



Okpik-Kapvik Advisor's Planning Guide

Northern Tier National High Adventure Programs 2018-19
"Delivering Wilderness Adventure That Lasts a Lifetime"

Welcome!

For over forty years the Okpik program of Northern Tier National High Adventure Programs has provided safe, exhilarating and challenging adventures for thousands of youth and adult participants. The name, Okpik, comes from the Inuit word for the Arctic or Snowy Owl which has been used as the symbol for the Okpik program since it began in the early 1970's. In an effort to offer more opportunities to Scouts around the nation, Northern Tier is excited to offer a new program called Kapvik. Kapvik is the Eskimo word for Wolverine which has been the traditional nickname for Michigan "The Wolverine State." Kapvik participants will embark on an exciting new adventure combining Northern Tier's Okpik program with the frozen woodlands of Michigan's Gerber Scout Reservation.

Okpik-Kapvik Participants learn how to cross-country ski, snowshoe, ice fish, build snow shelters, fat tire bike, and enjoy life in extreme weather conditions and temperatures. All groups are accompanied by a trained staff instructor, called an Interpreter, who serves as a teacher of cold weather camping skills. The Okpik-Kapvik program fully outfits crews with group gear and almost all necessary personal clothing (see the included gear list). The goal of the Okpik-Kapvik program is to instruct crews on how to see low temperatures as an opportunity, not a barrier, to turn a 3-season camper into a year-round camper.

Okpik-Kapvik is hosted at the Gerber Scout Reservation, A Northern Tier partner in Cold Weather Camping, outside of Muskegan, Michigan. Crews explore the Gerber Scout reservation and Owassippe Scout reservation. Two camps offering an expansive wooded area of solitude and Winter Adventure; no city lights, no noise, simply wilderness.

Okpik is the premier Cold Weather Camping Program of the Boy Scouts of America. We are excited by your interest in cold weather camping and we look forward to introducing you to the wonders of a North Woods winter.

Pronunciation Guide

OKPIK - Ook pick

Bizhiw - Bee zhoo

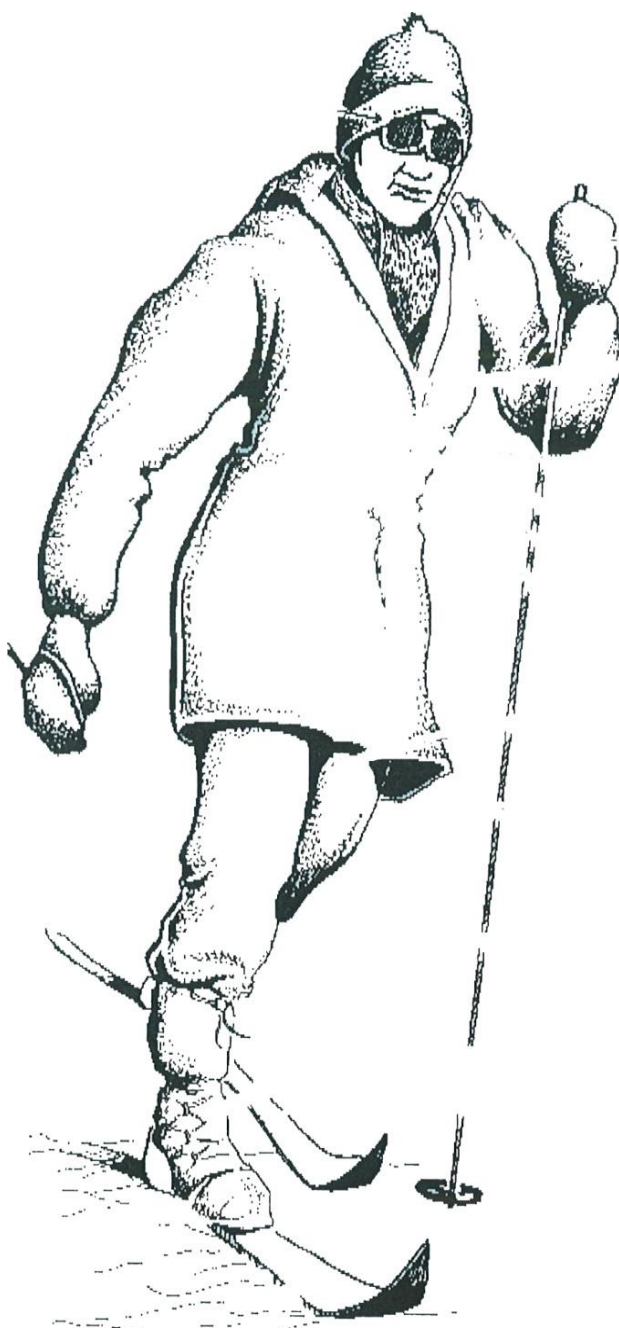
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LET'S GET STARTED



Why Winter Camp?

