



**NO BOUNDARIES^{TO}
BOUNDARY WATERS^{THE}**

2024 FACILITATOR MANUAL

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for being part of Friends of the Boundary Waters' No Boundaries to the Boundary Waters team! You have an important role in facilitating engaging, confidence-building outdoor experiences that bring the magic of the Boundary Waters to students across Minnesota. To ensure everyone has a safe, positive, and rewarding experience, we put together this handbook to both provide an overview of expectations and to answer any initial questions you might have.

Please take the time to read through this handbook and familiarize yourself with the various policies, roles, and responsibilities. You will likely go back to certain sections to refresh yourself on particular matters or to answer questions regarding travel, safety, post-event procedures, and so forth.

Clickable links to related pages and supporting online content are available throughout this handbook.

Again, thank you for being part of our team and for sharing your love for the Boundary Waters and the natural world with students across the state!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alison Nyenhuis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Alison Nyenhuis
Education Director,
Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness

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To access the digital manual, scan the QR code below or visit www.friends-bwca.org/outdoor-education-handbook/



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GENERAL SAFETY POLICIES

Avoid 1:1 with students

Always be in a group of three or more when working with students, and avoid situations where you would find yourself one on one with a student. If a student is injured, for example, and needs to be escorted inside to the nurse's office, for instance, ask another student or adult to join you.

Transportation and Participants

At this time, we are not authorized to drive participants (adults or students) in staff personal vehicles or Friend's-owned vehicles.

Injuries and First Aid

If anyone is injured (staff or participant) during a program, there is first aid administered, or there is a safety concern (physical, emotional, or otherwise), notify the Education Director and/or Operations Director. They will assess if an incident report should be completed.

Radio process

Channel 2 is our default for calling other instructors or for making general announcements. Conversations will happen on Channel 3 to avoid chatter. A conversation might look like:

- On Channel 2: "Alison for Izzie"
- Izzie responds (on Channel 2): "Hi Alison, go to 3"
- Both switch their radios to channel 3: "Hey Alison, I'm on 3, what do you need?"
- To close the conversation, the caller should say "Back to channel 2" to remind both parties to switch their radios back to Channel 2 so that they will be able to hear new calls or announcements.

Announcements for all groups regarding weather or safety concerns should be made on channel 2 by the program lead (unless it is an emergency situation where news needs to get to staff as soon as possible). If you see or hear lightning, radio the program lead and discuss it with them on channel 3.

WEATHER SAFETY

Temperature and Canoeing

To safely run paddling programs, the local air and water temperature combined should be 100°F. Water temperature can be found for the location online at <https://seatemperature.info>. It is the program coordinator's responsibility to monitor the conditions ahead of the program, and it is the responsibility of the Program Lead to double-check those conditions day-of.

Thunder and Lightning:

If you see lightning or hear thunder all outdoor activities must stop and participants and staff should take shelter indoors for 30 minutes after you see or hear the last storm activity. This goes for outdoor activities at schoolyards and activities in parks or other public spaces. If a school has a stricter storm policy, please adhere to theirs.

Other Severe Weather (including severe heat or cold):

Staff should be aware of other severe weather advisories, watches and warnings, such as those for tornadoes, excessive heat, wind chill, and winter storms. If "watch" category is present, staff should use their discretion when traveling to and holding outdoor events and reschedule if necessary. Staff should not travel to or hold programs outdoors during the "warning" category.

Advisory: Be aware. Prepare to make program adjustments if necessary. Communicate with the group to ensure they feel comfortable and have necessary gear.

Watch: Be prepared. Ensure participants have the gear they need, make alternative plans, and use discretion in holding or traveling to programs based on the needs of the staff and participants, as well as the duration of the program or travel.

Warning: Reschedule or cancel travel and outdoor programs.

Air Quality (AQI)

On days when the AQI is over 150 ([Red zone and above on AQI scale](#)), we will reschedule, adjust the timing or schedule, or cancel the program. For the Twin Cities metro area staff should use the [Minnesota Pollution Control Agency forecast tool](#) to monitor conditions. We have masks available to any staff or participants wanting additional protection when the AQI is elevated.

COURSE-SPECIFIC SAFETY POLICIES

Some of our courses pose more risks than others. See below for course-specific safety rules. For the full lessons for courses, visit the [course folder](#) in Cloud Paddler.

