



Rock Garden Paddling Kyuquot Sound Program Information Package

Program Description

Congratulations on registering to participate in our Rock Garden Paddling Course. Rock garden paddling is one of the most challenging and rewarding aspects of sea kayaking. As the popularity of rough water paddling increases in the sea kayak community, as does the need for safety and training.

This course requires that you have extensive previous experience including overnight trips in strong Class 2 waters or higher, rolling training, assisted and self-rescue practice and experience towing. If you are unsure of your ability to take this course, please call us to discuss your concerns prior to registering.

The following document has been written in order to aid you in preparing for the Rock Garden program. Please be sure to review all the pages and don't hesitate to contact us with any questions.

Paperwork Checklist

Please use the following checklist to ensure you have received and reviewed all the required documentation prior to the program start date:

- ✓ Rock Garden Paddling Course Information Package – please review
- ❑ SKILS Waiver – complete and return a minimum of 2 weeks before the course
- ❑ West Coast Expeditions Waiver - complete & return a min. of 2 weeks before the course
- ❑ West Coast Expeditions Participant Agreement and Medical Information form – please complete and return a minimum of 2 weeks before the course
- ❑ Policy and Procedures Document – please review

Please return paperwork to: West Coast Expeditions, PO Box, Courtenay, BC, Canada, V9N 6Z8, or by fax to 1-888-224-0968 or by email to info@westcoastexpeditions.com.

Objectives and Expectations

Objective

Whether you are new to playing near the rocks or an experienced paddler, our courses will challenge your experience and training. Focusing on risk management, boat control, reading water and rescues, our courses aim to give you the skills to play safely and confidently in Rock Gardens.

Expectations

Candidates for this course must demonstrate strong technical, tactical, mental, and physical skills in Class 2-4 waters.

Technical

- Handle their boat and recover from a capsize in currents, surf, moderate seas and strong winds.



Tactical

- Route plan on the open coast.
- Demonstrate situational awareness in a variety of challenging sea conditions.
- Make decisions in moderate and high consequence scenarios.

Mental

- Show resilience in the face of physical and psychological challenges.
- Show focus and attention in moderate and rough waters.
- Lead and follow within a peer group in Class 4 waters.
- Integrate technical and tactical skills.

Physical

- Demonstrate power and acceleration in moderate seas and strong currents.
- Demonstrate endurance appropriate to open coastal touring.
- Show balance and recovery in moderate and rough waters.
- Coordinate technical skills in complex paddling conditions.

Program Logistics



Program Prerequisites

For this program, the instructors will assume that you have extensive previous experience including overnight trips in strong Class 2 waters or higher, rolling training, assisted and self-rescue practice and experience towing. If you are unsure of your ability to take this course, please call us to discuss your concerns prior to registering.

Class Size

A minimum of 3 candidates is required to run this program while the maximum group size we adhere to is 6. The limited class size helps to ensure a rich learning environment with lots of opportunity for one-on-one coaching and feedback.

Locations and Traveling

This program will be based out of West Coast Expeditions' Wilderness Retreat Base Camp on Spring Island. This beautiful kayaking facility is nestled on the edge of the Mission Group Islands, perched among a chain of Barrier Islets in the Kyuquot area.

Please refer to the driving instructions outlined at the end of this document for directions on how to get you and your kayak to Fair Harbour (via the gravel road to Zeballos). Once in Fair Harbour you will be transported to Spring Island via water taxi.

Meals

Delicious meals are fully catered by West Coast Expeditions' staff who delight in feeding you well. One evening we will be treated to a traditional salmon dinner hosted by a local family from the Kyuquot-Cheleset First Nation. Immerse yourself in paddling, then warm up in the shower, eat well, and sleep like royalty (from a camping perspective!).

Our Classroom

The west coast near Spring Island in Kyuquot Sound offers a rugged outer coastal playground ideal for this training. From Spring Island we have ready access to rock gardens, boomers, reef breaks, arches, caves, tunnels, surge channels, surf landings, and moving water.

What You Are Responsible For

You are responsible for all travel from your home to Fair Harbour as well as all your personal paddling gear. You are also responsible for accommodation before and after the course. SKILS and WCE will cover the cost of water taxi transportation to/from Spring Island, well-appointed base camp accommodations with walk-in tents, beds, hot shower and fully catered delicious meals. White water helmets are mandatory for this course, and dry suits are strongly recommended. If you need to rent equipment, contact our office at info@skils.ca.

List of Required Gear

- ❑ Touring kayak appropriate to rock garden paddling. Plastic kayaks are recommended.
- ❑ PFD with whistle and knife
- ❑ Paddle
- ❑ Spare paddle
- ❑ Spray skirt
- ❑ Pump
- ❑ Helmet
- ❑ Tow line and other safety gear
- ❑ 15 m buoyant heaving line
- ❑ Immersion clothing (a dry suit is recommended)
- ❑ VHF Radio
- ❑ Snacks and water bottle
- ❑ Program paperwork
- ❑ Repair kit for kayak
- ❑ Personal clothing and toiletries
- ❑ Sleeping bag
- ❑ Complete sun and rain protection
- ❑ Headlamp
- ❑ Optional camera and binoculars

Your Instructors

This program is offered as a joint venture between SKILS and West Coast Expeditions (WCE).

SKILS staff members are industry leaders and professionals with extensive guiding and instructional experience and certification. For profiles on each of our staff members, please visit our website at www.skils.ca.



West Coast Expeditions has a reputation of hosting and delivering superb kayaking experiences for since 1988. Owner David Pinel, a veteran Guide Trainer and Examiner with the Sea Kayak Guides Alliance of BC, is scheduled to co-instruct this course. David has paddled in the waters of Kyuquot since 1995.