Many people do not know how to enjoy the winter, finding it an unpleasant season to be survived only by the grace of the hefty insulation of a house. However, for the initiated, winter is one of the best seasons to be outdoors.

For those intrepid enough to brave the icy conditions, greater solitude awaits. The crowds of the summer ebb out, and lakes become quiet and intimate. One doesn't hear the hum of the bugs in the winter (some claim the lack of mosquitoes is the best part of winter). Instead there are the howling of the wolves and the silence of the snow-dampened wilderness.

New activities abound in the winter and permit access to areas of the wilderness that are rarely visited in the summer. At Okpik, scouts snowshoe over swamps and bogs, cross-country ski on our groomed trail system, trek far out into the wilderness or build their own warm, insulating structure out of snow. Almost everyone tries something new at Okpik— and almost everyone develops a new fascinating and thrilling skill.

We believe that every participant in our Okpik-Kapvik program will be entranced by the glittering light of the sun on the snow, of the brilliance of the night stars, by the clear cut tracks of the moose and wolf and by the simplicity and solitude of the still winter world. The Okpik-Kapvik program is designed to introduce anyone to these joys, and to teach them how to thrive in perfect comfort as they navigate the exciting challenges of winter camping.

What are the risks? (RISK ADVISORY)

The Northern Tier National High Adventure Programs have an outstanding safety record. The Boy Scouts of America and Northern Tier emphasize safety through education and strict adherence to established policies and procedures. The safety of your group is dependent upon your attention to these procedures as well as being physically fit, properly equipped and trained for the rigors of cold weather camping.

Northern Tier and the Boy Scouts of America's policies and procedures, if followed, will minimize these risks as much as possible. Parents, leaders and participants should be advised that despite our best attempts at risk management, it is not possible to remove **ALL** risk from a cold weather wilderness expedition.

- Possible risks include (but are not limited to) motor vehicle accidents; severe weather conditions such as extreme cold temperatures and high winds; medical conditions such as heart attack, appendicitis, hypothermia, dehydration, frost bite, severe allergies and asthma or diabetes related conditions; accidents such as cuts, embedded fish hooks, burns or falls; risks associated with being on frozen lakes and encounters with wildlife.
- Medical evacuations and search and rescue services are coordinated by Northern Tier in close cooperation with local authorities.
- Please carefully read the information in this Okpik-Kapvik Advisor Planning Guide and **share it with your crew(s), leaders and parents**. If you have any further questions about risk management contact Northern Tier by phone 218.365.4811 or email info@ntier.org.

How do I prevent problems?

- **KNOW FIRST AID** - Make sure your crew is trained in First Aid and carries the required first aid kit. At least one advisor in each crew must be currently certified in CPR and Wilderness First Aid.
- **PURIFY ALL DRINKING WATER** - All water from natural sources **must** be purified by bringing it to a rolling boil or through use of a water purification filter. Chemical treatments are less effective in the cold.
- **TOBACCO** - It is strongly suggested that adult participants limit the use of tobacco on the trail. Smoking is not permitted in the presence or vicinity of youth, tents, Northern Tier buildings, BSA vehicles or near maintenance areas; only in designated areas on base.
- **ALCOHOL AND DRUGS** - Possession or use of alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs or the misuse of prescribed drugs is prohibited. Groups or individuals found in violation of this National BSA policy will be sent home, as arranged with the council office or parent.
- **ABUSE** - Physical, sexual or emotional abuse (including hazing) of a camper by his or her peers or by an adult leader is unacceptable anywhere. Local, county and state authorities as well as the BSA council representative will be contacted if abuse is suspected.
- **PRESCRIPTION DRUGS AND MEDICATION** - If an advisor or crew member is on regular medication, their physician should be consulted. Be sure to consult your physician to determine the effect cold weather may have on your medications (i.e. inhalers or epinephrine) or effects your medications may have on you in cold-weather conditions.

What are the policies?

ADULT LEADERSHIP - Two registered adult leaders 21 years of age or over are required at all Scouting activities, including meetings. There must be a registered female adult leader over 21 in every unit serving females. A registered female adult leader over 21 must be present for any activity involving female youth. Notwithstanding the minimum leader requirements, age- and program-appropriate supervision must always be provided.

ADULT LEADERSHIP TRAINING – All adult participants are required to present proof of BSA Youth Protection training upon arrival at Northern Tier. At least one adult in each crew must have proof of current CPR, Wilderness First Aid and Weather Hazards training.

BSA HEALTH AND MEDICAL RECORDS – All Northern Tier participants must present a current (within one year of the end date of your trip) BSA Health and Medical Record, signed by a doctor, upon arrival to base. Youth must have a parent or guardian signature as well. This form is available online at <http://www.ntier.org/>.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS - All youth must be registered as a Scout or Venturer.

