

LEVEL 3: ADVANCED WHITEWATER & SAFETY SKILLS

PREREQUISITES: Level 2 course, swiftwater rescue training, or mastery of level 2 curriculum (from personal experience or other courses/training).

This course is for those with previous whitewater packrafting experience wanting to strengthen paddle skills & boat control in class III whitewater. Participants must be skilled/proficient with self rescue, river safety and have prior experience reading and paddling up to class III whitewater with adequate boat control. This course is geared towards the aspiring class IV boater, or those seeking to refine & build their whitewater paddling technique & rescue skills.

Note: Course curriculum & itinerary is similar to Level 2, however, the course location integrates more challenging river features. Similar skills are practiced, but build on prior experience and/or instruction. The group size is smaller than Level 2, giving students more attention & personalized instruction

Length: 2.5 days, 20 hrs

River class: III

Venue::

Day 1: Anchorage, Goose Lake OR Wasilla Lake (TBD depending on student location & preference)

Day 2-3: Willow Creek

Cost: \$375

CURRICULUM:

Boat Control

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

Safety & Rescue:

- Wet exit & re-entry techniques/self-rescue
- Assisted & group rescue techniques
- Defensive swimming techniques
- Practical scenarios/drills on flat & class III 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 Considerations

ITINERARY:

Day 1: 5-9pm

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

Day 2: 9am-6pm

Meet at Willow Creek. We continue to refine paddling skills & boat control on class II-III water. Emphasis on integrating bow draws, bracing & effective body mechanics to enhance ferrying & eddy catching. Students “chose their own lines” and execute group safety and communication considerations.

Day 3: 9am-6pm

Meet at 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 class III 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 overall wrap up before departure.