

High Adventure Trip Report

**TRIP DESCRIPTION: White Clouds/River of No Return
Troop/Venture Unit - Troop 8**

**Date of Trip: June, 2008
Type of Experience - backpacking/whitewater**

1. Trip Summary: A 12-day trip to Idaho which included whitewater rafting on the Salmon River and backpacking in the White Clouds Mountains

2. Participants:

Adults: Mike Sass, Marty Foy, Peter Basso, Brian Keating
Scouts: 8 boys ages 15 - 17

3. Itinerary by Day:

- Day 1: Fly to Boise, ID, pick up food, and pre-shipped supplies, drive to Stanley, Idaho.
- Day 2-4: Rent rafts and whitewater gear - raft various sections of Salmon River. Camped in Forest Service campground, and took side tours of historic mines, ghost towns in Idaho. After two days of a mix of adults/boys in rafts, we allowed a boy-only boat for 7 miles of class 3 whitewater. The boys decided to change the last day from rafting to mountain biking.
- Day 6 - 9: Backpack to Boulder Lakes in White Clouds. Spent two nights at lakes taking day trips, fishing, hiking. Return to trailhead, and Stanley for final night.
- Day 10: Drive to Boise, Fly to New York

4. Administration:

Permit Info: The Middle Fork of the salmon river requires permits distributed by lottery. The main Salmon does not require permits. Permits aren't required to backpack in the White Clouds.

Maps Used: Forest service maps available from the Sawtooth Recreation area office north of Ketchum, Idaho.

Ref Books Backpacking guide books for Idaho which include Sawtooth Wilderness Area and White Clouds Peaks.

Useful Web links:

<http://www.recreation.gov/recAreaDetails.do?contractCode=NRSO&recAreaId=1027&agencyCode=131>

Useful Contact information: <http://www.riverwear.com/> They rent gear and are a wealth of local knowledge.

Greg Edson - Whitewater guide, president of Stanley Chamber of Commerce, high school classmate of Mike Sass. If you want to pay for a guided trip on the Middle Fork, Greg's your guy.

Anything Else: It helps to have grown up there

5. Lessons Learned: You cannot predict the snow level, which affects how early in the season you can backpack, and how much water is in the river. The best time for whitewater is early in the run-off - May or very early June. Sometimes, backpacking isn't safe in the White Clouds until late July. We were lucky because there was a late run-off, so the river level was much higher than normal for late June. By the same token, we were blessed by an early melt in the mountains. (We camped at 10,600 feet). If you set the dates of your trip months in advance, you have to be prepared to adjust the trip to current snow/water conditions.

Be prepared for snow and heavy run-off streams in the early season. Crampons, extra rope, and winter sleeping pads may be necessary depending on the snow melt. The real danger is crossing spring streams that are heavy with spring run-off. We had rope, carabiners and pulleys to build a tyrolean traverse if needed. (It wasn't). The good news is there is always another place to hike at lower altitude.

Don't try using highway tires on anything other than a paved or gravel road in Idaho. You will get multiple flat tires. Mileage is no indicator of the time necessary to travel on roads in Idaho. There are many "highways" where 40MPH is as fast as you can go.

Scouts and venturers who grew up in the east will get an eye-opener when they see Idaho. Be prepared for Boise State University to suddenly appear on your son's college list.