AGE REQUIREMENTS – Age requirements vary for each Okpik program option. To participate in Okpik Cabin Stay youth must be a registered Scout or Venturer. Youth participants in all other Okpik programs must be 14 years old or in the 8th grade during their trip.

Other General Information

CAMPERSHIPS – Youth with extenuating financial circumstances who are participating in an Okpik program may apply for funding assistance to attend Okpik. Camperships are determined on a need basis. The campership application is found on our website at <http://www.ntier.org/>. The completed application form(s) and other required documents must be returned by mail to Northern Tier no later than November 15. The camperships are reviewed in November with notification given to the crew advisor prior to the final crew payment due date.

INSURANCE - Northern Tier fees include accident and sickness insurance coverage. This applies for your travel to and from the Northern Tier base as well as your Northern Tier Expedition. This policy is secondary to a family policy. All participants with family insurance should include the insurance company name and policy number on their BSA Health and Medical Record form and should also submit a copy of the insurance card with the medical form. A BSA *Camper's Accident and Sickness Insurance* pamphlet will be sent in the Advisor packet and is also available online at <http://www.ntier.org/>.

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBER

If there is a home emergency while your crew is attending Northern Tier, **please contact Northern Tier at 218.235.8957.**

How do I plan a trip?

Northern Tier makes planning an Okpik trip simple. At any point along the way, we encourage you to contact us via e-mail (info@ntier.org) or phone (218.365.4811) with any questions. Paperwork for High Adventure Trips often requires a meticulous eye. It is easier for you and Northern Tier if you contact us with a question rather than arrive at our base with a paperwork issue.

The planning process is a 5-step plan:

- 1) Trip Selection
- 2) Reservation and Payment
- 3) Fulfillment of BSA Policy Requirements
- 4) Personal Preparation (physical, mental, gear)
- 5) Arrival and Enjoyment of Trip

How does a Northern Tier trip work?

The Crew

All Northern Tier participants belong to a crew. Crews vary in size (Okpik-Kapvik crew size can range from 6-8 members, but all crews consist of at least two adult leaders, a youth crew leader and a majority of youth participants. A Northern Tier Interpreter accompanies all crews.

Larger troops will be divided into “sister” crews. Though sister crews may know each other, they will have independent experiences while at Northern Tier to maintain the integrity of the wilderness program. Sister crews will have limited interaction in the wilderness.

The Crew Leader

The Program of the Boy Scouts of America is specifically designed to develop youth leadership. A well-qualified Scout or Venturer should be selected as the Crew Leader early in the planning of each Northern Tier Expedition. The Crew Leader is responsible for leading the discussion of the Crew’s route selection, organizing the pace of travel during the day and establishing the Crew duty roster for camp chores.

The Advisor

The Crew Advisor serves as a counselor and coach to the Crew Leader. The Crew Advisor is also responsible for ensuring the safety of everyone in the crew: all Crews are required to have an adult with training in Wilderness First Aid and CPR. Finally, the Crew Advisor addresses crew conflicts that may require appropriate discipline.

The Interpreter

The Interpreter is a Winter Camping Counselor who serves as a teacher and resource for the Crew Leader and Crew. The Interpreter has received special training in the best practices for winter camping adventures. The Interpreter aids the Crew Advisor in insuring the safety of the crew. Finally, the Interpreter is responsible for imparting the unique flavor, history, culture and adventurous spirit of the North Country to the crew.

The Wilderness

Northern Tier crews explore massive wilderness areas, where solitude allows for deeper meditation and the rugged terrain and mercurial elements provide for physical challenge. The wilderness is part-classroom and part-instructor in the Northern Tier experience.

Step 1: What are our trip options?

Okpik provides a variety of different program options to help crews plan trips that match their desires and needs.

- **Introductory treks** (Cabin Stay Program) that acquaint scouts with the basics of outdoor winter activities.
- **Intermediate treks** (Okpik Camping Weekend) that focus on developing higher skills, like snow camping, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, etcetera.

Okpik-Kapvik trips occur during a four week period:

- Kapvik Holiday Stay-December 27-January 1
- Kapvik Session 1-January 3-7
- Cold Weather Leader Training(Adult 18+ individual program) Jan 10-15
- Kapvik Session 2-January 18-21

Introductory Treks

OKPIK CABIN STAY participants will be able to experience a full range of winter activities while still being able to enjoy a warm cabin at night. Crews will take day trips throughout the woods in the area, learning how to ski, snowshoe and ice fish in the process. They will also learn how to cook breakfast and dinner meals in winter conditions. Minimum age is 11 or must be a registered Scout or Venturer by the time of arrival at base. Maximum group size is 8 and minimum group size is 6. Participants will receive the Okpik Cabin Stay Award.