Course Outline

Your instructors will strive to take advantage of any and all learning opportunities as they arise. Given the skills and experience of the candidates, the requirements of the course, and the elements we will be playing in we will alter the course to provide you with as rich, unique, and rewarding experience as possible.

Course instruction starts informally on the afternoon of Day 1 upon arrival at Spring Island, and includes a local orientation to base camp facilities, course objectives, participant expectations, and an introduction to the paddling area. We intend to get on the water that evening as part of the local orientation, paddling warm-up, and initial skills assessment.

Course Materials & Background Reading

In our experience, a little preparation goes a long way in this course. No prior reading is required, however, do make sure your roll is reliable and that you've been on the water recently to freshen skills and re-tune your body for active paddling.



Travel Guidelines from Vancouver to Fair Harbour

Travel on the Vancouver Island logging roads is common for tourists and requires that drivers and passengers be very alert for oncoming traffic in narrow stretches, on bridges, and around corners with restricted visibility. It is important to know that logging trucks have right of way. Many of the truck drivers own their own rigs and the adage “time is money” applies. They know each route intimately, travel at fast speeds, and take up most of the road width. Once on logging roads, you are advised to:

- Drive with your lights on,
- Slow down on corners,
- Hug the right side of the road whenever you can't see what is ahead of you, and
- Always be prepared to pull over.

This is not intended to scare you but to heighten your awareness. The Fair Harbour logging roads are kept in pretty good condition, though flat tires are not uncommon. We recommend that you carry a full-size good quality spare, especially if your vehicle has a small temporary spare tire that come with many of today's cars. If you do get a flat, pull off the road as far as possible before stopping. Be sure you are visible for at least 300 meters in front and behind. You may have to place emergency triangles ahead and behind you to ensure oncoming traffic is aware that you are stopped on the road. On dry days, the roads can also be very dusty from other traffic, which temporarily reduces vision.

To ensure that you meet your water taxi as arranged, always allow some extra time for changing a flat tire or for any delays because of road maintenance that is underway.

In the event of a breakdown or flat tire, there is frequent other traffic that will stop to help, but no reliable cell phone coverage once north of Campbell River, nor on the gravel roads to Fair Harbour, so be prepared to be self sufficient if you experience difficulties.

This outline can be used as a supplement to a good road map of Vancouver Island. Travelling in your own vehicle will give you the freedom to discover the many stops of interest along the way. Drive safely and enjoy!

Vancouver to Campbell River

There are a couple of different car ferry routes that will get you onto Vancouver Island. If you are coming directly from Vancouver to Campbell River, the shortest route is to take the ferry from Horseshoe Bay to Nanaimo. The B.C. Ferry Corporation (www.bcferries.com) has a good website to access information about routes, costs and timings. There is also a reservation system (by phone or on-line) for those who are on tight schedules. The BC Ferries phone numbers are: 1-888-223-3779 (from anywhere in B.C.) and 250-386-3431 (from outside B.C.).



The crossing time from Horseshoe Bay to Nanaimo is 1hr 35 min., and you should arrive well in advance of the ferry that you intend to catch, or within the prescribed time period if you have made a reservation in advance.

Campbell River is 156 km (96 miles) north of Nanaimo. The main Island Highway is #19. As you leave the ferry terminal in Nanaimo, turn right. The route is quite well marked and you should follow signs to Campbell River (you will also see signs for Parksville, Qualicum Beach, Comox and Courtenay - all of these are towns between Nanaimo and Campbell River and all are accessed by Highway 19).

Driving time from Nanaimo (Departure Bay Ferry terminal) to Campbell River is about 1hr 45 min.

Campbell River to Woss

From Campbell River, continue North along the Island Highway 19 to Woss (fuel, convenience store, liquor store, toilets, cafe).

- Distance: 125 km (78 miles)
- Driving Time: 1 hr 45 min

Important note: Once north of Campbell River, the Sayward Junction, Woss, and Zeballos are the only places to stop for fuel while enroute to Fair Harbour.

Woss to Zeballos

Continue north from Woss on Highway 19. Take the Zeballos turn-off (left) after approximately 22 km (14 miles), just past the Steele River bridge along the Island Hwy. This is the start of the gravel logging road to Fair Harbour. Use your headlights and be aware of logging trucks. You are now traversing Vancouver Island toward the west coast! You can bypass Zeballos and travel directly to Fair Harbour, or follow signs into the Zeballos townsite where there is accommodation, a store, fuel station, and some small shops.

- Distance: 64 km (39 miles) approximately
- Driving Time: 1 hr 10 min.

Zeballos to Fair Harbour

Follow the main logging road along the 35 km (22 mile) stretch between Zeballos and Fair Harbour. Forks in the road are usually well marked but if you encounter one which is not sign posted, follow the most well-travelled route.

- Distance: 35 km (22 miles) approximately
- Driving Time: 45-60 min

Important note: Fair Harbour is basically a large gravel parking lot with some nearby camping and a small convenience store in a trailer (on the second terrace of parking). The parking area is also used by logging companies, other tourists, sport fishermen, and the residents of Kyuquot. This is where you leave your vehicle. Although theft is very uncommon, we advise that you lock all doors and do not leave valuables inside. Pay (and somewhat supervised) parking in assigned spots is available through the store for approximately \$7/night; otherwise, you may find a free parking space to the left of the large Government Wharf (when facing the water).



Thank you for enrolling in our skills training program. If you have additional questions or concerns, please contact us at info@skils.ca. We look forward to playing on the water with you!