



Wilderness Canoe Base

Frequently Asked Questions

What does arrival day look like?

All groups are greeted in the Cove, our welcoming area on the mainland, by their group leader. Then, you will travel across to the islands of our base camp in a 36-foot Voyageur canoe. Your personal belongings will be transported by pontoon. After your group settles into your cabin, you will go through a series of orientations about wildlife of the Boundary Waters, health and safety, waterfront protocols, and how to paddle and portage. In the evening, campers from church groups and faith-based organizations will be invited to a Vespers service of worship and prayer.

What should I know about going "on trail"?

Every canoe trip looks a little different. Before leaving on your trip, you will have an opportunity to help your guide plan your route. Typically, you will take down camp in the morning, paddle for several hours, and then set up camp in the afternoon, with plenty of time for activities such as solitude time, fishing, swimming, and reading. For church groups, each day on trail also includes First and Last word and/or Bible study. On the last day of your trip, you'll paddle back to base camp, clean your gear, sauna, and share the stories of your trip with other groups who went on trail at the same time.

Uneven terrain and physical challenges are part of the wilderness experience. Campers should be ready to paddle, lift heavy loads and carry packs and canoes. We will make accommodations as necessary so that all campers can fully participate. Canoe trips provide access to many new skills and help develop campers' self-confidence, faith, and appreciation of nature.

What if I get sick or hurt at camp?

Our highest priority is always to ensure a safe and healthy environment for our campers and staff. We have created protocols, in accordance with the best practices and guidelines from the CDC, ACA, local health authorities, and other medical professionals. We will remain in step with best practices, and adjust our protocols as necessary. Our protocols contain many layers, which we feel will help provide safe spaces, and still allow for fun and faith formation to take place at our camps.

Campers are always accompanied by staff trained and nationally certified in Wilderness First Aid, Wilderness Water Safety and CPR. WCB policy is to contact parents/guardians in the event of a serious camper injury or illness. Responsibility for this decision is with the camp administration.

What do I need to know about bringing medications to camp?

Please list all medications you plan to bring on your health form. These medications are collected by our Director of Health and Safety upon arrival and are dispensed by your guide during your trip. This is true for both youth and adults - no exceptions. All medications must be in their original container. Prescription medications must have doctor's directions clearly labeled. We must count each pill upon arrival and departure, so we encourage packing only the amount of medication necessary for the duration of the trip. Please do not send non-prescription drugs, as camp has these on hand already. Medications will be returned prior to leaving for home unless otherwise specified. Please contact camp with any additional questions or concerns. Campers must have a current tetanus shot.

What if I have severe allergies or a chronic illness?

Campers with life threatening allergies must have an anaphylaxis plan and be under the care of a physician who has approved the camper's attendance at a remote wilderness camp. Campers with Type 1 diabetes should be able to independently manage their condition and have a physician's approval to attend a remote wilderness camp. For other illnesses, please get in touch with camp directly and we can answer any additional questions.

What if I need to connect with a camper while they are a camp?

If there is an emergency and a camp participant needs to be contacted, please call the main Wilderness Canoe Base office at (218) 388- 2241. We will work to relay an emergency message as quickly as possible. Because we spend so much time out in the Boundary Waters at camp, we ask that non-urgent messages wait until the camper returns back home.

What about the mosquitoes? Should I bring bug spray?

Mosquitoes are a fact of life in northern Minnesota. The best way to repel them is by using long-sleeved shirts/coats and long pants. If you choose to bring bug repellent, make sure it has no more than 30% DEET; repeated applications of highly concentrated bug spray damages the waterproofing on rain jackets and tents, and it can also cause some campers to become ill.

Outdoor gear is so expensive! Do I need all the gear on the packing list?

Expensive clothing is not necessary to come to camp. Camp has many items available to borrow while at camp. We have extra wet shoes, sleeping bags, and some rain gear. Certain types of clothing can also be found at discount stores (ie: nylon windbreaker pants are often available at thrift stores). Please contact the camp if you do not have the appropriate gear and we will help you find a solution.

Does Wilderness have a camp store?

Our camp store, called the Blockhouse, carries snacks, drinks, ice cream, and camp merchandise. We accept cash, credit cards, and checks.

Can I bring food to camp?

We encourage you to not bring any personal food to Wilderness unless special exceptions are made with camp before arrival. Because of the unique nature of camping in the wilderness, food is packed for each group with great care and planning. We are able to accommodate all types of food issues if they are brought to our attention prior to the camper's arrival (peanut allergy, lactose intolerance, gluten-free, vegetarian, etc). Please indicate any food issues to your trip advisor and place the correct information on the health form. For specific allergies requiring more extensive accommodation, please call camp as soon as you know you or your child will be attending.

