



**HIGH ADVENTURE**



**ORDER OF THE ARROW  
WILDERNESS VOYAGE & CANADIAN ODYSSEY  
PARTICIPANT GUIDE**



My Brother,

Congratulations on signing up for OA Wilderness Voyage or Canadian Odyssey! This summer, you will experience Scouting in a way that most people only dream about. You are now a participant in one of the most exciting, challenging, rugged, and rewarding high adventure programs in the Order of the Arrow.

As you prepare for this incredible adventure, understand that you will be one of only 84 Arrowmen to experience OA Wilderness Voyage (OAWV) or OA Canadian Odyssey (OACO) this summer. By participating in OAWV and OACO, you will be part of an elite group of youth leaders and committed Scouts who have a true passion for adventure and service. You will be joining an enduring legacy of service to the North Woods that goes back 27 years!

We ask that you please read all of the provided materials to best “Be Prepared” for your two weeks up here with us. Canoe camping is an ancient, and storied, tradition, and the following materials will allow you to prepare to introduce yourself to a type of camping that few still practice. Therefore, it is very important that you have the correct equipment and knowledge to succeed on your Voyage or Odyssey. Canoe camping in the vast and remote northern wilderness is very different from a troop campout or a backpacking trip. It will be difficult; but most worthwhile things are.

OA Wilderness Voyage/Canadian Odyssey is an amazing opportunity for Arrowmen like yourself to take advantage of. They are specifically designed to challenge you mentally and physically, while providing you opportunities to overcome challenges you never knew you could. While on this trek you will further your understanding and knowledge of the pillars of the Order of the Arrow: Brotherhood, Cheerfulness, and Service. Most importantly, the program is a wildly fun adventure giving you the chance to explore not only the great lakes and portages of the Northwoods, but the high places within you as well. Finding your *Up North* with your brothers promises to be an adventure you will never forget!

We hope you come away from this experience with a similar sense of accomplishment and growth as we did when we were participants! Please feel free to contact us with any questions regarding your preparation and planning. We are looking forward to your arrival!

Yours in Brotherhood,

Marc Jacobs

2026 OA Wilderness Voyage/Canadian Odyssey Director

Dylan Richardson

2026 OA Wilderness Voyage/Canadian Odyssey Assistant Director



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## EQUIPMENT

Please review the enclosed Packing List (pages 8-10) to help you pack for your trip. Remember, you will be doing physically strenuous work for the first five days of your trek, so be prepared.

Northern Tier will provide tents, cooking gear, stoves, packs, and all food necessary for your two-week experience. All gear will be repacked before departure. You will be sharing a portage pack with two to three other participants.

In addition to the gear on the Personal Equipment List, please bring your full Scouting America uniform (pants/shorts, socks, belt, shirt) and your Order of the Arrow sash.

Limited secure storage is provided in the form of crew lockers for your clothing and other personal “travel” items that you will not be carrying on the trail. The lockers must hold the entire crew's non trail gear, so please be considerate.

## BE PREPARED

**Physically Strong:** We strongly encourage you to follow an exercise regimen in order to have an enjoyable experience canoeing, trail building, and portaging.

**Mentally Awake:** Please review the OA ceremonies before your trip Up North as this will enrich your experience.

**Morally Straight:** You are expected to abide by and exemplify the Scout Oath and Law while on your adventure and in your travels.

## LEADERSHIP

Your crew will be under the leadership of a pair of OA Foremen. They are skilled and trained in both trail conservation work and wilderness camping in the Boundary Waters. They will meet you in the parking lot as you arrive at the Charles L. Sommers Canoe Base and guide your crew through life on base and trail. These Foremen will assist you in planning and carrying out your wilderness adventure.





## EXPEDITION NUMBER

Your expedition number is important. Your expedition number is based on the day your OA Wilderness Voyage or Canadian Odyssey begins. For example, if your trip begins on June 5, 2025 your expedition number will be OAWV060525 or OACO060525. Please be sure to include your expedition number in all correspondence.

## UNIFORM

Wear your uniform proudly, as it identifies you as a member of the largest youth organization in the world. While at the Charles L. Sommers Canoe Base, the official Scouting America uniform is appropriate and comfortable. You will wear work clothes on the trail, but while in base camp, full uniform is required. OA sash should be brought to base, though it will ONLY be worn at the conclusion of your trek. We show that we are Arrowmen through our actions, not our appearance.

## INSURANCE

Scouting America carries accident and sickness insurance coverage for all Northern Tier High Adventure participants from the time they leave home until they return. This policy is secondary to a family policy that might be in effect. The name and policy number of your family's insurance needs to be on the medical form.

