and other canoeing equipment.

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.
 - b. Using the containers and packs from requirement 7a, demonstrate how to load and secure the containers and other equipment in the canoe. -
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:
 - c. 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.
8. 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
 - d. Pushaway
 - e. Forward sweep
 - f. Reverse sweep -
- For stern paddling only:
- g. J-stroke
 - h. Rudder stroke
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, and J-stroke. Repeat while paddling on the other side.

- c. While paddling on one side only, paddle a 50-yard course making at least one turn underway and one reverse of direction 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:

- Merit Badge Worksheet Packet
- Bring a pencil and pen.
- 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.
- Bring your blue card. (Riverbend does not have blue cards.)
- Drinking Water, Snack or Money to purchase items at the Visitor's Center
- Sunscreen and Hat
- Synthetic clothing, quick drying clothing, ready for immersion
- Rain Jacket
- Dry clothing to change into after the class
- Teva, Chaco, or Keen style sandals, or old tennis shoes, NO FLIP FLOPS

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 or meet the required skills in order to obtain blue card sign-off. Digital photographs or video of your scout doing the element of the requirement will be sufficient evidence, unless otherwise stated.

If your scout needs blue card sign-off or further skill/requirement assessment 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/>