

LEVEL 2: WHITEWATER ESSENTIALS

PREREQUISITES: Level 1 course, swiftwater rescue training, or mastery of level 1 curriculum from either personal experience or other courses/training.

The Level 2 course is for paddlers with previous packrafting experience wanting to strengthen their ability to read and paddle class II-III rivers.

Length: 2.5 days, 20 hrs

River Class: II-III

Venue:

Day 1: Anchorage, Goose Lake

Day 2-3: Eagle River and/or Willow Creek

Cost: \$375

CURRICULUM:

Gear

- Gear for river & whitewater paddling
- Stowing gear & rigging for whitewater

Boat Control

- Paddle Strokes: Forward, backward, sweep strokes, draws & bracing
- Effective body mechanics

Safety & Rescue:

- Wet exit & re-entry techniques/self rescue
- Assisted & group rescue techniques
- Defensive swimming techniques
- Practical scenarios & practice on flat & moving water

Fundamentals of River Mechanics:

- International Scale of River Difficulty (American Whitewater Safety Code)
- Current (cfs), volume, gradient, water levels
- Down & upstream V's
- Eddies & eddy lines
- Waves
- Bends
- Ledges & horizon lines
- Wood hazards
- Rocks and pillows
- Holes and hydraulics

- Cold water
- Undercuts & ice

River Running:

- Catching eddies
- Ferrying
- Navigating river features & hazards
- Communication & signaling: universal river signals
- Group organization on the river
- Scouting & portaging

Multi-day & Wilderness Trip Planning

ITINERARY:

Day 1: 5-9pm

Meet at Goose Lake for group introductions & course expectations. We practice paddle strokes, body mechanics and self/group rescue & safety scenarios on flat water before applying it to the river.

Day 2: 9am-6pm

Meet at Eagle River Day Use Area. We focus on reading rivers and class II whitewater while refining our paddling skills & boat control, with an emphasis on catching eddies & effective ferrying. Awareness of downstream hazards and how to scout & portage rapids are taught. Negotiate a class III rapid feature by the end of the day. Running a portion of Campground Rapid is “challenge by choice,” & up to instructor discretion based on student ability & current water level. Learn techniques & considerations in “setting safety” and risk assessment for the rapid.

If Day 3 is on Willow Creek, many participants choose to drive up in the evening and camp out.

Day 3: 9am-6pm

Location TBD; Eagle River or Willow Creek.

We continue to refine paddle skills, boat control and river reading throughout the morning session. In the afternoon we practice rescue scenarios on moving water. (Throw rope use, self-rescue, assisted rescue & group rescue).

Course closes with discussion about multi-day trips & special Alaska/wilderness considerations. Q & A, debrief and course wrap up before departure.