

# THE GREEN RIVER EXPEDITION FIRST PLACE 2006 AMORY ADVENTURE AWARD

*by the 21st Oshawa Venturer Company*

**W**here do you go when you're a Venturer company and you want to plan something big; something challenging; something you have never done before?

There is nothing more exhilarating than an adventure by canoe. But where to go? We decided there would be no more perfect spot than the Green River in Utah. It was relatively accessible, and the geology and terrain would be like nothing we could encounter in Canada. Best of all, we knew we could canoe for up to seven

days with no portages, and could investigate all sorts of possibilities for side trips. All this, in connection with the area's official designation as Environmentally Sensitive (needing special protection for landscape and wildlife) made it a perfect choice.

## **Planning**

The canoe part of the trip would take place from July 3 to 8, with side trips afterwards from July 10 – 13. On November 24<sup>th</sup> we took our first "hard look" at what we needed to do to make this trip happen. The key purpose of the expedition was the canoe trip down the Green River, and although we had all done some canoe tripping before, not everyone had the same level of experience or skills.

We decided that canoe training would be necessary, and resolved to set the standard of participants achieving Ontario Recreational Canoeing Association (ORCA) certification for Flat-water and Canoe Tripping prior to going on the trip. Everyone would need Standard First Aid and CPR certification as well before going on the trip.

"Be Prepared" holds true for every situation and with an excursion like this it was doubly important. We planned for an emergency "enhanced" first aid kit, including a snake bite kit; telephone numbers for hospitals and evacuation from the river (two of our members had bee sting allergies). With virtually no cell phone reception in the river canyon, we also needed to rent a satellite phone.





## DAY ONE

– by Alex Holliday

By 6:30 a.m. the gear was packed into the two vehicles and we were on the road to the music of “Nirvana”. Crossing the border at Sarnia, we drove through Michigan, Indiana, and Illinois (traffic in Chicago was horrible). After a long stop for dinner we finally arrived at our reserved campground by 12:30 a.m. We set up the tents and immediately fell into our sleeping bags.

## DAY TWO

– by CJ Foster

Up with the birds at 6:30 a.m., we packed up and headed towards Nebraska and Colorado. Since the day’s driving had left us exhausted, we decided to forego our intended campsite and stop early in Central City. Unfortunately, we couldn’t find a campsite so we ended up sleeping in the vehicles in a parking lot. It was getting really cold outside, but everyone did their best to keep warm and get as much sleep as they could. It was not a restful night.

## DAY 3

– by Jon Foster

As we drove, we saw lots of deer and mountain goats, reservoirs and log cabins set off by the beautiful forest backdrop. Moving through the mountains, our ears constantly popped with the change in altitude. As we progressed, the mountains changed to rolling and rocky desert and then into flat desert as we crossed into Utah. That night we were fortunate enough to spend the night in one of the local high schools, through arrangements with our contact from the Boy Scouts of America.

## DAY 4

– by Jesse Howell

Finally we were at our destination — the Green River. When we set off, there was a fast current and the scenery was beautiful. All in all we covered 15 miles, and stopped to set up camp on a little sandbar island where we could swim. The bugs were horrific — even bug juice didn’t help.

## DAY 5

– by Amanda Howell

Happy Independence Day! Once on the water, we canoed to the river register. This is a place on the rocks where people sign their names by carving them into the rocks. It’s the

only acceptable place on the river where you can do this. The register was covered in names dating back to 1860. On the canyon rockface there were pictures of a castle, a bull head, a spider and an alien. We managed to canoe 20 miles, plus the five miles we’d missed the day before! That evening we set up camp on another small sandbar, and enjoyed games and tall tales before bed.

