

Program Information Package



5-Day SKGABC Level 1 Guide & Paddle Canada Level 2 Skills Course

Program Description

Join this customized instructional week on “the Perfect Island” and develop your kayaking and guiding skills on the doorstep of some of the best west coast paddling! Industry leaders West Coast Expeditions (WCE) and SKILS are joining efforts to offer this training opportunity. Take advantage of WCE’s one-of-a-kind location with wilderness camping comforts and world-class sea kayaking opportunities in remote and spectacular Kyuquot Sound.

- Complete your Sea Kayak Guides Alliance of BC Level 1 Guide training and assessment
- Complete your Paddle Canada Level 2 Skills certification
- Have fun on & off the water learning from instructors who are industry leaders
- Learn with quick access to sheltered and outer coast waters
- Paddle with phenomenal sea life including curious sea otters or tufted puffins
- Have access to base camp infrastructure and shelter that facilitates all-weather learning and comfort, including the option to warm up with a hot shower after wet paddling play!

Paperwork Checklist

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

- ✓ Level 1 (Day) Guide Program Document – please review
- ❑ SKILS Waiver – complete and return a minimum of 2 weeks prior the course
- ❑ West Coast Expeditions Waiver - complete and return a min. of 2 weeks prior 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
- ❑ SKILS Training Manuals – 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

This 5-day program is designed for aspiring sea kayak leaders. Candidates will be assessed on their ability to organize and lead an extended one-day sea kayak program in Class 1 waters. Successful candidates will be awarded SKGABC Day Guide / Level 1 Guide status and Paddle Canada Level 2 Skills.



Expectations

Level One Guides are expected to perform all the skills outlined below with a high degree of proficiency while leading in class 1 waters and demonstrating personal comfort suitable for class 2 waters.

- Class 1 waters: Gentle tours in non-challenging, protected waters with limited wind effect, little or no current, easy landings and ready access to land-bases assistance.
- Class 2 waters: Tours in lightly populated areas with short crossings, moderate potential wind effects, gentle to moderate non-turbulent currents, easy to moderate landings and light surf beaches.

All successful candidates will clearly demonstrate effective communication, leadership and judgment throughout all aspects of the examination and specifically during situations requiring instruction, scenarios, or risk management. Candidates should take the scenarios seriously as they will be evaluated on how thoroughly they follow through in these scenarios and look after all group members.

Paddling Skills

Candidates will demonstrate a range of paddling skills such that they are able to maintain efficient control of the angle, motion, and tilt of their kayak. Strokes must be demonstrated on both sides. Strokes will be initially assessed in controlled conditions then throughout the practical evaluation in varied water conditions.

Specifically, the candidate will perform the following skills:

- Basic strokes (forward, reverse, stopping, forward and reverse sweeps with and without edging, underwater recovery draw, low brace, low brace turn)
- Demonstrates safe & effective control in moving water (eddy turns, ferry glides).

Rescue Techniques

Any or all of the required rescue techniques may be assessed in controlled conditions, or at any time during the practical evaluation in varied water conditions, and during leadership scenarios.

Specifically, the candidate will perform the following skills:

- Dry and accessible storage of safety equipment throughout the practical evaluation.
- Candidates will demonstrate 1 self-rescue technique;
 - Self rescue with paddle float to the point of securing the skirt and beginning to pump out water within 2 minutes; use of stirrup optional
- Candidates will demonstrate 3 assisted-rescue techniques;
 - T Rescue.
 - Parallel Rescue.
 - Sling rescue / stirrup re-entry.
- Candidates will demonstrate 1 towing or travel-assist technique
 - Technique should be appropriate for different distances, sea conditions, and situations.

Navigation

The candidate will use a variety of navigation tools including nautical charts, compass, Tide and Current Tables, and Chart One to plan a sea kayak trip.

Specifically, the candidate will perform the following skills:

- Identify symbols and scale.
- Use Chart One as a reference tool.
- Plot appropriate route plans with distances and time estimates.
- Follow route plans and adapt to conditions.
- Use Tide and Current Tables to predict tides and currents.
- Familiarity with basic collision regulations (re: right of way).



Weather

The candidate will use a variety of weather aids to make reasonable 6 to 12 hour weather predictions to be used within the context of a sea kayak trip.

Specifically, the candidate will perform the following skills:

- Describe weather phenomena including small-scale features (land and sea breezes, gap and corner winds, fog types),
- Observe and describe current local weather trends (re: cloud, wind, and precipitation) and the relevance to trip and route planning,
- Access the marine weather forecast and interpret the relevance to trip and route planning.

Emergency Signaling and Radio Use

The candidate will demonstrate proficiency with a variety of communication devices appropriate to the area of travel. Devices will include VHF radio and flares.

Specifically, the candidate will perform the following skills:

- Routine communications for logistics (e.g. using appropriate language, clarity, brevity, precision, etc.)
- Proper communication procedures for an emergency call (to Coast Guard Radio or direct to RCC)
- Care and proper use of flares (including types, limitations, sequencing, and safe ignition).
- Alternate one-way signaling options (e.g. smoke fire, signal mirror, strobe, EPIRB, PLB, etc).