Canoeing rules: (Full canoeing [lesson plan](#))

- We do not allow racing.
- The canoe should only be paddled by two people at a time. A third person can “duff” in the boat by sitting on the keel of the canoe on a lifejacket. The duff should not have a paddle.
- Loading the boat: One person enters the canoe at a time along the keel while the instructor steadies the stern on the beach. They walk with three points of contact to the bow. If a dock is available, participants will load one at a time by sitting on the dock, swinging their legs into the boat, and (with three points of contact) sliding low and slow into the seat.
- In any canoe rescue situation, instructors should prioritize “People, boats, then gear.” Focus on ensuring participants are safe, then the watercraft, then rescuing any gear last.
- The instructor should always be at the stern of the boat they are in.
- 1 instructor to 12 people maximum.

Fire building rules (Full [fire building lesson](#))

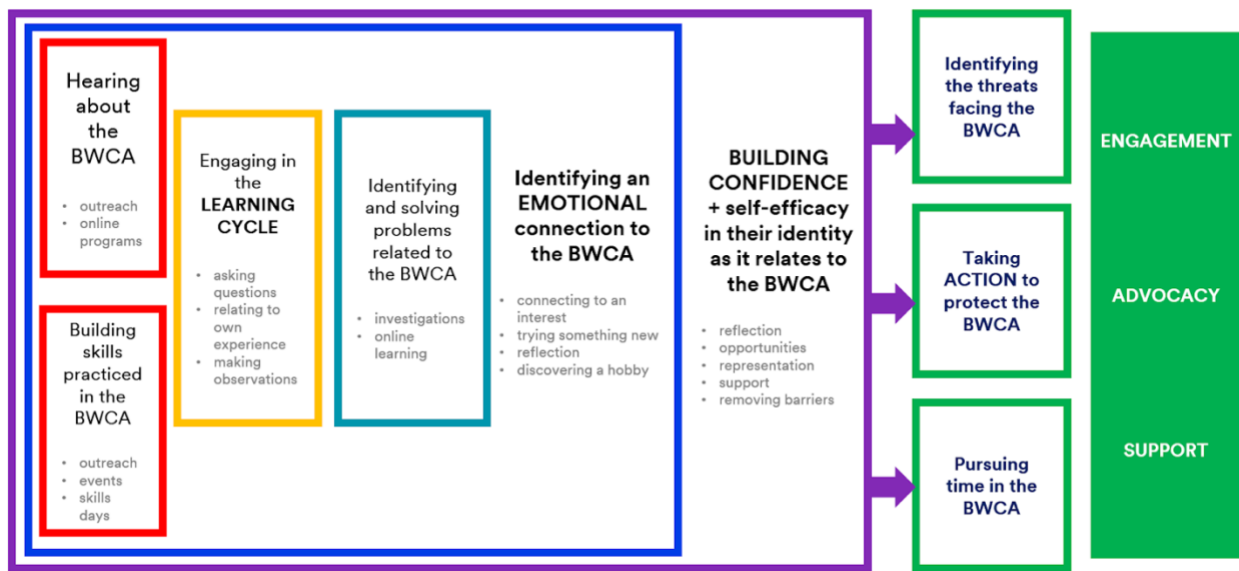
- Always have two liters of water and first aid on hand before beginning the unit.
- This station can only take place outdoors.
- Ensure the fire starters are counted when they are collected from students and that we receive them all back.
- Fires should not go outside the area of the tin.
- Only materials approved by the instructor should be added to the tins.
- Inspect the locations for wind, dry grass, and other risks. Find any area with the least impact risks, such as a concrete area or a sheltered area.
- Practice Leave No Trace when collecting firewood for the station - look for material that is dead, dry, down, and dispersed.

FACILITATION GOALS AND GUIDELINES

No Boundaries to the Boundary Waters Educational Model

Below is an educational change model to outline the goals between students first hearing about the Boundary Waters and becoming lifelong stewards of this place. This model shows the *why* behind our offerings and what we hope to achieve in the shorter term through our school outreach, trip preparation, and BWCA experiences.

Educational model / continuum of engagement



Facilitation principles

- Challenge by choice:** We let all groups know that our programming is “Challenge by Choice.” This means that we do not force students to do anything that they don’t feel comfortable doing. However, we do want to encourage students to step into their “growth zone” by trying new things with support, so we will encourage students to try small steps out of their comfort zone. Ultimately a student is in charge of their own learning and experience. If you have a student who is not comfortable participating, asking them about what they would feel comfortable doing at the station is a good place

to start.