Please note our camp dietary policy: Our Dining Services Team takes pride in providing tasty and nutritious meals, prepared with care for you during your stay. While do our best to accommodate people with dietary restrictions (food allergies, intolerances, vegetarian etc.), we may not be able to accommodate all dietary preferences.

Can I bring my cell phone or other electronics?

While we don't have a specific electronic policy, we'd like to invite you to consider how you'd like to interact with their cell phones on your trip. While it may seem difficult at first, our campers have always said that being able to disconnect has been life-giving. We'd love for you to consider a group covenant that includes leaving all cell phones on the bus (or at camp) throughout the duration of the trip. (This is also beneficial as the cell phone won't get lost, broken, or fall into the lake.) Camp is not liable for any broken or lost electronic devices brought to camp.

How do we stay clean?

Please do not bring any soaps or shampoos to camp. Even biodegradable products need some soil in order to break down, and there is not enough soil on the ground in the BWCAW to support this. The lake is an awesome place to wash off throughout the week, and our staff will be happy to share great techniques to clean off while swimming. Any camper who is in an emergency situation at camp who needs a shower will be provided with one.

What should I know about water usage?

All the water used at WCB is pumped from Seagull Lake, treated on our property, used, and filtered back into the environment via septic field. In the fall of 2015, WCB invested in a brand new top-of-the-line water treatment system! Because we work hard to get our clean water and remain ever mindful of the ecosystem from which we take it, we have some guidelines regarding water usage.

- We have many outhouses located on both islands as well as the mainland. If you are fit and able, please use the outhouses during your stay at WCB. If this is unfeasible, we do have flush toilets available in Pinecliff and the Medical Center.
- A jug of drinking water and cups will be provided in your cabin upon your arrival. You will also find a drinking fountain in Pinecliff as well as a large cooler jug near the kitchen for drinking water. You can also fill up in the sinks outside of Trailshack. All of our sinks and faucets provide the same clean drinking water.
- Please do not drink unfiltered drinking water from the lake.

What are your swimming and boating policies?

- Lifeguards are always required when swimming. We are happy to coordinate a staff member to lifeguard during a post-sauna swim or in our swimming area.
- You must be within sight of a lifeguard whenever paddling in a camp canoe. When paddling close to camp, the lifeguard may be either in a canoe or on the shore. When taking a longer paddle away from camp, you must have a lifeguard paddling with you on your trip.
- Soon after arriving in camp, we ask that all campers participate in a “swim and swamp” orientation with our Waterfront Coordinator. Here, you’ll learn the basics of how to handle our canoes as well as important safety information. This orientation requires everyone enter the lake with the goal of making all campers feel comfortable swimming and boating in a lake setting.
- Anyone who does not wish to follow WCB’s canoe policies may rent a canoe from a nearby outfitter for use during their visit with us.
- Staff members will always operate all motorized boats. If you need a ride at any time, please find a staff member to help you.
- Wet shoes must be worn while swimming. Shoes must be closed heel and closed toe (Crocs and sandals of any kind are not acceptable).

What should I know about fishing at camp?

- Fishing licenses are required to fish in the state of Minnesota. They can be purchased in Grand Marais on your way up to camp if you do not already have one. Everyone 16 and older must have a license. Youth under 16 may fish without a license but must be with an adult who does have a license.
- Please bring your own fishing equipment and bait.
- Fishing may occur alone from the shore of our islands anywhere except for designated swimming areas. Fishing from a canoe requires a lifeguard to be within sight either from shore or from another canoe.
- Many of our staff love to fish and would be delighted to spend an afternoon or evening fishing with you!

What is WCB’s Canoe Etiquette?

- We have a “wet foot” policy, meaning each time you enter or exit a canoe, your feet will get wet and the canoe will be in deep enough water to float. The bottom of the canoes must never touch land.
- All canoes should be stored on a canoe rack when not in use.
 - If you need to store your canoe on land (ie: at a campsite), the canoe must be in three-point stance. Again, the canoe bottom will never touch the ground.
- No canoeing after dusk or before dawn.

If I need to cancel my registration, can I get a refund for my deposit?

Deposits for camp programs are non-refundable/non-transferable after the deposit deadline, except in the case of a medical cancellation (a fee may still apply). If Lake Wapogasset Lutheran Bible Camp, Inc. chooses to cancel a session or sessions, registration payments will be refunded less a \$25 fee to cover administrative costs. All refunds are issued back to the original payment method.

Is financial assistance available?

It's our goal to serve every youth who wishes to attend camp. Camperships are available for either partial or full payment. If you would like to apply for a campership, please talk with your organizer of the trip/church staff to apply for a campership at Wilderness.