

Hatch Wilderness Adventures, LLC. Frequently Asked Questions

What is HWA's mission statement?

HWA provides wilderness travel opportunities for individuals and families to grow their spirituality of God in nature, learn outdoor techniques so they can enjoy independent wilderness travel, and enjoy fun and fellowship.

What is "Group Travel?"

HWA is not a traditional outfitting/guide service. We provide for group travel in which our participants work together as a team. Everyone is expected to work hard, be willing to learn, and define their individual expectations in relation to the success of the group.

For items with an * can I bring my own gear instead? The answer is yes, you may bring your own gear, but the outfitter reserves the right to approve or disapprove any personal items an individual may bring. Since we are traveling as a team, any gear an individual brings can have significant impacts on the entire group. All HWA gear is of the highest quality and meant to work in tandem as light, comfortable, safe, and reliable. You may find the rental gear at HWA is higher quality than your personal gear.

If I bring my own gear will my cost be lowered? You may bring your own gear, but it will not lower your cost.

Why should I avoid cotton? In the wilderness, the slogan is "Cotton Kills". It tends not to dry out, soaks up water (and smells) quickly, and provides for a hypothermic experience. You are welcome to bring a cotton hat, handkerchief, or other small items.

What kind of socks should I bring?

Socks should be heavyweight backpacking socks similar to Smartwool with a blended, non-cotton material calf length in height. If you have backpacked before and prefer medium weight socks, please bring those. Synthetic blended materials prevent blisters, dry out faster, and are very durable.

What is "wet-footing"?

Wet-footing is a term used to describe portaging a canoe where the canoe does not touch land. Individuals are expected to "get their feet wet" for the duration of each travel day by entering and exiting the canoe in the water to prevent unnecessary damage to the Kevlar hull. For canoeing, we recommend inexpensive or old hiking boots that will stay wet during travel, and a second set of shoes to dry your feet out in camp. A waterproof breathable laminate is not necessary, as you may be in knee-deep water at times.

What kind of boots do I need for hiking?

We recommend a Gore-Tex (or similar) boot which you have “worn in” and provides strong ankle support. New boots should be worn for a couple of weeks and tested on a few hikes to ensure they don’t have any hotspots. Boot fitting is an art and going to a knowledgeable footwear store is recommended. The fit of the boot is more important than the brand or style. Poorly fitted boots without enough support for a 40-50-pound pack can bring a trip to an end quickly.

Why do we use trekking poles when backpacking?

Trekking poles provide for a more comfortable and safer hiking experience. They can be used for stability and prevent your upper body from becoming stiff since you use your arms to move through the woods. Once you grow accustomed to them, you may decide never to hike without them again! HWA provides Leki trekking poles which can be stored on propriety gear loops on your backpack.

What happens in the event of adverse weather conditions?

If it’s simply rain, we will continue both our hiking and canoeing experiences as usual. If there’s lightning, we do not paddle or hike and seek shelter. If there’s heavy wind, we will stop paddling but may continue hiking depending on the condition of the forest we are traveling through. We have no way to predict the weather once in the wilderness and are subject to its extremes.

Where exactly and how far will we be traveling?

The exact route plan will be determined by the health and experience of the group in conjunction with the weather. Final travel decisions are made by HWA taking into consideration the needs of every member of the group.

What kind of food will we have and who will prepare it and clean up?

HWA provides nutritious (and lightweight) meals from Backpackers Pantry augmented with fresh food and other kinds of wilderness friendly items. Meals are meant to provide nutrition suitable for wilderness travel. You may be accustomed to eating more or less on a daily basis, but adequate calories are provided.

Where do we go to the bathroom?

In the BWCA camp sites have forest service style outdoor pit toilets with a fiberglass toilet to sit on. On backpacking trips there may, or may not, be a similar pit toilet. If there is not, you will have to dig a “cat hole” and do your business there. You are welcome to bury used toilet paper, but any non-biodegradable personal products must be packed out. You can do this with a heavy plastic bag and throw it out at the conclusion of the trip.

What kind of emergency assistance do we have?

HWA carries a Garmin In-Reach which is both a satellite enabled emergency beacon and hand-held communication device. This is for emergency use only.

What if someone is injured?

If you were to get injured in the wilderness, Pastor Nick is a Wilderness First Responder and can provide significant treatment and care. While most wilderness injuries do not require extraction, rarely a life-threatening event requires immediate extraction. The costs associated with medical evacuation are bore by the person requiring the medical care and can be very costly. If this is a concern, you can purchase Wilderness Emergency Medical Evacuation Insurance from a number of online agencies for a modest fee.

What kind of canoes will we use?

We will be using Wenonah ultra-light Kevlar outfitting series canoes that weigh between 39-49 pounds.

What kind of sizing do you provide for rain gear?

Rain gear is one of the most undervalued pieces of equipment you take into the wilderness. It can literally save your life. We provide S-XXL waterproof, breathable, laminate rain gear at no extra charge with a fresh DWR coating. If you want to bring your own, HWA must approve it. If you have not refreshed the DWR coating in the last year, you should do so prior to the trip with a product similar to Nikwax TX-Direct. Without a DWR finish, the laminate tends to wet out and you will not enjoy the benefits of a breathable membrane.

What if I need to cancel my registration?

Trip costs are distributed across the group. Canceling one registration doesn't cancel those costs. Thus, your deposit is non-refundable and your final payment, due 90 days prior to the trip, is also non-refundable. Partial refunds for the costs beyond the deposit are considered in the event of family emergency (death or serious illness) at the discretion of UCCI and HWA.

What kind of physical fitness requirements are there?

Participants need to be in good physical condition to complete these rigorous wilderness experiences. Pre-trip exercise should take place of 2-3 times a week with a mixture of both cardio and strength training. Being physically conditioned will only increase the enjoyment and safety of an individual and support the efforts of the group as a whole.