- **Encourage observations and curiosity:** Our curriculum is built off a model of student observation and integrating students' lived experiences into our programming. Our goal is not to have students step away from the program with all of the "right" answers about an outdoor skill, but rather to have the opportunity to notice things, bring their own experiences to the activity, and to try new things without fear of being "wrong". Encourage students to share what they already know, what they notice about something, what something reminds them of, and what they are wondering about. The curriculum has been developed to have students share with each other and build from each other's observations – make sure to bring focus to this part of the lesson.
- **Positive Experience:** All pieces of our program work together to provide support for students to have positive experiences outdoors. In order to progress along our educational model and become more engaged, students need to have a positive experience where they feel safe, welcome, and valued. Our program supports students in challenging themselves and going outside of their comfort zone, but for the benefit of and at the pace of the participant. Facilitators are encouraged to see programs through a lens of addressing and easing barriers for students, like adjusting programming for the weather, or validating tough experiences like bugs or other elements.

PROGRAM OFFERINGS

Names for programs and types

We offer a few different types of programming, but we are also willing to be flexible and cater our programs to the school or group! The most common types of programming include:

- **Classroom Courses:** These are one of the courses listed in the catalog taught to an entire class during their normal class time (usually anywhere from 40 minutes to 1.5 hours, depending on the school schedule). Typically we will rotate through a few of the teacher's classes. Many of the courses can be taught as a large classroom (such as water quality, biomes, skull investigation, climate change, map and compass) with 1-2 instructors, but some others require splitting into small groups (teambuilding, fire building) and need multiple instructors. For this reason the courses listed first are most common for classroom course requests.
- **Adventure Days:** With multiple instructors and enough time, we can offer a BWCA Adventure Day, consisting of several rotating stations. There are examples in the course catalog of different station pairings, but we can mix and match different stations. The most popular options are teambuilding and portaging, fire-building, map and compass, and skull investigation. Group sizes need to be below 20 students each (ideally below 15), and need to have at least 30 minutes per station. Usually a school will do a 3 hour program with an introduction, 3-4 stations, and a wrap up.
- **Trip Pitch*:** This type of program is more of a presentation-style, and features information specific to the Boundary Waters trip opportunity the school has. This presentation will go over what to expect on a trip, dates and costs, how to sign up, and frequently asked questions.

- **BWCA Workshop***: This is a program designed to prepare students for their wilderness trips and start to work together as a team. It looks similar to the BWCA Adventure Days, but only with the trip group and chaperones. Depending on the numbers, groups might rotate through stations as one group or several. Activities are determined with the chaperone's input on what would be most beneficial for students before the trip, and include activities such as packing, portaging, food storage, teambuilding, and occasionally paddling.

** These programs are only done with trip program partners.*

PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS

Arrival and set up:

Arrival at the school will be arranged by the program coordinator and should be no later than an hour in advance of the program. Staff should first go to the office and should be prepared to follow school rules as they relate to check-in (present ID's, etc). Set-up locations will be determined in advance by the program coordinator.

Teacher Meeting:

During an Adventure Day program, the Program Lead will lead a teacher meeting while the “Common Ground” game is going on with the large group. This meeting should cover:

- **Names of everyone**
- **Expectations around participation and behavior management**
 - We expect that teachers are modeling engagement with the activity and are checking in with their instructor at stations to offer help and support. We also expect that teachers help support behavior management in the group, such as sitting near students who need support, taking students out of the group for breaks if needed, and addressing any additional behavior concerns according to their school policy.
- **Group rotation**
 - Check in with the teachers to confirm that students know their groups, and work with teachers to determine a plan for dismissal (for example, do students know their group as group 1, or as the teacher name, etc). The Program Lead will dismiss, according to this input.
 - Rotation: Determine the order of station rotation, if not already determined (sometimes we need to set up in the space first to see what makes sense). Let teachers know what their rotation will be, and determine which group will start at each station, to announce during dismissal.
- **Photos**

- Ask for a teacher who is willing to take some photos during the day with our program camera. Note that we don't need a lot of photos, but clear images of students engaged in stations is great, and as much as possible to get photos with faces in them, instead of a lot of backs of heads. (Photos will have been cleared ahead of time by the program coordinator, but if there are no-photo students teachers should not take photos of them).
- Show the teacher how to turn the camera on, how to zoom, and to have on the automatic setting.

Program roles and pre and post-event checklist

Depending on the staff roles, there are various tasks before, during, and after a program.

Review the [Program Roles](#) for more detailed information.

PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Plans and organizes the program information by communicating with school partners and staff.

