

2025

Northern Tier High Adventure Program
Summer Participant Handbook



Contents

What are the Requirements to Attend?	5
Adult Leadership – BSA Policy	6
Co-ed/Female Crew Policies	6
Northern Tier Crew Makeup Policies	7
Tenting Policies	8
PREPARE FOR HIGH ADVENTURE	12
TRIP ORGANIZATION	12
ELECT A CREW LEADER	13
SELECT YOUR TREK PROGRAM OPTIONS	14
TRIP PLANNING	15
WHAT GEAR IS NEEDED?	17
GEAR PROVIDED BY NORTHERN TIER	23
ARRIVAL AT BASE	25
HIT THE TRAIL	29
NORTHERN TIER POLICIES	34
NORTHERN TIER AWARDS	38

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

Ely: Ee' lee

Atikokan: At' i coke' can

Bissett: Beh set'

Quetico: Kwet' i ko

Atikaki: At' i kāk' ee

OKPIK: Ook' pick

*Cover Photo: "Cozy Campfire During Sunrise"
by Sophia M., 2024 Participant*



WELCOME TO NORTHERN TIER NATIONAL HIGH ADVENTURE!

NORTHERN TIER DELIVERS WILDERNESS ADVENTURE!

The mission of Northern Tier High Adventure Programs is to provide high quality character development experiences for all of Scouting's participants through challenging wilderness adventures - featuring expedition canoeing and extreme-temperature winter camping - in the rugged North Woods of Minnesota, Ontario and Manitoba.

Welcome to the Northern Tier National High Adventure Programs and the great North American Canoe Country. This region is associated with a rich history. The Fur Trade Era, from the late 1600s through the late 1800s, is certainly a colorful piece of our history. Several fur trading companies hired French-Canadian Voyageurs, a hearty breed of adventurers, to paddle birch bark canoes and haul trade goods and furs thousands of miles each summer by water and portage trail. This handbook is presented to **you, the modern Voyageur**, as a reference for the history and adventure of the Canoe Country, both past and present. We hope you are dreaming of your wilderness canoeing adventure and the thought of traveling the beautiful canoe country excites you.

Northern Tier operates two high adventure bases located in Ely, Minnesota; and Atikokan, Ontario. From these facilities millions of acres of sky-blue lakes, meandering rivers, dense boreal forests and wetlands are available for paddling and portaging. The mystique of the wild outdoors and historical features will lure you to explore, to learn and to seek new challenges. Read and reread this handbook carefully, as it informs you of many details that will help you prepare for your trip. The Personal Equipment List is very important for you and your crew. Bring only the items mentioned and try to share as many items as possible amongst other crew members. Remember, you will be carrying everything you bring. Proper planning before your trip will assure you and your crew an enjoyable wilderness adventure!

What are the Requirements to Attend?

All Northern Tier Participants:

- Must be 14 years of age or be 13 years of age and have completed 8th Grade upon arrival at Northern Tier.
- Must fall below the maximum (295 pounds) weight allowed for participation and it is strongly recommended that no participant weigh less than 100 pounds. See Appendix D.
- Must have a current (within 12 months) and completed BSA Health and Medical Record. The doctor completing the form must review the Northern Tier Risk Advisory included with the form. The Northern Tier form can be found at <https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/ahmr/>
- Must be classified as a BSA swimmer, see appendix E.
- Must be a registered member of the Scouting America.

Scouting America and Northern Tier takes Youth Protection very seriously. Some of the Youth Protection policies that apply to participants at Northern Tier (and throughout Scouting) relate to registration and training. The complete set of Youth Protection policies may be found at <https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/>

Northern Tier will strictly enforce Youth Protection policies, which include the *Barriers to Abuse within Scouting*

All registered adults must have current BSA Youth Protection Training (certified within the past two years). This means all participants 18 years old and older who are registered in Venturing, Exploring, Sea Scouting, or as an adult volunteer must have current Youth Protection Training. Because of the great concern Scouting America has for the issue of child abuse in our society, the Youth Protection program has been developed to help safeguard both our youth and adult members. Adult BSA Registration requires

verification of Youth Protection Training. All adults participating in a Northern Tier expedition must be registered. Youth Protection Training and documentation are available at your local council or online at <https://www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection/>.

Adult Leadership – BSA Policy

- As shown above, each crew MUST always have at least TWO BSA registered adults (called “Advisors”) age 21 or older.
- All adult participants are required to present proof of BSA Youth Protection training upon arrival at Northern Tier. At least one adult in each crew must have proof of current [CPR](#), [Wilderness First Aid](#) and [Weather Hazards](#) training. Northern Tier also recommends at least one adult complete BSA paddle Craft Safety training.

Co-ed/Female Crew Policies

- All crews are required to provide two adults aged 21 and over. Please refer to the Guide to Safe Scouting and ensure your crew is following the leadership standards required for your unit type.
- Crews may be all-male, all-female, or coeducational. All male or all female crews must follow the Scouting America Troop leadership guidelines as outlined in the Guide to Safe Scouting. Coeducational Troops and Venturing crews must meet the leadership standards for coeducational units as outlined in the same guide. Please contact the Northern Tier registrar with any questions about leadership requirements.

Northern Tier Crew Makeup Policies

Ely, MN Canoe Programs
Max crew size is 8 participants
Min crew size is 6 participants

Min 2 registered adults age 21+
Crew must be majority youth age 14-18
Atikokan, ON Canoe Programs
Max crew size is 11 participants
Min crew size is 6 participants
Min 2 registered adults age 21+
Crew must be majority youth age 14-18

Buddy System

Scouting America's Buddy System policy is as follows:

- The adult unit leadership oversees and approves buddies.
- Buddies are two and can also be three to prevent youth members from being alone.
- Buddy pairs cannot be mixed gender, where appropriate a 3rd youth must be added (for a buddy group of 3).
- Youth siblings of the same gender may serve as buddies regardless of age with permission from their parents or legal guardians.
- Except for siblings, it is recommended that the age gap between buddies be at most three years for all non-sleeping activities but **must** be no more than two years for all tenting.
- When exceptional circumstances warrant, a parent or legal guardian may serve as a buddy for their child's Scouting activities, but youth buddies meeting the above criteria, if available, are always preferred.