Leadership and Judgment

The candidate will demonstrate strong leadership skills in a variety of situations including rescue scenarios and during the daily routines of paddling and or overnight group travel. The candidate will demonstrate good judgment and preventative risk management for group safety both on and off the water. The candidate will combine a variety of problem solving, rescue, and group management techniques to successfully resolve staged scenarios.

Specifically, the candidate will perform the following skills:

- Communicate effectively to individuals and group,
- Detect and correct errors in client's forward stroke to prevent injury and improve efficiency,
- Assert effective group control on land and water,
- Awareness of individual and group needs,
- Leadership through clear communication and decision-making.
- Ongoing risk management and assessment;
 - Follows general safety practices and procedures for landing, launching, and on-water travel,
 - Follows general safety practices and procedures for on-land group management (site orientation, setting parameters, etc.),
 - Problem-solving for minor issues (equipment and clients),
 - Scenario management and resolution (including potential capsizes, illness and injury, missing client, equipment loss or damage).

Trip Preparation

The candidate will demonstrate an understanding of the stages and importance of trip preparation. Specifically, the candidate will perform the following skills:

- Equipment check.

Environmental Impact Awareness

The candidate will demonstrate an awareness of and explain the positive and negative impacts of commercial sea kayaking in coastal BC communities and environments. The candidate will

demonstrate an awareness of and explain the potential negative impact by sea kayakers on coastal and marine ecosystems.

Specifically, the candidate will describe or demonstrate the following skills:

- Guidelines and strategies for minimizing group impact while traveling on the water (marine life) and in camp (erosion, waste, vegetation, fresh water, visual, fire, wildlife, etc.).
- Proper human waste disposal (guidelines, strategies, concerns).

Program Logistics

Location, Timing & 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.



The program is 5 days (4 nights) in length. Please aim to arrive midday on Day 1 and depart midday on Day 5. Midday start and end times allow for travel to and from Fair Harbour on the same day for most participants (eg. from the Comox Valley).

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.

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 both sheltered water and open coast as well as spectacular scenery and phenomenal wildlife.

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 must provide your own meals for the duration of the program as well as kitchen/cooking equipment and camping equipment (tent, tarp, sleeping bag, sleeping pad etc.). 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.

Participants have the option to rent a sea kayak and equipment from WCE (please arrange at time of registration) or provide their own sea kayak and equipment (PFD, paddles, pump, throw/tow line, paddle float, rescue stirrup, etc.). Immersion protection is also available for rent (wetsuit or drysuit, booties, neoprene hood, paddling jacket). Rental costs are not included in the course cost. Personal kayaks can be transported on the water taxi from Fair Harbour.

Finally, you are also responsible to provide your own meals from lunch day one to lunch day 5, as well as the kitchen and cooking equipment for preparing your meals. We also recommend you bring a sealable rodent-proof and bird-proof container for food storage (eg. Cooler or Rubbermaid bin). You will also need to bring camping equipment (tent, tarp, sleeping bag, sleeping pad), personal clothing (including sun & rain protection), and a towel.

List of Required Gear

- ❑ Touring kayak appropriate for guiding in Class 1 or light Class 2 waters.
- ❑ PFD with whistle and knife
- ❑ Paddle
- ❑ Spare paddle
- ❑ Spray skirt
- ❑ Pump
- ❑ 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 binocular

What SKILS/WCE is Responsible For

WCE & SKILS will provide certified instructors, learning materials, group safety equipment, established campsites, hot showers, drinking water, outhouses, group shelter for all-weather learning during theory session, and water taxi transportation to/from Fair Harbour.

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.

Registration

Register on-line at www.westcoastexpeditions.com, or by phone (1-800-665-3040) or email info@westcoastexpeditions.com. Payment can be made by cheque, Visa or MasterCard.

Course Materials & Background Reading

In our experience, a little preparation goes a long way. Please take the time to organize your course materials early and spend some time reviewing the material. It is a good idea to review your paddling skills prior to the course, especially if you haven't paddled over the winter. A trip or two to the lake or pool is recommended to test your sea legs as well as the equipment you plan to use on the course.

Prior to the course you will be provided with 2 training books (the *SKILS Guide Manual* and *Navigation, Weather and Sea State – A Paddlers Manual*) to help you prepare. Participants are required to read through the training books thoroughly prior to the course. Reviewing this material will help you study for and succeed on the written exam. Please be absolutely sure you review the entire *SKILS Guide Manual* as well as the following pages in *Navigation, Weather and Sea State – A Paddlers Manual*; these pages are required reading:

- 1 to 37
- 40 to 49
- 58 to 87
- 89 to 106
- 110 to 151
- 153 to 197
- 203 to 208
- 211 to 213



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@skills.ca. We look forward to playing on the water with you!