

Paddling the Alton Lake Loop

Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, Minnesota

July 27 - August 1, 2008 (Sunday - Friday)

Are you looking for a wilderness journey that combines beautiful scenery, the wonderful rhythms of traveling by canoe, creative and delicious meals (that you don't have to cook!), time to both explore and relax, and the camaraderie of other interesting women? Our Paddling the Alton Lake Loop trip in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) contains all these elements and more. We paddle on both small and large lakes and creeks, watching for moose, mink, beavers, pileated woodpeckers, and—of course—the ever present loon, Minnesota's state bird. On this trip we extend a special invitation to anyone who is interested in a canoe trip with a relaxed pace, low mileage, few portages, and ample time to do as you choose.

Although our final itinerary will depend on permit availability, there are many excellent options and we describe one here. We enter the BWCAW from the Sawbill Trail and traverse a loop that goes through Sawbill Lake to Kelso Creek, Kelso Lake, through Alton Lake and back to Sawbill. The trip begins at 4 p.m. on Sunday at the Sawbill Lake outfitters where we have a brief orientation. We spend this first night at the National Forest campground right next door. The rest of the first afternoon is spent learning how to pack Duluth packs, set up tents, and making sure you have the clothing you need for the next five days. On Monday morning we'll review paddling strokes and canoe handling instruction before setting out on Sawbill Lake to our first campsite. The next morning we paddle to Kelso Lake, where we spend the next two nights. A beautiful bog extends north and east on the Kelso River, making it a great area for in-depth exploration. In July / August the pitcher plants are in bloom and the Sundew and Butterwort, two other carnivorous plants, can be found there as well. Deer with young have been sighted on the edge of the bog, as well as blue herons and moose - it's truly a wonderful area for discovery. We spend our last night in Alton Lake, a large lake with many islands separated by a short (30 rod) portage from Sawbill Lake. On Friday morning after a leisurely breakfast we return to the same landing, where cars can be safely left during the trip. During our free time we can enjoy sunbathing, fishing, taking time to reflect, or further exploration by canoe and foot. Women who enjoy fishing will find walleye and northern pike throughout the route. Our campsites have firegrates and pit toilets and typically overlook the water, providing great views of sunrise and sunset as well as the rising moon. The BWCA is a photographer's paradise!

Beginning canoeists are offered the teaching they need to build new skills with confidence. More experienced outdoorswomen have ample opportunity to improve their techniques and learn new wilderness living and traveling skills. Our guides love to teach as much as they love to be outdoors. If you want to preview the area, maps are available from the Fisher Map Company, Box 1107, Virginia, MN 55792 and outdoor gear stores like REI. Ask for map F-5.

To reserve a place on this wilderness journey, please send your deposit of \$200 or the full trip fee of \$850 (deduct \$50 if you register by 4/24) to the Adventures in Good Company office, or call to register by phone. The fee includes permits, guide services and instruction, group canoeing and camping equipment, group maps, and meals from Sunday dinner through Friday breakfast. Each participant provides a sleeping bag and sleeping pad, clothing, and personal items. Roundtrip transportation from Duluth to Tofte is available on a cost share basis. If you need transportation, we will leave from the Duluth airport at 1pm on July 27 and will return to the airport by 3 pm on August 1.

Three months before the trip, we'll send you information to help you prepare for your journey, including a detailed packing list. Please call the Adventures in Good Company office with any questions; we'd be delighted to welcome you to the beauty of the Boundary Waters!

A d v e n t u r e s i n G o o d C o m p a n y

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