Youth Participants:

- Must be at least 14 years old OR have completed the 8th grade and be at least 13 years old prior to participation.
- Must be registered members of the Scouting America and may participate in a Northern Tier trek.

- Each participant must meet the health requirements as outlined in the BSA Annual Health and Medical Record.

Tenting Policies

Tenting arrangements at Northern Tier follow BSA's tenting requirements

(<https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/>)

and must meet the requirements shown below:

- Separate tenting arrangements must be provided for male and female adults as well as for male and female youth.
- Youth (14-17) cannot share tents with anyone 18 or older (including parents).
- Youth under 18 may share tents only if there is not more than 2 years age difference.
- *Unregistered guests or family members are NOT permitted to camp at Northern Tier. There are no scheduled programs or available housing accommodations for family members of expedition participants.*

In keeping with the policies of the Scouting America, registration and participation in Northern Tier National High Adventure programs is without regard to race, color or national origin. The above are minimum requirements. The National High Adventure Department of the BSA recommends that age, BSA membership and swimming ability not be the only criteria for determining participation on High Adventure expeditions. The following should also be considered:

- 1) Maturity
- 2) The ability to carry a heavy load (≥ 70 lbs.) over steep, muddy and rugged portages.
- 3) Camping/canoeing experience
- 4) Height/weight requirements
- 5) Physical condition

BE A SWIMMER

Everyone in your crew must be classified as a swimmer prior to arriving at Northern Tier. To qualify as a swimmer, you must be able to swim 100 yards (75 yards any forward stroke and 25 yards in a resting backstroke) and to rest by floating. The Swim Classification Form, sent to your advisor and available online at www.ntier.org, must be completed prior to your arrival verifying each participant is classified as a swimmer. **Non-swimmers and beginners cannot participate in a wilderness canoe trek.** It is the responsibility of the contingent, unit and/or crew leader to make sure all participants (including adults) are swimmers as indicated in the Safe Swim Defense Plan. **If you are not a swimmer, be sure to talk to your leader(s).**

SPECIAL NOTE:

It is Northern Tier policy to wear a life jacket, your “wet boots” and to follow the BSA Safe Swim Defense Plan anytime you are swimming.

GET A PHYSICAL EXAMINATION AND PARENTAL PERMISSION

All participants, youth and adult, **MUST** bring a current annual BSA Health and Medical Record. A blank BSA Health and Medical Record form is available at the Northern Tier website www.ntier.org. Be sure to provide your doctor Parts A, B, and C of the form as well as the Northern Tier risk advisory when you go for your physical exam. A physician must review the risk advisory, prior to completing the form. Confirm that your physician has completed the form accurately prior to arrival at Northern Tier. A parent or legal guardian must complete the medical history and sign the medical form if you are under the age of 18. Every participant, youth and adult, must have a physical examination performed by a physician within 12 months of your expedition’s end date.

When you arrive at Northern Tier, your advisor will turn in all BSA Health and Medical Records for the duration of your trip. Keep a

copy for your records. If anyone arrives without a medical form signed by a physician and a parent or legal guardian if under 18, your trek may be delayed for a day or longer until the situation is rectified. **The only medical form Northern Tier will accept is the Annual BSA Health and Medical Record.** Good physical condition is essential. Each participant in a Northern Tier expedition should not exceed the maximum acceptable weight of 295 lbs. Those who fall within the recommended weight limits are much more likely to have an enjoyable trek and avoid incurring injuries and health risks.

The following table shows the recommended weights for each height, as well as the maximum weight for that height.

Northern Tier suggests that each participant not exceed the maximum weight on the table for their height. Northern Tier **REQUIRES** that you fall below the maximum (295 pounds) allowed weight for participation.

Additionally, Northern Tier strongly recommends that no participant weighs less than 100 pounds. Smaller participants will have a very difficult time due to the strenuous nature of the trek and the heavy weight of items to portage.

Weight-to-Height Table Northern Tier National High Adventure Programs		
Height	Recommended Weight (pounds)	Maximum Weight (pounds)
***Participants weighing less than 100 pounds will have a very difficult time and are discouraged from attending.		
5' 0"	100 - 138	166
5' 1"	101 - 143	172
5' 2"	104 - 148	178
5' 3"	107 - 152	183
5' 4"	111 - 157	189
5' 5"	114 - 162	195
5' 6"	118 - 167	201
5' 7"	121 - 172	207
5' 8"	125 - 178	214
5' 9"	129 - 185	220
5' 10"	132 - 188	226
5' 11"	136 - 194	233
6' 0"	140 - 199	239
6' 1"	144 - 205	246
6' 2"	148 - 210	252
6' 3"	152 - 216	260
6' 4"	156 - 222	267
6' 5"	160 - 228	274
6' 6"	164 - 234	281
6' 7" +	170 - 240	295
Maximum Allowed Weight ***No participants weighing more than 295 pounds will be allowed to participate.		295 pounds

RISK ADVISORY

Your safety is of utmost importance to us. Northern Tier National High Adventure Programs have an outstanding safety record. Scouting America and Northern Tier emphasize safety through education and strict adherence to established policies and procedures. The safety of your group is dependent upon your attention to these procedures as well as being physically fit, properly equipped and trained for the rigors of remote wilderness canoeing. Following these policies and procedures maximizes the potential for a safe and enjoyable experience for all involved. Parents, leaders, and participants should be advised that despite our best attempts at risk management, it is not possible to remove ALL risk from a wilderness expedition.

For more information about possible risks at Northern Tier, see the *Advisor Planning Guide* at www.ntier.org.

PREPARE FOR HIGH ADVENTURE

Your adventure begins at home. Months before arriving at Northern Tier, you should begin planning and training. A famous explorer once said, “The key to successful planning is living the experience in advance.” This guidebook has been developed to help you anticipate what to expect to better prepare yourself and your crew. The more thorough your planning is, the more successful your experience will be.