## DAY 7

– by Jordan Duchene

It was raining when we woke up. In fact, it rained on and off all day. As we paddled down the river we continued to point out shapes we saw in the rocks. We saw one rock, sticking out of the water, which looked like a howling wolf head. Shortly after that we came around a bend in the river and



## DAY 6

– by Kristal Saltern

We awoke to red clouds in an overcast sky, which we were sure meant rain. Out on the water, however, it would turn out to be the best canoeing yet — a smooth, enjoyable, easy ride. We did our first, amazing river walk of the day in an area of craggy, sculptured rocks where there had once been a meteor impact. We canoed a lot, and finally found a great campsite on a sandy beach right next to an organ rock shale wall over 250 feet high.

saw some bighorn sheep in among the rocks of the canyon wall. This part of Canyonlands National Park is called “Island in the Sky” and has one of the biggest herds of bighorn sheep in the U.S.A.

## DAY 8

– by Katie Holliday

We got to sleep in late today! It was a nice, relaxing morning with a lot of swimming — everybody had fun and enjoyed themselves. We got on the river by about 10:45; then paddled for a half mile when we got out



of the canoes to check out some cave-dweller ruins. That was amazing! Later on, tragedy struck! We were unable to avoid some rocks and split a hole in the side of one of the canoes. The tear was above the waterline so we were able to keep going, but it was a sad moment. We all decided we would donate the money we had left to pay for the damage. Continuing our paddle, we finally arrived at



Photos: 21st Oshawa Venturer Company and Rover Crew

the confluence of the Colorado and Green Rivers. Our river trip was all but over.

## DAY 9

– by Charlene Harry

We packed up all our gear by 11 a.m. to get ready for the jet boat that was going to pick us up. After a two hour jet boat trip, we made it to the bus that would take us all the way to Moab. It was a very long drive to Arches National Park, but even though it was getting dark, the scenery was beautiful.

## DAY 10

– by Holden Eldridge

It had now rained three days in a row – as if we had brought some Canadian weather with us. We spent part of the day doing laundry and shopping; after which we headed back to the park. On the way we saw some “arches” and took some amazing pictures.

## DAY 11

– by Alex Holliday

The morning sky was beautiful. We had planned to drive to Delicate Arch where the views were supposed to be fantastic – they did not disappoint. With difficulty we climbed up around five thousand feet and could see just about everything. After sight-seeing, we traveled to Bryce Canyon National Park to find our pre-booked camp site. Once again we shared our site – this time with a group of youth from France (21 people!). At the end of the day we had a meeting to deal with some of the issues coming from having 13 people packed together for 11 days. A lot of tension was released and we all went to bed with the promise of a late wakeup time.

## DAY 12

– by CJ Foster

This was a real sleep-in – we didn’t wake up until 8:45 a.m. Everyone was in good spirits after the long sleep and looking forward to our trail ride that day. We were each given horses according to our individual levels of riding experience. It was an amazing experience – we saw hundred year old trees and heard various stories of native legends. Although happy with the ride and the photos we took, what we were really looking forward to was what came next: hot showers at Ruby Inn’s Bathhouse!

## DAY 13

– by Jon Foster

Just outside of Glenwood Springs, Colorado, we ran into a rain and hail-storm. Some of the guys had a snowball fight, but it was over pretty quickly as the hail melted. Arriving at 5:30 p.m. in Sylvan Lake State Park we quickly set up the tents. Despite having spent the day just driving, everyone was tired and it was an early night for all.

## DAY 14

– by Jesse Howell

Today we visited Glenwood Caverns. The cable car/tram went right to the top of the mountain. Cool view! Inside the cavern it got dark very fast. During the tour, the guide told us to shut off our lights so we could experience complete and total darkness. At the end of the Caverns we took a picture of all of us covered in dirt.

## DAYS 15 – 17 - THE TRIP HOME

This morning we would hit the road for home. Of course no trip is without its misadventures – we blew out two tires. The first time, a former Scout at the local Wal-Mart stayed late to help us, and we were soon back on the road. The second time, it took the efforts of three former Scouts before we were on the road again.

By 7:40 pm, one day later than expected, we were driving through Toronto. We were all happy to be home again, but at the same time, kind of sad. It was over, what a trip!

## CONCLUSION

This truly was the trip of a lifetime, and we are utterly grateful to have been part of Scouting and to be able to continue to embrace all the adventures Scouting has to offer. X

– Participants:

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