Intermediate Treks

OKPIK-KAPVIK COLD WEATHER CAMPING WEEKEND provides a basic introduction to camping in winter conditions. Participants will hike out through the wilderness, towing their gear in sleds (pulks), set up a campsite and spend the one or two nights camping. In addition, they will be exposed to a wide variety of winter activities: snowshoeing, ice fishing, skiing, ice climbing, and fat tire biking. Minimum age is 14 or in 8th grade by the time of arrival at base. Maximum group size is 8 and minimum group size is 6. Participants will receive the Okpik-Kapvik Cold Weather Camper Award.



Additional Awards Available



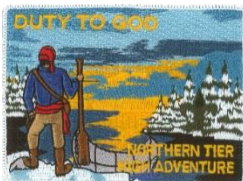
The Okpik Winter Trek award is available for any crews that spend at least 2 nights camping off base in the woods, change campsites at least once and travel at least 7 miles



The Zero Hero patch is available to any participant who camps outside on a night where the temperature drops below 0 degrees Fahrenheit (which means -1 or colder).



The Bizhiw Patch is available to any participant who spends two nights off base.



The Duty to God award is available to scouts and adults who participate in at least one daily devotional while at Northern Tier and lead grace before one meal while on ice



The Trail of Courage award is available to crews who participate in group discussions about healthy lifestyles and personal improvement while at Northern Tier

Other Okpik Opportunities



OKPIK COLD WEATHER LEADER TRAINING – Interested in leading your own winter camping trips? Our Cold Weather Leadership Training program combines an on-base seminar curriculum with a hands-on, on-ice training (including two nights on trail). This five-day course is a condensed version of the same curriculum we give to our Interpreters. It is fun, informative, and an excellent preparation for designing and leading your own troop and council level winter camping adventures. Minimum age of 18 is required by the time of arrival at base.

Step 2: How do I make my reservation and pay?

Once you choose a program, reserving your place in the Okpik schedule is very easy. You will need to know which session you would like to attend as well as the number of participants who will be attending. Okpik-Kapvik trips take place on a set schedule so crews will arrive on the first day of their session and leave on the final day of their session.

Participants are grouped into crews. Each crew must have at least 6 and no more than 8 crew members including two adults.

If you navigate to the “Trip Planning” page on our website, you can access our Trip Availability Chart. [A lottery will be held the first full week of January to make reservations for the upcoming Okpik season.](#) Online reservations will be available after the lottery is run. See our website for details. Alternatively, you can contact Northern Tier by phone (218.365.4811) and our Registrar will provide you the information you need.

If anyone in your trip has dietary restrictions or needs, please communicate this information by submitting a request using the registration portal that you use to sign up your crew, requests must be submitted to Northern Tier at least 45 days in advance of your trip. Northern Tier accommodates a wide variety of dietary issues if given advance notice.

PROGRAM(s)	CREW SIZE	Length of trip	FEE
Kapvik Holiday Stay, Okpik Cold Weather Camping Weekend, or Cabin Stay	6-8	5 nights Dec. 27-Jan 1	\$3775 per crew
Cold Weather Leader Training	-	5 nights Jan. 10-15	\$340 per person
Okpik-Kapvik Session 1, Okpik Camping Weekend or Cabin Stay	6-8	4 nights Jan. 3-7	\$3020 per crew
Okpik-Kapvik Session 2, Okpik Camping Weekend or Cabin Stay	6-8	3 nights Jan. 18-21	\$2265 per crew

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Deposit	\$800.00	Due within 3 weeks of reservation
Final Payment	Balance of Fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due May 15 for all Holiday Stay crews Due Oct. 1 for all other Okpik Crews (or within 3 weeks of reservation if reservation is made after Oct. 1)

WHAT'S THE REFUND POLICY?

All fees (deposit, first payment and final payment) are non-refundable and non-transferable in event of cancellation. Exercise caution in making reservations or paying fees for anyone who has not made a financial commitment. Northern Tier High Adventure Programs must commit financial resources to employ staff, purchase food and supplies, and prepare for base operations. Participants are, therefore, also required to make a financial commitment to attend. Be conservative in making reservations to avoid losing fees due to cancellations.

In rare & extenuating instances, we may determine that conditions do not allow us to present the Okpik programs. In this instance, you will be notified, and all fees will be refunded or transferred to future trips.

WHAT EXPENSES ARE NOT COVERED BY THE NORTHERN TIER BASIC FEES?