## MEDICAL FORM

YOU MUST BRING YOUR CURRENT AND COMPLETED MEDICAL FORM WITH YOU TO THE CHARLES L. SOMMERS CANOE BASE AS WELL AS UPLOAD IT TO NOAERS. If you arrive at Charles L. Sommers without an uploaded and/or physical form you will need to complete a physical in Ely, which will delay your departure into the wilderness and increase the cost of your trip. Ensure your parents' signature (if you are under 18 years of age), and your personal insurance information is on the form.

## SWIM CHECK

Please upload to the participant portal and bring a completed swim check form. Swim checks will not take place at Northern Tier. Form is available in the appendix of this document.





## TRANSPORTATION

You will be responsible for your transportation to and from Charles L. Sommers Canoe Base. General information based on common travel methods is included below. You must arrive at the base by 5:00 p.m. the day that your program officially starts. For example, if your trek is July 6 – 20, you must arrive at the base by 5:00 p.m. on July 6th and you would depart on July 20th.

## SHUTTLE

If Arriving by Airplane - A shuttle van is available from Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport (MSP) for a round trip fee of \$300.00. Uniformed scouters from the local OA lodge in Minneapolis will greet you when your flight arrives and will help you get to the shuttle. If you plan to arrive via plane, you must schedule your arrival no later than 12:00 p.m. into Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport. Allow time to claim your luggage. The shuttle departs from baggage claim level, Door 4 of Terminal 1 at 12:30 p.m. and arrives at Charles L. Sommers at approximately 6:00 p.m.

The return shuttle leaves at 7:00 a.m. on your last scheduled day from the Sommers Canoe Base, arriving at Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport at 1:00 p.m. DO NOT schedule your return flight before 2:30 p.m. on the last day of your trek.

## CAR

If Arriving by Private Vehicle - Private vehicles can be driven directly to Charles L. Sommers Canoe Base, twenty-two miles from Ely, Minnesota. Wilderness Voyage/Canadian Odyssey Foremen will meet you at the stockade next to the parking lot the day your trek officially begins. Participants are strongly urged to arrive around 5pm, but any time after 1pm is acceptable. If you are driving up or arriving early, please call Northern Tier at 218-365-4811 and ask for the OA Office.

The Northern Tier High Adventure Base address is:

14790 Moose Lake Road, Ely, Minnesota 55731

Participants are strongly encouraged to find a travel companion from their home council to ease the process of traveling to the base. If you have difficulties or questions about travel arrangements, please call Northern Tier High Adventure Base at 218-365-4811 and ask for the OA Office.



## INDIVIDUAL ARRIVAL PLANS

Please share your travel plans with us by visiting [registration.oa-scouting.org](https://registration.oa-scouting.org) and login using your ArrowID you created to register. Then click on My Events and then select travel on the left-hand side of the screen. Enter your travel information so we know when and where you will arrive. If you plan on using the shuttle, after entering your information click on the general link on the left side of your screen and then select the Make a Payment button. The shuttle fee needs to be paid before you arrive.

## DIETARY NEEDS

Please enter any dietary restrictions on NOAERS at <https://registration.oa-scouting.org/>. Northern Tier is unable to accommodate any special diet needs not communicated 30 days before arrival. Northern Tier is unable to meet all food needs, so the food services manager will reach out with questions or concerns as yours are reviewed. In some cases, you may need to bring your own food. If you have any questions about dietary needs and the food Northern Tier will be preparing for your trip, please call Northern Tier at 218-365-4811 and ask for the food service manager.

## PROGRAM FEES

Participant fee for OA Wilderness Voyage or Canadian Odyssey is \$495.

A non-refundable deposit of \$50 is due with your application. The additional \$445 is due with the return of your acceptance notice. No participants will be allowed to begin their trek until their program fee is paid in full. Cancellations made at least four (4) weeks prior to your scheduled arrival date will be eligible for a refund of the second part of the payment.

The fee for shuttle transportation, if applicable, from Minneapolis/St. Paul airport must be paid in advance following the instruction provided in this information packet. Please refer to applicable shuttle transportation information for refund and other policies.

“By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail” -Benjamin Franklin





## PACKING INFORMATION-PLEASE READ COMPLETELY

You are packing for a week of hard physical labor, rain or shine, followed by a weeklong wilderness trek. You will not drop off or resupply gear, so your “Wet Clothes” and “Dry Clothes” need to serve several purposes. Note that there are no laundry services available at Northern Tier.