TRIP ORGANIZATION

Northern Tier uses the term “crew” to describe the group of Scouts/Venturers and adult advisors attending a Northern Tier canoe base. An organized crew quickly accomplishes its chores and has more time to enjoy canoe country. Ideally, you and your other crew members are organized before your arrival at Northern Tier. This will be easier if your crew is made up of members from your Troop or Venture Crew. If your crew is a part of a Council

contingent and is made up of Scouts or Venturers from various Council units, Northern Tier recommends that the crew members have several organizational meetings and/or training outings to help crew members and leaders prepare for the canoe trip.

Your crew size will vary by the base you are attending:

- Ely - 6-8 participants
- Atikokan - 6-8 participants in the Quetico and 6-11 participants in the Crown Lands

In addition to the participants you are coming to Northern Tier with, your crew will be assigned an Interpreter, who will accompany you on your trip.

ELECT A CREW LEADER

Each crew should elect a crew leader from the youth members before beginning a trek. The crew leader is responsible for organizing and planning the crew's activities. He or she leads by example. This responsibility requires someone with leadership ability who is respected by all the crew members. The crew leader must be aware of the interests and capabilities of everyone in the crew.

ROLE OF YOUR ADULT ADVISOR

Your adult advisors will counsel and advise the crew leader and crew while letting the crew leader lead the crew. The advisor provides discipline should it be required and offers suggestions to help the crew leader. Your advisor is responsible for the safety and well-being of each crew member and if needed will be assisted by the Interpreter assigned to your crew.

ROLE OF THE NORTHERN TIER STAFF MEMBER –THE INTERPRETER

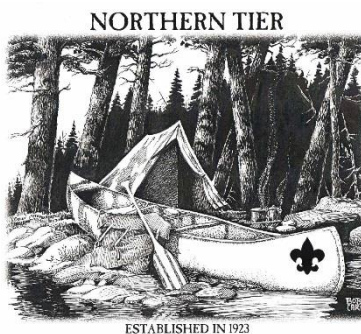
When you arrive at Northern Tier, your crew will be greeted by a wilderness canoe counselor known as an Interpreter. The Interpreter will join your crew and stay with the group for the entire wilderness canoeing expedition and lead you through the

first day orientation/outfitting procedures before you hit the trail. The Interpreter is an adult male or female who has been trained as a BSA National High Adventure Base Staff member. The Interpreter provides training support, interprets outdoor skills and acts as a resource person to the crew leader, the crew and the adult advisors. In an emergency or any situation involving safety, the Interpreter will act in conjunction with the adult advisors. The Interpreter is not a “fishing guide” but acts as a resource person for the skills pertaining to Scout camping and wilderness canoeing. He or she is a specialist with the equipment and food carried on canoe trips. The Interpreter has been trained in the history of the canoe country and special safety practices to be observed on a wilderness canoe trip.

SELECT YOUR TREK PROGRAM OPTIONS

Before you arrive at Northern Tier, examine the program opportunities listed below. You will have the opportunity to do some of the following. Discuss with your other crew members and prioritize your top choices to discuss with your Interpreter upon arrival.

- **Fishing**
- **Swimming**
- **Ecology**
- **Observing Wildlife**
- **Star Gazing**
- **Photography**
- **Cooking and Baking**
- **Low Impact Camping**
- **Backcountry Navigation**
- **Lake Monitoring Program**
- **Duty to God Program**
- **Extra Miler Emblems**



More information on awards, please follow the below link.

www.ntier.org/TripPlanning/Awards.aspx

TRIP PLANNING

Prior to arriving at Northern Tier your crew should answer the following questions:

1. How many nights is our trip?
2. How far do we want to paddle each day?
 - a. The average crew paddles/portages approximately 2 to 3 mph
 - i. Easy days will encompass 8 to 12 miles.
 - ii. Moderate days will be 13 to 17 miles.
 - iii. Difficult days will be 18 miles and above.
3. Do we want to have a layover day (stay in a campsite 2 nights and a full day)?
4. Do we want to fish?
5. Which of Northern Tier's special awards do we want to earn?
 - a. What's the priority?
 - b. These awards can be found at www.ntier.org/TripPlanning/Awards.aspx
6. Do we want to try to avoid portages or challenge ourselves to overcome as many as possible?
7. Do we want to go on big lakes, small lakes, rivers or a combination?
8. Do we want to see waterfalls?
9. Do we want to see pictographs/petroglyphs?
10. Do we want to really get away from others, or embrace the other wilderness visitors?

The answers to these questions will be used to plan your trek on the day you arrive at Northern Tier while you work with your crew and Interpreter.

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBER

For an emergency, it is best to call between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM and talk with a full-time staff member. During off hours a duty officer will answer the emergency line. *An emergency message MUST include the full name and the Northern Tier Expedition Number.* Northern Tier will not be able to contact the person if they are on their trek; however, the message will be attached to the crew file for delivery upon the person's return to base.

**Telephones are available for use by participants at our 2 bases.
These numbers are strictly for emergencies:**

Ely Phone: 218.365.4811
www.ntier.org

MAILING ADDRESSES FOR PARTICIPANTS

ELY BASE - You will be attending the Ely Base if your expedition number begins with "E." Mail for participants attending the Ely Base only should be addressed as shown above. Sending mail is not encouraged as it must be sent shortly after the person has left home to ensure receipt. All mail must have a return address so it

Full Name and Crew Number
Northern Tier National High Adventure Base
14790 Moose Lake Road
Ely, MN 55731

can be returned to the sender if the letter arrives after the person has left for home.

ATIKOKAN BASE - If your crew number begins with an "A", you will be attending the Atikokan Base.

Mail delivery to Canada takes a very long time.
Please do not plan to have mail sent to Atikokan - It
will probably arrive long after you have already
departed for home.