- **FOOD:** An evening meal is available for any crew arriving prior to 7:00pm. Northern Tier staff must know **2 weeks** prior to your arrival that your crew(s) want to eat an evening meal at base. Crews that plan to arrive after 7:00pm should plan on eating dinner en route to the base. A list of restaurants in Muskegon can be found by going to <https://visitmuskegon.org/restaurants/>
- **FISHING:** All participants who wish to Ice Fish during their Okpik experience must possess a valid Michigan fishing license. Fishing Licenses may be bought online in advance of your trip. This is the best way for you to purchase your license.
 - To purchase your fishing license online go to <http://www.michigan.gov/dnr>
 - Please refer to the Michigan DNR website for all fishing regulations and rules: http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dnr/2018-MI-Fishing-Guide-WEB_615716_7.pdf
- **PATCHES:** Program patches for Bizhiw, Zero Hero, Winter Treks, and Duty to God can be purchased (if requirements are met) in the Trading Post.

WHAT IS MY CREW NUMBER?

In your confirmation email, you will be given a crew number. This number should be referenced in any correspondence with Northern Tier. Your crew number is assigned to you based upon which program you are participating in, the date you are arriving and the number of crews that you have. For example crew number K011017ABC is compiled of:

- K represents the program you are attending (in this case either Cabin Stay or Okpik Camping Weekend)
- 011017 is the date this crew will arrive at Northern Tier (January 10, 2017)
- ABC indicates that this group consists of 3 crews: Crew A, Crew B and Crew C

CREW PHOTOGRAPHS

When you arrive at Northern Tier each crew has a photograph taken. You can order copies of pictures - 5x7- \$5.00 or 8x10- \$7.00 - prices subject to change.

Step 3: How do I fulfill BSA policy requirements?

Northern Tier is a National High Adventure Base of the Boy Scouts of America. Consequently, every group that arrives on base for a trip must meet certain requirements. *Below the required pieces of paperwork that every crew must have with them upon arrival at base are listed.*

Please read carefully: **If you do not bring the required paperwork, you will not be allowed on your trip.**

- ☐ **TWO-DEEP LEADERSHIP** - Every crew must have a minimum of two adult leaders, one of whom must be at least 21 years of age. Co-ed groups must have co-ed adult leadership over the age of 21.
- ☐ **BSA REGISTERED ADULTS AND YOUTH** - At least one 21+ adult and all youth (Scouts and Venturers) must be registered members of the Boy Scouts of America. Apply for BSA registration through your local council.
- ☐ **HEALTH AND MEDICAL RECORDS** - All participants, adult and youth, must bring a completed BSA "Health and Medical Record" signed by a medical doctor. Okpik is a physically taxing program in a rugged area and participants must be fit enough to meet the challenge: participants are required to fall within the minimum and maximum height/weight requirement on the Health and Medical Record. Northern Tier strongly recommends that all participants fall within the recommended weight for their height for the reasons of safety and enjoyment of the programs. The maximum and minimum weights are the absolute maximum and minimum. **THOSE FALLING ABOVE 295 POUNDS WILL ABSOLUTELY NOT BE PERMITTED TO PARTICIPATE.** You do not want to fall above or below those requirements. Forms are available at www.ntier.org.
- ☐ **FIRST AID KIT:** Each crew is responsible for bringing a complete First Aid kit. See page 20 for recommended First Aid Kit supplies.
- ☐ **TRAINED ADULT LEADERSHIP** - All participants over the age of 18 must have proof of BSA Youth Protection Training. One adult per crew must have proof of Wilderness First Aid training, CPR training and BSA Weather Hazards training.
- ☐ **AGE REQUIREMENTS** – Northern Tier expects crews to abide by the Age Requirements of their program. Youth participants should be put in programs that are appropriate for their physical abilities and maturity levels.

Step 4: How should we prepare?

Okpik makes winter camping easy and simple by providing crews almost everything they need. All food is pre-packed by your Interpreter and ready to go on arrival. All cooking gear – stoves, fuel, pots, utensil kit, etc. – await your inspection upon arrival. All the tools necessary for spending several nights in the elements are provided. In addition, almost all significant recreational equipment is available free of charge. Snowshoes, cross-country skis and basic ice fishing equipment are all stocked ready-for-use in our Bay Post.

Okpik outfits participants who need it with almost all personal clothing. Cold-weather sleeping bags, sleeping pads, wind pants, wind jackets (anoraks), boots, water bottles and more are provided by Okpik's outfitting department. *Participants must bring their own hats, long underwear, wool socks, summer rated sleeping bag, flashlight, bowl and spoon; participants are encouraged to bring their own fleece pants and shirt.*

Finally, Okpik provides an Interpreter to educate participants on how to winter camp in the most comfortable, safe, and fun manner. Almost everyone who arrives at Okpik is new to winter camping; prior experience is not necessary.