**Wet Clothes** are used for portage trail maintenance on the work week and paddling on the voyage week. These clothes will get wet and most likely will not dry out. The clothing must be synthetic or wool. Synthetics are preferred as they are less prone to chafing. Clothing should NOT be cotton.

**Note:** All participants are required to wear boots that have full ankle coverage, a rugged stitched or vulcanized sole and drainage at the instep. Boots should NOT be waterproof. Please contact us prior to your arrival if you are unsure if the boots you are planning to bring meet this requirement. Individuals arriving with inadequate footwear will be required to purchase boots in the trading post prior to departure on water. The health and safety of participants is of utmost importance to us, so there are no exceptions to the boot requirement. Northern Tier recommends the Astral TR1 Merge 2.0 or the Merrell Moab Ventilator Mid Boots. The Astral boots are available at <https://store.ntier.org/>.

**Dry Clothes** are backup clothes and for camp use. These clothes NEED to stay dry the entire trip - Once you get into campsite, you will take off your wet clothes, air dry and powder your feet, and change into all dry clothes. **Note:** Any gear not on your body during the day must fit in your stuff sack including sleeping bag, clothing, and additional gear. We recommend a 25–35-liter dry bag. Many people prefer a waterproof compression sack.

The crew gear provided by Northern Tier and the OA will include: packs, cooking equipment, water purification system, emergency communication, first aid kit, tents, fire tools, crew tarp and cord, bear ropes, food, work gloves, PFDs, canoes and paddles.

**Some Items are NOT Recommended.** These items include **Crazy Creek or camp chair** (chairs may not be used in canoes and many campsites have log seating), **Hammocks** (You won't have great time or opportunities to set up a hammock, and they are generally uncomfortable during mosquito season), and **Phones** (the trip will take you far out of cell service and the Boundary Waters has claimed many a dropped phone! We encourage you to take advantage of this rare opportunity to disconnect. Your foremen will be able to contact the Northern Tier bases using a radio or satellite phone if necessary.) Additionally, please do not bring anything you're not willing to risk losing or damaging. Northern Tier provides a true wilderness experience with variable, unpredictable conditions which may damage items you're attached to.





## PACKING LIST- OAWV/OACO PARTICIPANTS

### WET CLOTHES

- (1) Pair rugged synthetic quick dry pants, convertibles recommended
- (1) Short sleeve shirt, anything sturdy and synthetic
- (1) Pair durable wool/synthetic socks
- (1) Pair sturdy, NON-waterproof boots with good drainage. (See note about boots above)
- (1) Long sleeve synthetic shirt (a base layer like a Duofold or a lightweight sun hoodie)
- (1) Pair synthetic underwear
- Waterproof rain jacket (No ponchos, no Frog Togs)

### DRY CLOTHES

- (1) Wool sweater or Soft-shell fleece
- (1) Long sleeve synthetic shirt
- (1) Short sleeve synthetic shirt
- (1) Pair synthetic underwear
- (1) Pair synthetic pants (recommend: convertible “zip off” pants or soft-shell pants)
- (2) Pair synthetic or wool socks
- (1) Pair close toed shoes with hard soles (recommend: used lightweight sneakers)  
Note: Crocs or other open-heeled shoes are not allowed.

### PERSONAL GEAR

- Waterproof dry bag
- (1) 20-40°F degree lightweight sleeping bag
- (1) Sleeping pad
- (1) Good folding-blade pocket knife or multi-tool
- (2) Wide mouth 1-liter Water Bottles (Ex: Nalgene)
- (1) Mess Kit
- (1) Plastic or metal bowl (Example is GSI plastic bowl)
- (1) Cup or mug
  - (1) Spoon
- (1) Hat (ball cap or wide brim)
- (1) Pair sunglasses with Croakies-type attachment
- (1) Pack towel (recommend: cotton or microfiber beach towel)
- (1) Hand towel
- (1) Bug spray in plastic bottle (tin cans are banned)





- (1) Small plastic bottle of 30+ SPF or higher waterproof sunscreen (no aerosol)
- (1) Bottle of Gold Bond Powder
- (1) Toothbrush
- (1) Small tube toothpaste
- (1) Good headlamp and extra batteries
- Good pen and journal
- Book for reading

### FOR ON BASE DAYS & TRAVELING

- Field Uniform Shirt (Class A)
- A pair of socks and underwear
- OA Sash
- Scout shorts/pants
- Scout belt
- Close toe hiking boots or sneakers (Recommend: the same as dry shoes)
- Toiletries, towel
- Any money you may desire for Trading Post purchases (patches, clothing, waterbottles, etc)

