

EXPEDITION-BASED EDUCATION FOR HOME SCHOOLED STUDENTS

A Program of The Haw River Canoe & Kayak Company

What is Expedition-based Education?

Expedition-based education is outdoor, recreational activities that can last from a few hours to several days. Students are required to research a topic of personal interest related to the expedition and, while on the expedition, make a presentation on what they learned.

More than outdoor recreation, expedition-based education takes information gained from independent study and relates it to how that information applies to “real life” situations. The emphasis is **not** on students memorizing facts for a test, but rather gathering background information and then, through observation and discussion, discovering how the information applies to the world around them.

Canoeing and/or Kayaking as a Focus Activity

Among the many types of outdoor activities, canoeing and kayaking are perhaps best suited to expedition-based education since most towns and cities are located near or on a waterway and the best way to explore a stream or river is by canoe and kayak. In the North Carolina Piedmont, the Haw River was the first “highway” into the wilderness, became the major engine that powered the early textile industry and is now, once again, the center of attention as municipal & county recreation & park programs from Greensboro to Pittsboro develop the Haw River Trail.

A half-day trip on the Haw River could raise and answer the following questions:

- How long is the river,
- Where does it start and end,
- How fast does it flow,
- What towns/cities does it flow through/by,
- Who were the people that lived here before and what happened to them,
- What animals and plants will we see on our trip,
- How does life adjust to constantly changing conditions like floods and droughts,
- What are the economic benefits of the river,
- What human-caused pressures are being placed on the river and its inhabitants,
- When is the best time and where is the best place to see wildlife,
- Is the river polluted, and if so, by what, and
- How long will our river trip take?

The answers to these questions and others require knowledge of geography, mathematics, history, biology, ecology and economics. A one-day river trip in each of the four seasons of the year would highlight changes brought about by light, temperature and animal

migrations. An overnight river camping trip would highlight group dynamics through trip planning, shared camping chores, time for storytelling and responsibilities brought about by independent living.

The Haw River is Well Suited for Expedition-based Education

There are many reasons the Haw River is well suited for expedition-based education. A few things to consider are:

- Some of the river is wild and remote while other reaches are more urban,
- The river has fast moving stretches with rapids while other sections are slow moving and lake-like,
- There is a great diversity of birds and wildlife including endangered species,
- Evidence of indigenous people, grist mills and textile mills and colonial habitation abound,
- Many river stretches are ideal for canoe and kayak instruction for both beginner and advanced paddlers,
- Some parts of the river offer paddling opportunities during drought conditions,
- Wider sections of the river are ideal for viewing stars, comets and constellations,
- Wildflowers abound during all four seasons, and
- New parks spaced out along the river provide easy access.

Over one million people live in the Haw River watershed. Many of the municipalities along the river rely on it for drinking water and/or wastewater discharge. What we do in our homes and places of work not only affects us, but it also affects everyone who lives downriver. To be responsible citizens we need to understand the “ecological system” in which we live and how our actions and inactions affect it.

What Can The Haw River Canoe & Kayak Co. Bring to Expedition-based Education?

The Haw River Canoe & Kayak Co. operates on over 40 miles of the Haw River from Haw River State Park in Guilford County to Jordan Lake State Recreation Area in Chatham County. All of our currently scheduled guided trips have an educational component to them during which we identify animals and plants and point out sites of cultural interest.

We offer both canoe and kayak instruction as special courses, but also provide at least some instruction for all guided and rental trips. We develop customized trips for our clients’ special needs. We do not limit participation by age or physical ability.

We require a minimum of 6 participants on a trip, but can accommodate as many as 40. Our half-day guided trip fee is \$25.00 per person. Participants have a choice of whether to paddle a canoe or a kayak.

Please see our website (www.hawrivercanoe.com) for a list of currently scheduled guided trips as well as information about our mission and statement of values. Guided trips on dates not currently on our schedule can be accommodated.