However, better prepared scouts and advisors have more satisfying trips. While Okpik provides most of the gear you might need, acquiring your own gear (which you can break in beforehand) may increase your comfort. Okpik participants are strongly advised to arrive mentally prepared by reading the **OKPIK PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK** and the **OKPIK COLD WEATHER CAMPING GUIDE**, to give themselves a basic understanding of cold-weather camping practices before they arrive.



What should we bring?

Okpik provides almost all of the gear required for a safe and satisfying winter camping adventure. However, each individual and each crew will need to bring some of their own personal gear.

Group Gear: All crews are required to bring their own First Aid kit

Personal Gear:

Required:

- ☐ 2 Winter Hats (preferably fleece)
- ☐ 2 pairs of synthetic long underwear (tops and bottoms; **NO COTTON**)
- ☐ 2 pairs liner gloves
- ☐ 2-3 pairs wool or heavy synthetic socks
- ☐ 2-3 pairs synthetic liner socks
- ☐ 3-Season Sleeping bag. This will be combined with an Okpik issued Cold Weather sleeping bag.
- ☐ Headlamp or flashlight and extra batteries (MUST HAVE – days are short in the winter)
- ☐ Toiletry articles (toothbrush, toothpaste, etc.)*
- ☐ Plastic Cup, bowl and spoon
- ☐ Stuff sacks (33 liter or less) or small duffel bag for all personal gear (DO NOT plan to take large suitcases or large packs on trail)
- ☐ Items for showering* (towel, soap, etc.) and clothes for the trip home
- ☐ Scarf or Neck Gaiter*
- ☐ Sunglasses* or Ski Goggles

The following items are available for outfitting, though you may feel more comfortable in your own:

- ☐ 2 pairs wool or fleece pants
- ☐ 2 sweaters* – preferably wool or polar fleece
- ☐ 2-3 pairs of mittens* (mittens are warmer than gloves)
- ☐ 1 wind jacket
- ☐ 1 pair snowpants or rainpants
- ☐ Skis and snowshoes
- ☐ Warm/winter boots (e.g., Sorels or Kamiks) with removable liners

The following items are recommended but not provided by Okpik

- ☐ Suspenders (better than a belt in cold weather)
- ☐ Fleece Vest
- ☐ Pocketknife/matches/bandana *
- ☐ Sunscreen and chapstick *
- ☐ Camera and film

PLEASE NOTE: While Northern Tier strives to have clothing available for all sizes, we are limited in the number of XX-L items. For these sizes or larger, we recommend that participants bring their own.

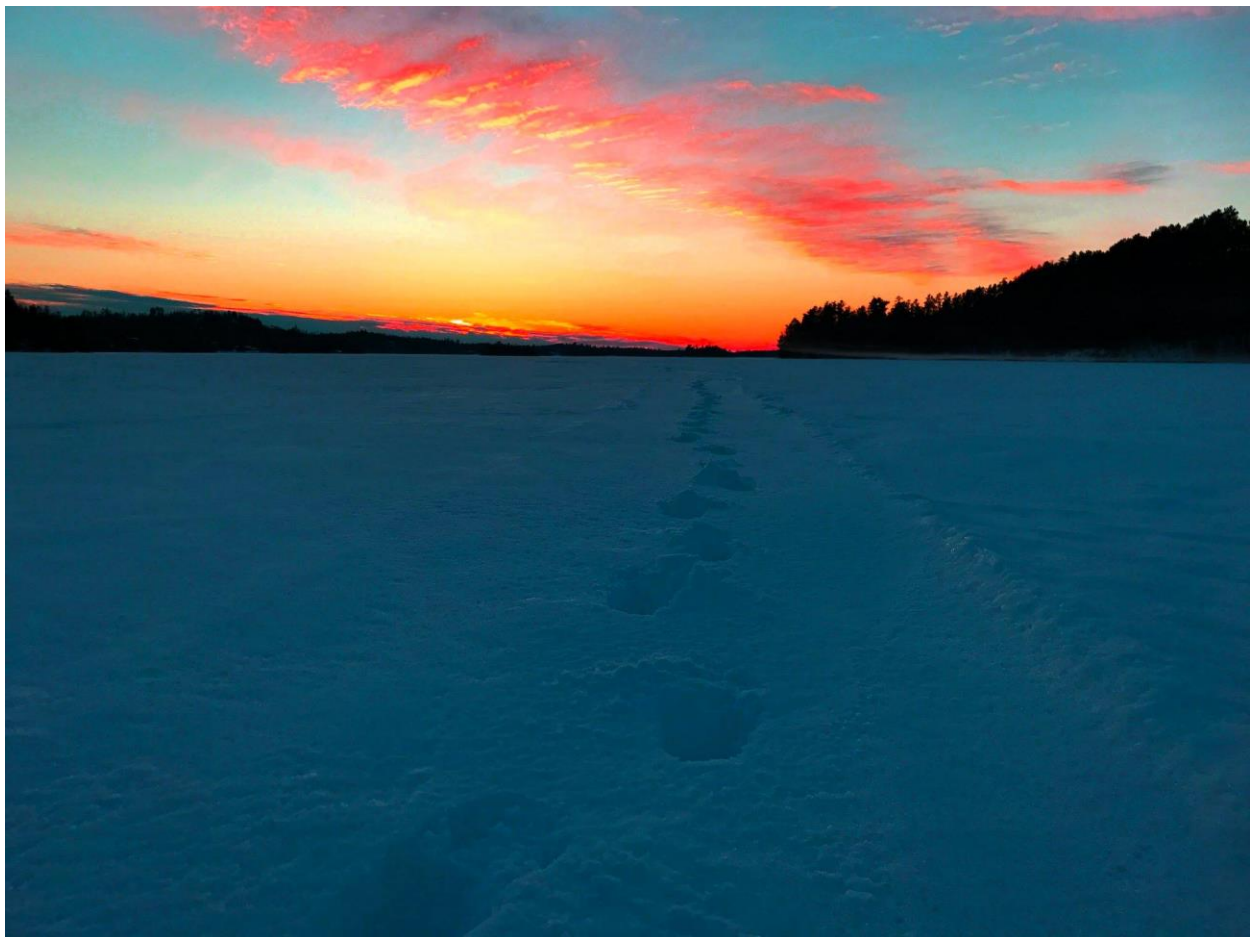
*These items are available for purchase in the Trading Post or online at www.ntier.org.

