

4-H CHALLENGE CANOEING TRIP WRAP UP 2009

Oh, let's say summer weather has been a challenge this year. That was the case when Rimrock and TNT went to Kingsley for a canoe trip with leaders Joe Whitenight, Ashley & Bryant Sebastian, Kelley Sampeer and leaders in training Scott Wiesler, Rachel Carrol and Karl Brockdorff.

The planning of the trip was perfect. Sam Sattler, a former Rimrock member home on leave from West Point, was able to attend along with Lee and Karl Brockdorff also former members. These guys were some of our first Challenge members, what a hoot to have three former members helping, working, and pitching in. We are blessed that they still love the outdoors and don't mind putting up with us.

All of the new members arrived at Terry Umlor's home, on the Manistee River and got our camp set up. It was raining some but stopped to allow us to get camp set up. The sun did not shine but that didn't stop the Polar Bear Club from getting into their suits and life jackets for a float down the river. We headed up stream on a trail along the river. At the jump in spot it was one for all and all for one. Man this water is coooold. We floated downstream to the dock and out we came. Everyone was smiling with blue lips and chattering teeth. Then some wise guy (Sam) suggested that we do it again. It was as if these challenge kids were on fire, running back up stream to float down again in that freezing water. We got to the jump in site for the second time. The group decided that we should try to get rid of the bad weather so we made a sacrifice to the river. One from Rimrock (Alyssa) and one from TNT (Shane). Everyone grabbed them by the arms and legs and on the count of three dumped them into the deep end of the river. Even though we now know it did not work, it was fun to try. The second time everyone arrived at the dock we got out and changed quickly into dry clothes. Now it was time for some games and making dinner.

With some full bellies and a good fire we did our highs and lows. Man, these kids were determined that the rain or any bad weather was not going to stop their fun.

The next morning we got up, made breakfast, packed lunches and dry clothes (in case we tipped) for the canoe trip. Now it was time to load the canoes, drive to the put-in site, and unload canoes. Everyone pitched in carrying paddles, gear, boats, and drybags. It was time for pairing up and learning about safety. In the river we go. The whole day was a blast. Terry showed the kids a snapping turtle and muskrat. Some folks enjoyed another float at the swift. These guys are awesome. Everyone changed partners many times. It rained most of the trip and not one person complained. We truly had fun. Back at camp we played more games. The kids loved Terry's spider web game.

After the games it was time for dinner. Mr. Umlor made chili. The kids cooked hobo pizza and hot dogs over the campfire. After we shared our highs and lows we had time for the trust walk. This is a great time to get the kids used to being in the dark woods alone. Finally it was time for bed.

The next morning we packed for a 6 mile hike to the High Roll-a-ways. What a great walk up hills along the river where loggers once worked. At the end of the hike we presented the amulet to Alyssa. Her willingness to help, her positive attitude and just being fun to have around easily allowed her to stand apart as a true Challenge member. She definitely deserved to have her name put on the club amulet. Congratulations, Alyssa.

The TNT amulet was awarded to Ryan. Ryan was also helpful and always positive. Good Job, Ryan!