REVIEW CAMPER INSURANCE COVERAGE

The Northern Tier fee includes accident and sickness insurance coverage. This applies for your travel to and from Northern Tier as well as while you are on your canoe trek. This policy is secondary to a family policy. Insurance information of the family policy should be noted on the BSA Health and Medical Record. A BSA *Camper's Accident and Sickness Insurance* pamphlet is available at www.ntier.org.

SHARPEN YOUR SKILLS

Use your BSA Handbook, Fieldbook and Canoeing Merit Badge Book to sharpen the following skills:

- Assigning Duties
- Backcountry Cooking
- Using Map and Compass
- Being Physically Fit
- Canoeing Skills
 - Trimming Your Load
 - Paddling a Canoe
 - Avoid Swamping
 - React to Swamping
 - Lifting/Flipping a Canoe
 - Wet Foot Portaging
 - Portaging

WHAT GEAR IS NEEDED?

The following checklist is for you and your crew to help you ensure that you have everything you need for an enjoyable and successful Northern Tier Trek. Most items may be purchased through the Northern Tier Trading Post Store at store.ntier.org.

REQUIRED Personal Gear		
Clothing		
Quantity	Item	Special Notes
1	Pair of Boots**	<i>All participants are required to wear boots that have full ankle coverage, a rugged stitched or vulcanized sole and drainage at the instep. <u>Boots should not be waterproof.</u> If you are unsure if the boots you are planning to bring meet this requirement, please feel free to contact us prior to your arrival. Crews arriving with inadequate footwear will be asked to purchase boots in the trading post prior to departure on water. The health and safety of our participants is of utmost importance to us, for this reason there are no exceptions to the boot requirement.</i>
1	Pair of Camp Shoes	All participants are required to bring closed-toe/closed-heel camp shoes with hard soles, such as lightweight sneakers.
1	Rain Jacket**	<i>All participants are required to pack a quality rain jacket with a hood. Ensure that your rain gear is waterproof, not just water resistant. Ponchos are not acceptable and are very dangerous in the event of a capsized canoe</i>
2	Shirts**	Long-sleeved, Lightweight
2	Pants**	Quick Dry – recommend Zip Off Legs
3	Pair of Socks**	Synthetic or Wool – NO Cotton
2	Pair of Underwear**	Recommend Synthetic, Quick Dry
1	Hat**	Broad Rimmed or Baseball Style
1	Jacket**	Lightweight Fleece
1	Hat**	Knit/Stocking Cap

1	Clean/Dry Clothes	For wearing on base and to and from Northern Tier for Travel
1	Flip Flops/Sandals	For wear in the shower – these are NOT permitted on trail
1	Uniform	BSA field or activity uniform for travel
<i>Other Personal Gear</i>		
1	Sleeping Bag	<i>All participants should bring a sleeping bag that is compact, synthetic, lightweight and rated to 35°F with a compression style stuff sack.</i>
1	Waterproof stuff sack**	25-30 Liter dry bag for clothing and other gear – this will be packed in our gear packs
1	Sleeping Pad**	Closed Cell or self-inflating foam
1-2	“Camp Towel”***	Bandanna, Buff or Synthetic Camp Towel
1	Belt or Suspenders**	
1	Toothbrush**	
1	Mess Kit**	Plastic or Metal: 12 oz Bowl, 8-12 oz Cup/Mug, spoon/spork
1	Water Bottle**	1 Liter, wide mouthed with Carabiner Style Clip
1	Headlamp**	
1	Whistle	
1	Lip Balm**	
1	Sunglasses**	With keeper strap
2	Prescription Glasses	IF needed with keeper strap
2	Personal Medications	If needed – 2 supplies to carry in separate locations
	Personal Toiletries	
1	Bathing Towel	For on base showering needs

OPTIONAL Personal Gear		
1	Camera	With extra batteries and waterproof box
1	Head Net**	For mosquitos
1	Long Underwear**	For cool nights and mornings
1	Rain Pants**	Could double as second pair of pants
1	Book **	For Reading
1	Journal**	For personal reflection
** Items marked with a double asterisk are available to purchase at store.ntier.org.		

REQUIRED Crew Gear		
Quantity	Item	Special Notes
1	Small Pocket Knife**	1 Knife per Canoe (3-4 total)
1	Small Compass**	1 Compass per Canoe (3-4 total)
1	Map Case**	1 Map Case Per Canoe (3-4 total)
1	Set of Maps**	1 Set of Maps Per Canoe – <i>Do not purchase your maps prior to arrival – we help you pick the best set of maps for your route upon arrival.</i>
1-2	Sunscreen**	1-2 bottles per crew – SPF 15 or greater – no aerosol cans
1	Repair Kit	<i>Multi-tool, duct tape, small sewing kit</i>
1-2	Bug Repellent**	1-2 bottles per crew – High Deet content recommended – no aerosol cans
1	Toothpaste**	1 Tube per crew is recommended
1	Medicated Foot Powder**	1 Bottle per crew is recommended
1	Crew First Aid Kit	Complete list is outlined at http://www.ntier.org/filestore/NorthernTier/pdf/FirstAidKit.pdf
OPTIONAL Crew Gear		
	Fishing Poles	Fishing Equipment is available to check out. Crews are allowed 1-2 poles per crew.

	Fishing Tackle**	Limited fishing tackle is available for each crew to check out. You may want to bring some of your favorite. Make sure it is lightweight and compact.
1	Binoculars	
1	Fillet Knife**	

** Items marked with a double asterisk are available to purchase at store.ntier.org.

What Not to Bring

SPOT Satellite Messengers or other Emergency Beacon Devices	Northern Tier provides all necessary Emergency Communications devices and manages all emergencies in conjunction with local authorities. All crews will be asked to lock any such devices up with their valuables prior to departure on water. These devices are not permitted on the trail.
Canoe Chairs that clip or strap into canoes.	These damage factory canoe seats and make portaging difficult. Standard Crazy Creek style camp chairs may be brought for use in camp sites and can double as a sleeping pad.
Electronic Music, Game or Video Devices	The beautiful wilderness of Northern Minnesota, Southern Ontario and Manitoba are the reasons you're at Northern Tier, right? Enjoy it!