How do we prepare – mentally and physically?

Winter Camping requires a good deal of stamina. The cold temperatures drain energy, as the body spends more effort working to keep itself warm. While out on the ice, you can expect to expend far more calories than you normally would – 4,000 - 5,000 would be a good estimate!

Because of these factors, arriving at Okpik in good physical condition will enhance the enjoyment of your trip. Try to exercise for thirty minutes three times a week for at least the month before you arrive at Okpik. We recommend, in particular, high amounts of cardiovascular exercise. Pulling a sled, snowshoeing, skiing and biking all require significant cardiovascular capacities. Run, swim and be active to prepare for your trip. It is also a good idea to do at least one overnight preparation trip before you attend Okpik.

Winter camping is a fascinating and little studied branch of outdoor skills. We encourage you to study up on the various techniques and approaches to winter camping. Spending several days in the cold requires a methodical and meticulous approach to even the most mundane tasks. Begin your preparation by reading through the Okpik Guide to Winter Camping. If you find that fascinating, continue your education through the books listed in our bibliography at the end of this book



Fishing Licenses

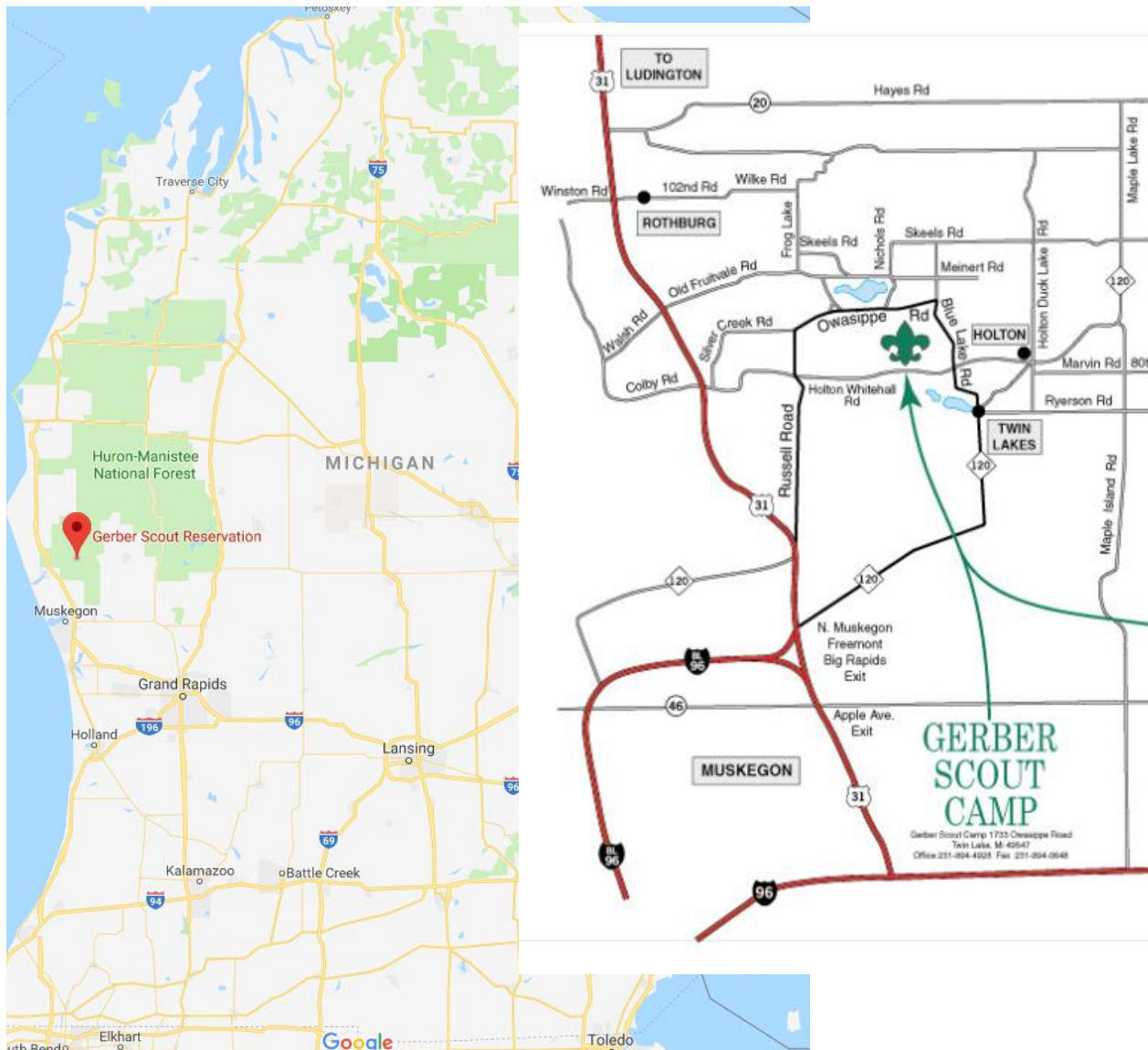
Northern Tier recommends that all Fishing Licenses be purchased online in advance of your trip. If youth under the age of 17 (for fishing in Michigan) would like to fish, they can fish under the license of a single adult. However, their catch will be restricted to this adult's limit.