### ITEMS YOU MAY BRING BUT ARE NOT REQUIRED

- Digital Camera (recommend waterproof camera or stored in a small waterproof case)
- Small basic compass (to use on the trail, if needed)
- Fishing Gear (Fishing gear is also available for check out as crew gear - we recommend checking gear out. Make sure to purchase a fishing license if you wish to fish).
- Pair of paddling gloves
- 10' Paracord (keep coiled for extra shoe lace)
- Waterproof rain pants (recommended but not required)
- (1) 5ft of duct tape (take off roll of duct tape and roll on itself or roll around water bottle)
- (1) Knit/stocking cap
- Playing Cards (your trip will likely have plenty of free time in campsites)
- Light

"I think that we ought to eat all our provisions now, so that we shan't have so much to carry." -Christopher Robin





## PAPERWORK & ARRIVAL CHECKLIST

- Scouting America Health and Medical Record (signed by a doctor within the last year)
- Visit [registration.oa-scouting.org](https://registration.oa-scouting.org) with your ArrowID to:
  - Enter personal arrival information
  - Register and pay for shuttle if needed
  - Enter any dietary restrictions (and also at [ntier.org/resources/food/](https://ntier.org/resources/food/) if applicable)
- Swim check form (Must be completed before you arrive)
- Proof of Safeguarding Youth Training (If 18 or older)

Please be sure to have ALL of the required paperwork when you arrive at base on your first day; any missing items could delay the start of your trek (and the other 13 Arrowmen there in the same session). If you have any questions about any of this information, please contact Northern Tier at (218) 365-4811 and ask for the OA Office – we'd be more than happy to help!

“The smell of the morning is an adventure, and if you can start the day going outdoors and sniffing the air, there is always a life to the spirit” -Sigurd F. Olson, The Singing Wilderness



## FISHING LICENSES

Northern Tier recommends that all Fishing Licenses be purchased online in advance of your trip. If you plan on fishing, you are responsible for familiarizing yourself with local rules and regulations.

OA Wilderness Voyage: MINNESOTA FISHING LICENSES- All individuals, 16 years of age and older wishing to fish need to obtain a license in order to fish in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW), licenses can be purchased in advance over the phone by calling 1-888-665-4236, or online at <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/licenses/fishing/index.html?type=fishing>.

NOTE: A Social Security Number is required to obtain a Minnesota Fishing License

OA Canadian Odyssey: ONTARIO FISHING LICENSES- All individuals, 16 years of age and older wishing to fish need to obtain a license in order to fish in the Quetico Parks, licenses can be purchased in advance online at

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/fishing-licence-non-residents-canada>

“If people concentrated on the really important things in life, there’d be a shortage of fishing poles” -Doug Larson





ORDER OF THE ARROW

**WILDERNESS VOYAGE**

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ORDER OF THE ARROW

**CANADIAN ODYSSEY**

# APPENDIX



## Appendix A: Swim Classification Form

### Swim Classification Record

(Changes and/or corrections to the following chart should be initialed and dated by the test supervisor.)

Unit Number \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Swim Test \_\_\_\_\_

	Full Name (Print) (Draw lines through blank spaces)	Medical Recheck Parts A-B	Swim Classification		
			Non-Swimmer	Beginner	Swimmer
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					

The swim classification test performed at a unit level should be conducted by one of the following council-approved resource people: Aquatics Instructor, BSA; BSA Lifeguard; BSA Swimming & Water Rescue; or other lifeguard, swimming instructor, etc. Test administrators should utilize chapter 5 of the [BSA Aquatics Supervision Guide](#).

**NAME OF PERSON SUPERVISING & FACILITATING THE SWIM TEST:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Type of Authorization/Training  
(Attach a copy of certification if required by council procedure)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Expiration Date if applicable

## Appendix B: OA Canadian Odyssey Additional Instructions

1. All participants must have a valid, unexpired passport and clean criminal record.
2. Once your trip is completed, you will be required to check in with US customs. The Northern Tier staff will assist you with this process, typically done through the CBP ROAM app, available through Apple and Google. Your check in will be smoother, if you have downloaded the app to your phone prior to arrival. We will have devices with preloaded apps, but each person must check in individually and the line can get quite long.
3. Make sure to bring your passport with you to Northern Tier. You will have to show it at the border when crossing into Canada AND online when returning to the US. Do NOT forget at home as this will prevent you from participating.

## Appendix C: Scouting America Health and Medical Record

The Medical form can be found at <https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/ahmr/>.

1. Make sure to download and use the most up to date Scouting America Health and Medical Record.
2. Make sure to take the Northern Tier Risk Advisory (the last page of the form) with you for your physician to review.