<i>Cell Phones</i>	<p>Northern Tier provides an emergency communication device for each crew on trail, it is unnecessary for crews to bring cell phones for use as a communication device (virtually no cell reception). However, we do recognize that many people use their cell phones as their cameras and this is permitted. We would request that you leave them in airplane mode and enjoy the Wilderness for what it is. We would still recommend using a crew camera over a cell phone.</p>
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GEAR PROVIDED BY NORTHERN TIER

- Portage Packs w/Liner Bags (1 for every 3 people)
- Food Box(es) and Pack(s) w/Liner Bag(s)
- 1 Crew Equipment Box and Pack
- Tents (2- and 4-man as needed)
- 1 Dining Fly w/Ridge Line and Stakes
- Parachute Cord
- 1 Shovel
- 1 Folding Saw
- 2 Bear Ropes and 1 Pulley/Ring
- 1 Fire Grate
- Dromedary Water System
- 2 Stoves, fuel bottles, and fuel
- 1 Paddle/person
- 1 Life Jacket/person
- 1 Seat Cushion for middle passenger/canoe
- 1 Emergency Radio or Satellite Phone w/waterproof box
- 1 Utensil Kit
 - 1 Slotted Spoon
 - 1 Regular Spoon
 - 1 Metal Spatula
 - 1 Nylon Spatula
 - 1 Spreader Knife
 - 1 Whisk
 - 1 Pair Hot Pot Pliers
 - 1 Soap Kit
- Dish Soap, Sanitizer Tablets and Scrubbies
- Hand Sanitizer
- Stove Oil
- Strike Anywhere Matches
- 1 Polar Pure bottle/canoe (for water purification)
- Cooking Equipment
 - Cooking Pots (8, 4, and 1-quart sizes, percolator, griddle available)
 - 1 Bakepacker and Baking Liner Pans
 - 1 Measuring Cup
 - 1 Cutting Board
- Canoes (one canoe per three people).
- Full Trail Food Outfitting - 3 balanced meals per day and:
 - Spice Kit with a wide variety of spices and seasonings available.
 - Condiments
 - Variety of hot and cold drink mixes
 - Supplemental Baking/Cooking Items (Bannock, Fish Fry, Sugar, Popcorn)
- Toilet Tissue
- Fishing Equipment (Ely only, available on a first-come first served basis).
- GPS Units (available on a first-come first served basis).

Be aware that you are embarking on a rugged trip. Be cautious of advice from people who were lucky enough to travel to the canoe country on a nice weekend, wore shorts and sandals and perhaps traveled ten miles from their vehicle. Your trip will be more adventurous! You will travel in all kinds of weather and will probably average over 10 miles/day for 6 to 9 days. ***Northern Tier recommends that everyone write their name and crew number with a permanent marker on their clothes, uniforms, and personal equipment. This will help in reclaiming lost and found items.***

CAMERA

Although optional, a camera is rewarding to record memorable experiences and beautiful scenes. Some crews select a crew photographer who takes shots for everyone. Another weight saving idea is for several crew members to share a camera. Not every crew member needs a camera. Don't forget additional batteries and memory cards. Do not plan to use a phone as a camera.

MONEY

Campers spend an average of \$150.00 each in the Northern Tier National High Adventure Trading Post. If major items such as fleeces, vests, boots, paddles, etc., are desired, more money will be needed.

- If travelling to the bases in Atikokan, only Canadian Currency and credit or debit cards are accepted at the Northern Tier Trading Post. Please plan to stop and exchange money on your travels to Canada.

LOOK SHARP EN ROUTE

Wear your Scout or Venture uniform proudly! You are members of Scouting America, the greatest youth organization in the world. A properly uniformed, sharp-appearing, well-mannered crew makes a lasting impression on people who observe you. Use the buddy system to keep track of everyone.

ARRIVAL AT BASE

DAY ONE

The afternoon of your arrival will be busy! Please arrive on base between 1 and 2 PM. Be prepared for the following:

- Meet with your Interpreter.
- Complete your first portage! Carry personal and group gear to your crew's assigned cabin or tent (may be up to a ¼ mile hike). Do not pack in roller luggage, it is a rugged trail to your cabin. Pack in a backpack or duffel bag. If you plan to store your gear in a Northern Tier locker, make sure you use a frameless pack, so they collapse into the locker.
- Medical Screening of all participants
- Crew Check In (verify training certificates, swim form, permits, etc.) – see advisors guide for more information.
- Gear and food outfitting.
- Route Planning
- An Interpreter led shake-down of group and personal gear.
- Dinner
- Crew Photo
- Visit the Trading Post

Check-in will be completed the afternoon of your arrival. Crews arriving after 2:00 will not be able to complete these tasks and will be delayed in getting on the water the next day. We cannot accommodate early arrivals at Northern Tier, if your crew arrives before the 1:00 check-in time, we ask that you wait in the parking lot and our staff will be there by 1:00 to greet you.

DAY TWO

Breakfast will be served the next morning. Your Interpreter will lead you through any additional preparations which will include:

- Canoe Check Out
- Food Check Out
- Final Gear Check Out
- Store personal items in lockers or vehicles.

An efficient crew will be on water by 10:00 am.

NOTE: Northern Tier High Adventure trail food is by necessity a high-carbohydrate, high caloric diet. It contains wheat, milk products, sugar, corn syrup and artificial coloring/flavoring. If an individual is allergic to some food products or requires a special diet, suitable trail food must be purchased at home and brought to Northern Tier.

Please keep in mind that while we try to be as accommodating as possible, we will not be able to accommodate all food needs and may ask participants with certain needs to supplement the menu with their own food.

Individuals requesting special diet food, will be assessed a \$75 charge. Individuals are welcome to bring their own. Keep in mind it must all be prepackaged and shelf stable. No fresh foods.