Pre-program responsibilities

1. Pre-communication with teacher:
2. Create a program document with all details for staff.
3. Create calendar invites with details, including a link to the program document and inviting all participating staff.
4. Organize time for pack out/in and put on the No Boundaries calendar. Sometimes this can be the day of the program, but for early programs or traveling programs sometimes a separate day is best.
5. Assign roles for the day - ensure all staff are trained in the roles they are assigned, and assign training times if not.
6. *If canoeing*, look at the weather forecast and water temperature for the area (at <https://seatemperature.info>). If there is a possibility that the combined temperature of the water and air will be less than 100 degrees, reschedule

canoeing, or make a back-up plan and communicate to the program lead to check the temperature day-of and proceed accordingly.

Post-program responsibilities

1. Send recaps to the communications team after receiving it from the Program Lead. Combine into one email if applicable. Send by the end of the day Monday the week after the program.
2. Review EPR (End of Program Document) from the day and purchase any needed supplies or bring any concerns to the education director.
3. Post-visit communication with teachers by the following Wednesday.

PROGRAM LEAD

Serves as the point person day-of using details from the coordinator.

Pre-program responsibilities

1. Lead pack-out according to the list on the program document.
2. Check out the vehicle and complete the pre and post-trip forms.

During program responsibilities

1. Ensure the team is adhering to the schedule and set-up instructions in the program document.
2. Lead the chaperone meeting.
3. Kick off the program and opening introductions.
 - a. Serve as the point-person for day-of program adjustments.
 - b. Back-up weather plans will be communicated by the Program Coordinator, and if there is a concern of air/water temperature for canoeing, the Program Coordinator will ask the Program Lead to check this day-of.

Post-program responsibilities

1. Leads program debrief with the staff directly after the program and compiles notes for the End of Program Document (EPR).
 - a. Fill out this information electronically digitally in the program document by the end of the week (Friday).
 - b. Communicate any missing items, replacement items, or incidents to coordinator and/or Education Director.
2. Lead pack-in according to the list on the program document.
 - a. Upload photos during pack-in.
 - b. Ensure all course bins are ready for the next program. Replace supplies and if more are needed for purchase inform the coordinator and/or education director.
3. Enter program log information by Friday of the program week.
4. Download photos and condense down to 10-15, then create a few blurbs about the program. Send these and the photo link to the program coordinator by Friday of the program week.

PROGRAM STAFF

All other staff facilitating a program..

Pre and post-program responsibilities

1. Assist with pack-out/pack-in according to the Program Document

During program

1. Facilitate stations, respond and adjust to any changes.
2. Communicate with the Program Lead for weather or safety concerns.

Post-program responsibilities

1. Give input to EPR debrief
2. Ensure all supplies are packed up and ready for new programs, and are returned to their proper locations.

PROGRAM AND FACILITATION RESOURCES

Course Outlines and Materials: Lesson plans and any print materials are located in the [course folder](#) in cloud paddler. Always check here first for directions on how to facilitate a station.

You can also access them through:

Cloud Paddle>Education>No Boundaries to the Boundary Waters>Year-Round Programming>Courses.

In the course folder, there are also [supply lists](#) for each course. These can also be found inside each course bin.

Helpful Links

- [Friend's Teambuilding Guide](#)
- [Participant Log](#)
- [Program Document Folder](#)
- [Photo Folder](#)
 - Find the appropriate year/category and create a new folder each visit.
- [Introduction unit](#) (all schools go through ahead of visit)
- Friend's website: www.friends-bwca.org
- General Trip Planning Resources: <https://www.friends-bwca.org/explore/resources/>
- How-to videos: Helpful for trip groups or for your own background information <https://www.friends-bwca.org/bwca-how-to-videos/>

PROGRAMS AND TRAVEL

Due to our LCCMR grant funding, there are guidelines we must follow for travel and meals paid for by the Friends. We try to adhere to these guidelines as best we can, though in some areas options are limited and meal amounts may not be realistic.

Meals are covered for programs when:

- Programs are 35 miles or more away from the office.
- Breakfast is covered when traveling overnight, or when departing before 6:00 am. The allowable amount for breakfast is \$10/person.
- Lunch is covered when programming goes over lunch and the program is 35 miles or more away. The allowable amount is \$13/person.
- Dinner is covered when traveling overnight or traveling to programs until 7 pm or later. The allowable amount is \$19/person.

Vehicle: The Friend's vehicle should only be operated by Friend's staff who have been authorized to drive the vehicle. All pre and post trip paperwork must be filled out and all gas purchases should be made with a Friend's credit card.

Overnight Lodging: Overnight lodging may be booked at the staff's discretion when travel and program time do not support completing the visit in a single day. Factors such as the length of programming and energy needed to deliver quality programming should be considered. All overnight stays should be approved by the Education Director.