Special diet restrictions not communicated to us more than 30 days in advance cannot be accommodated.

www.ntier.org/resources/food

VISIT THE TRADING POST

- **ELY CREWS:** Before departing for your trek, you will want to visit the Trading Post to purchase those last-minute items. Many of the items not purchased back home may be found in our Trading Post. Now is the time to purchase items needed for the trail - there is no place to buy items once you start your trip. We encourage you to purchase your fishing license online before you arrive.
- **ATIKOKAN CREWS:** The Atikokan Trading Post will carry a few trail items, Northern Tier and Atikokan souvenir items, trail maps and snack foods. Necessary trail items are best purchased prior to your arrival at the Atikokan base. We encourage you to purchase your fishing license online before you arrive.
- **NORTHERN TIER ONLINE STORE:** Trail equipment and Northern Tier souvenir items are available for purchase

through the Northern Tier on-line store, found at store.ntier.org.

ROUTE PLANNING

- Your Interpreter will meet with you and your crew to plan a custom-made experience based on the desires and abilities of your crew. The crew leader is responsible for representing the interest of the entire crew according to the priorities you and your crew have selected from the **TREK PROGRAM OPTIONS** and answering the **TRIP PLANNING** questions in this booklet. A written itinerary is prepared showing when and where you plan to camp. One copy of the itinerary is carried by the crew and one copy is kept at base in case of emergency.

SHAKEDOWN YOUR GEAR

- In a place designated by your Interpreter, you will unpack everything. Your Interpreter will review each item necessary for your trek and demonstrate the best method of packing the items in the 3-person portage packs. Store surplus gear and uniforms in your vehicle or crew locker/storage area if you did not arrive in your own vehicles.

FIRST NIGHT MEAL

- Your first meal at any of the bases will be dinner the evening you arrive.

PACK YOUR GEAR

- Northern Tier Provides a Portage Pack in which you will carry personal gear for up to 3 people. Your tent(s), sleeping bags (in compression style stuff sack), sleeping pads, dry shoes and 25-30-liter stuff sacks or dry sacks with your remaining gear will be packed into this pack. Each pack comes with a plastic liner which when

packed properly (not over packed) will serve as a first line of defense to keep your personal equipment dry. If you are not using a waterproof stuff sack for your clothes and personal items, packing them into zip closure style freezer bags within your stuff sack provides additional protection. When packing these portage packs plan to pack them tall and narrow with heavier items toward the top of your pack and closest to your body to get the weight over your bone structure so your muscles do not tire easily. Remember to pack items you may need during the day, so they are easily accessible. Items like this may include your crew first aid kit, maps, compass, sunscreen, camera, and rain jackets.

- Do not pack aerosol cans (unless bug repellent or medication) or glass jars because they are bulky and prone to break or empty their contents and are also not allowed in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness or Quetico Provincial Park.

A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

- Following the last orientation session in preparation for your trip, it is best to return to your overnight accommodation for a good night's sleep. Tomorrow, you hit the trail!

HIT THE TRAIL

- **FOLLOW BUDDY SYSTEM**

- As you are canoeing or portaging, **always keep your crew together** and stay within hearing and visual distance. The Buddy System is a part of the BSA Safety Afloat policy. The lead canoe sets a steady pace that allows everyone else to keep up comfortably and makes sure the crew travels in the proper direction. The sweep, or end canoe, calls a halt when anyone needs to stop. This is done by passing the word to the canoe in front of you until everyone gets the message. Staying together is safer, avoids anyone becoming lost, promotes teamwork and looks sharp. The crew leader is responsible for making sure it happens. Normally the crew leader should be positioned midway in the group, to monitor the progress and morale of everyone else. The crew leader decides when to take a rest stop, where to eat lunch, when to seek shelter from bad weather and when to stop or turn back with the counsel of the Interpreter and an advisor. Traveling in a canoe or portaging after dark is not recommended except in an emergency.

- **SELECTING A CAMPSITE**

- In the Boundary Waters, all campsites available will be pre-established. It will be easy to tell what an official Forest Service campsite is because they all have a fire ring and a pit toilet. Consider how many tents your crew has and if there is a good tree for hanging a bear bag when selecting a campsite. Not all campsites will have enough space for all your tents. In the Quetico and Crownlands you will not find these types of sites. The campsites here are even more primitive and often created by crews that came before you. However, you should keep an eye out for a good bear bag tree and plenty of tent pads just like you would in the Boundary Waters.

MEALS ON THE TRAIL AND OFFERING THANKS

- All meals, starting with lunch on the day you start canoeing through lunch on the day you return to base, will be carried on the trail and cooked/prepared by you and your crew members. Crews are encouraged to give thanks before eating meals on the trail. The Wilderness Grace is particularly appropriate.

WILDERNESS GRACE

For food, for raiment, for life
and opportunity,
For sun and rain, for water and
portage trails,
For friendship and fellowship,
We thank Thee, Oh, Lord.
Amen.



● FISHING ON THE TRAIL

- Some of the most spectacular game fishing in North America is available in the waters covered by Northern Tier. Fishing can highlight your high adventure experience and supplement your trail food menu. Decide if you are going to fish before you leave home so you can prepare for it. Bring your rod and reel, a small plastic tackle box, fillet knife, sharpener, pliers with a side cutter and a pocketknife. For those crews that do not have their own fishing gear, a small amount of equipment is available to borrow from Northern Tier (Ely base only). Fishing licenses need to be purchased prior to arrival. **Remember the most efficient way to get your fishing license is to purchase it online prior to your arrival.** The types and prices of fishing licenses for Minnesota and Ontario can be found online at these websites:

- Minnesota Fishing Licenses: <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/>
 - Ontario Fishing Licenses: <http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/>
 - Many crews come to canoe country to fish. If you are planning to fish while on your trek, we want you to do it safely. If fishing from a canoe, only have 2 people in the canoe. The buddy system of 2 canoes must be followed as well as BSA Youth Protection Policies. If you fish from shore, be careful with casting in the vicinity of other people. When not fishing, make a policy concerning the storage of hooks and lures while in camp and while traveling. Enforcing such policies will prevent an injury to someone walking by a lure and getting snagged, or by stepping or sitting on a lure.
- **LEAVE NO TRACE**
 - The wilderness areas used by Northern Tier crews are all on public lands managed by federal or provincial government agencies. The campsites in these areas are all open to public use and are strictly on a first-come first-served basis. Wherever your crew camps, you are responsible for maintaining the wild character of the wilderness area you are camping in.
 - Keep your impact to a minimum and leave each site cleaner than you find it. Carry out all the garbage and trash that you carried into the wild.
 - Crews also help by cleaning up sites littered by other campers. This helps Northern Tier and the Scouting America maintain the respect of the government agencies and represents a service project in keeping with the BSA principle of good citizenship and our own slogan: “Do a good turn daily.”
 - The crew leader makes sure your fire is extinguished, using the “white ash and cold to the touch test”. ***Thoroughly police your campsite before you depart.***

- Help preserve the beauty of the North Woods and respect others using the wilderness by pledging to conduct yourself in an exemplary manner by following the principles of Leave No Trace. If you want to know more details, you can purchase the Lakes Region Leave No Trace booklet from the Northern Tier Trading Post or visit the LNT website at www.lnt.org.

KEEPING YOURSELF HEALTHY AND SAFE ON THE TRAIL

Strict adherence to proper health and safety practices is crucial.

You are responsible to yourself to keep safe and healthy, but this is also a crew responsibility. Failure to purify water or to thoroughly rinse dishes may affect everyone in the crew. Read these trail practices to keep you and your crew strong, safe and healthy.

KNOW WILDERNESS FIRST AID SKILLS and CPR. Every Northern Tier crew **MUST** have an adult advisor certified in Wilderness First Aid and CPR. Ailments most commonly requiring treatment are sunburn, cuts (all types), sprains, blisters, burns, headache, stomachache, constipation, diarrhea and embedded fishhooks.

Stock your first aid kit with supplies to handle these problems. Be aware of anyone in the crew who has a medical condition. Every injury or illness must be recorded in the base first aid log. While on the trail, your Interpreter will fill out a report to be posted in the base medical log upon your return.

- Practice good personal hygiene.
- Care for your feet:
 - While you are canoeing and portaging, sound, healthy feet are a must. Cut your toenails short and square; don't round the corners. We recommend wearing two pairs of socks in your boots to help prevent blisters. Your feet will be wet throughout the day while you're paddling due to the Wet Foot technique but be sure to dry them thoroughly, air them out and apply foot powder liberally to prevent trench foot and other problems. Put on your dry camp socks and your camp

shoes as soon as you can when you get to your campsite. Due to the sharp rocks, lost fishing tackle and the potential for broken glass. **DO NOT WALK AROUND THE CAMPSITE OR GO SWIMMING BAREFOOT.** The only time you should be barefoot is in your sleeping bag.

Know and be prepared to practice First Aid for the following ailments:

- Bugs, bee stings and other insect bites.
- Hypothermia
- Sunburn
- Heat Exhaustion
- Heat Stroke
- Dehydration
- Prevent Accidents
 - Most Accidents involve horseplay. Fatigue, hunger and mild hypothermia or dehydration may impair a crew member's performance and judgment. Common causes of accidents include rock throwing, improper use of knife and axe, getting snagged by a fishhook, running through campsites barefoot, and carelessness around fires. Maintain crew discipline and practice safety at all times to avoid injuries from accidents. Always use the principles of Safe Swim Defense when swimming and Safety Afloat when on the water. Always wear your wet boots and PFD while swimming and always wear shoes in camp.
- Avoid Storms and Lightning
- Stay Put if Confused or Lost
- Purify All Drinking Water
- Wash and Rinse Dishes Thoroughly

NORTHERN TIER POLICIES

- Secure Your Food: Bears, chipmunks, mice and other rodents are fond of trail food. Hanging your food and 'smellables' at night is necessary. Remember, perfumed items (toothpaste, soaps, Chapstick, etc.) may smell like food. Your Interpreter will advise you on what to do and how to do it. Whether on the trail or on base, do not take food into any tent or cabin.
- Respect Wildlife: We are visitors in the wilderness – please be responsible and courteous guests. Do not bother or provoke wildlife. Animals should be enjoyed from a distance and should never be fed.
- Purify All Drinking Water: All water from natural sources - including springs, streams and lakes must be purified by bringing it to a rolling boil, treated with chemical purifier or filtered.
- Wash and Rinse Dishes Thoroughly: Protect the health of your crew by thoroughly washing, rinsing and sanitizing dishes. Let dishes and utensils air dry. The dirty dishwater should be disposed of at least 200 feet behind the campsite and at least 200 feet from any water source.
- No Climbing Allowed: Rock climbing, rappelling and tree climbing are not permitted. BSA regulations require advanced training and equipment which is not available for use on your trek.
- Swimming: All swimming and water activities must be done in accordance with the BSA Safe Swim Defense policy. In addition, wet boots, a life jacket and a swimsuit or shorts must always be worn by all swimmers .
- Diving: Diving is prohibited at Northern Tier per the BSA Safe Swim Defense policy. Therefore, all entry into the water must be feet first or by wading into the water. Jumping feet first into the water is allowed from rocks or ledges no greater than five feet above the surface of the water, if the water is clear and the depth of the water is 10-12 feet deep. Life jackets must always be worn.

- Cliff Jumping: Jumping into the water from any height greater than 5 feet above the surface of the water is prohibited.
- Whitewater Policy: The running of rapids, whitewater or waterfalls is prohibited. All Northern Tier crews will portage around all falls, rapids, fast water, etc. During times of unusually high water it will be necessary to be very careful and watchful while traveling.
- Rock Throwing: Rock throwing is prohibited.
- Solo Canoeing: There will be no solo canoeing. There must be a minimum of two canoes at all times with 2 canoeists in each canoe.
- Boots and Shoes: You must wear boots or shoes in all wilderness trail campsites, while canoeing, swimming, fishing, etc. Bare feet and under-protected feet are a major cause of foot injuries.
- Tobacco: The use of tobacco is never permitted within the line of sight of youth. No smoking is permitted in any Northern Tier building or vehicle. Each base has a single established tobacco use area.
- Alcohol and Drugs: Possession or use of alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs or misuse of prescribed drugs is prohibited. Groups or individuals found in violation of this national policy of Scouting America will be sent home immediately, as arranged with the council office or parent.
- Firearms and Fireworks: Shooting firearms are not allowed at Northern Tier. Do not bring firearms or archery equipment with you. Fireworks are a safety hazard and are prohibited by Northern Tier National High Adventure. Leave them at home.
- Youth Protection Policy and Abuse: Scouting America's Youth Protection Policies must be adhered to. No one-on-one activities between youth and adults are allowed. The BSA two deep leader policies must be followed. No youth and adults are allowed in the same tents. Physical, sexual or emotional abuse (including hazing) of a camper by his or her peers or by adult leaders is unacceptable anywhere.

Reporting of abuse is the law. The local, county, state or provincial authorities as well as the BSA Council representatives will be contacted if abuse is suspected.

- **Forest Fires:** Our forests are a beautiful and valuable heritage. If you spot a fire or think you have, report it to your Interpreter, who will report it to the base director by radio or phone. Your crew should not attempt to fight wildfires and should quickly leave the area. Because of the wilderness status, some of the areas which have naturally occurring fires may be left to burn naturally. Other man-caused fires may be extinguished. Trained fire fighters will monitor or extinguish the fires accordingly.
- **Fires on Base:** A fire on any of the Northern Tier program base facilities needs to be reported to the base director or staff person immediately. If the fire alarm is activated, all crews are to report to the parking area of the base facility. Each base has a fire guard plan posted.

WRAP UP YOUR ADVENTURE

Plan to return to base in the afternoon (between 1 and 3 pm) of your final full day. Atikokan return times may vary due to vehicle shuttle and float plane arrangements. Crews are encouraged to spend their last night on base to get a good night's sleep before traveling.

- **CLEAN AND CHECK IN CREW EQUIPMENT**
 - At your last campsite scrub your pots and pans to get all the black off and clean other equipment thoroughly. Upon arrival back at base you will check all your gear into the Bay Post or equipment issue area. The staff will check each item for damages other than normal wear and you will be charged for any damages and for lost items before your departure. Your advisor will also be able to pick up the car keys and valuables while in the equipment area (Ely) or shortly thereafter at the Canadian bases. After equipment check-in, you will

have time to take a hot shower and sauna and change clothes before dinner.

- **VISIT TRADING POST**

- **EVALUATE YOUR TRIP**

- Everyone in the crew will be asked to complete an online evaluation form. Many constructive suggestions are implemented as a result of these post trip evaluations. Your medical forms will be returned to you with the blank evaluation forms.

- **RECEIVE AWARDS**

- Meeting the challenge of a Northern Tier National High Adventure experience is worthy of recognition. An emblem is awarded to every successful participant to wear on the right pocket of the Scout uniform. These awards are not for sale, they can only be earned. Be sure to visit the Trading Post for any other awards that you worked on while you were on the trail.

- **DINNER AND EVENING PROGRAM**

- After eating dinner there will be a closing campfire program. The type of program will vary depending on the base attended. After the program and/or another visit to the Trading Post it will be time to get a good night's sleep for the trip home.

- **HEAD FOR HOME**

- Breakfast will be served to you, after which you are ready to begin your journey home.

NORTHERN TIER AWARDS

Northern Tier offers a wide variety of patches that can be earned over the course of your trek. A brief synopsis of each patch or program is offered here.

Mileage Awards

Northern Tier offers mileage awards for subsequent miles – in 25 mile increments up to 200 starting at 50-miles. These are miles specifically traveled while on your trip. Patches and plaques are available from the Trading Post.



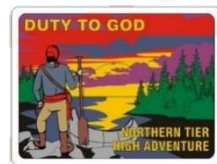
Northern Tier Lake Monitoring Program

Our Lake Monitoring Program provides your crew with an experience to learn about the water quality in the lakes of Northern Minnesota and Northwestern Ontario and how it changes. It also provides a community service opportunity for your Scouts as the data collected is used by government agencies and scholars to monitor water clarity and provide an assessment of suspended material in the water (often algae). Long term monitoring provides scientists with valuable data to detect trends in water quality and detect signs of degradation to a lake.



Northern Tier Duty to God Program

While at Northern Tier, you will encounter divine handiwork on many occasions. The Duty to God program will help you reflect on these special moments. This popular program requires a crew-led religious service, participation in at least three devotionals while on your trek, and the leading of grace at a campfire meal.



Triple Crown and Grand Slam of High Adventure Award

Scouts and Scouters who have participated in at least one qualifying program at three of the four national high-adventure bases operated by Scouting America (Northern Tier, Philmont, the Summit, and Florida Sea Base) can earn the Triple Crown patch and certificate. To qualify, you must earn a high-adventure program participant emblem (patch) from three of the four national high-adventure bases.



Participants who complete a qualifying program at all four of the National High Adventure Bases qualify for the Grand Slam of High Adventure.

Note: To earn the Triple Crown, you must complete each high adventure through the Scouting program. For example, canoeing the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness or Quetico through another outfitter other than Northern Tier will not qualify.



UP NORTH

Up North is a certain way the wind feels on your face and the way an old wool shirt feels on your back. It's the peace that comes over you when you sit down to read one of your old trip journals, or the anticipation that bubbles inside when you start sorting through your tackle box in the spring.

Up North is the smell of a Duluth pack hanging in your basement and the sound of pots clinking across the lake. It's a raindrop clinging to a pine needle and the dancing light of a campfire on the faces of friends.

Up North is a lone set of cross-country ski tracks across a wilderness lake and wood smoke rising from a cabin chimney. It's bunchberries in June, blueberries in July and wild rice in September.

Each of us has an Up North. It's a time and place far from the here and now. It's a map on the wall, a dream in the making, a tugging at one's soul. For those who feel the tug, who make the dream happen, who put the map in the packsack and go, the world is never quite the same again.

We have been Up North. And part of us always will be.