MICHIGAN FISHING LICENSES - A license is required when targeting fish, amphibians, crustaceans and reptiles in public waters of the state. If you fish in Michigan you must purchase a fishing license if you are 17 years of age or older. If you are under 17, you may fish without a license, but you are required to observe all fishing rules and regulations. Turning 17 at any point during the current season (April 1 - March 31)? You'll need to buy a license once you do!

How do we get to the base?

Crews should arrive at Gerber Scout Reservation between 1:00 and 4:00 PM for their Okpik-Kapvik program. Lunch should be eaten en route to the base as it will not be available for your crew upon arrival. You are responsible for your own transportation to Gerber.

Gerber Scout Reservation is located at 1733 Owasippe Rd, Twin Lake, MI 49457 approximately 60 miles north of Grand Rapids, Mi.



Transportation Options

Gerber Scout Reservation is 60 miles from Grand Rapids, Crews using public transportation will need to arrange charter transportation to the Base.

Where can I stay en route to base?

- There are a variety of hotels in the grand rapids area
- For lodging opportunities in the Grand Rapids area visit <https://www.experiencegr.com/hotels/>

What can we see along the way?

Michigan is full of fascinating historical sites, terrific museums, and beautiful scenery. The Muskegon Winter Sports Complex near lake Michigan offers lots of fun winter activities, visit www.msports.org to learn more

What happens when I arrive at the base?

The afternoon of your arrival will be busy! Please try to arrive on base between 1 and 4 PM. Be prepared for the following:

- Meet your Interpreter
- Carry personal and group gear to your crew's assigned cabin (Do not pack in roller luggage, it is a rugged trail to your cabin. Pack in a backpack or duffel bag.)
- Medical Screening of each individual
- Crew Check In (presentation of paperwork, health forms, and copies of your certifications)
- Expedition Planning
- An Interpreter led shake-down of group and personal gear
- Gear and food outfitting
- Dinner usually from 5-7 PM
- Orientation presentation

How do we stay in touch with family and friends while at Northern Tier?

Remember that you will be embarking on a Wilderness Trek. Crews are strongly encouraged to leave connections to the urban world on base when out on the trail. Cell phones are discouraged while in the wilderness.

Northern Tier provides an emergency communication device for each crew on trail, it is unnecessary for crews to bring cell phones for use as a communication device (virtually no cell reception). However, we do recognize that many people use their cell phones as their cameras and this is permitted. We would request that you leave them in airplane mode and enjoy the Wilderness for what it is. We would still recommend using a crew camera over a cell phone.

While on base, limited cell phone coverage exists and some service providers are better than others. Due to the remote location of the base, we cannot guarantee any cell phone coverage. Similarly, Northern Tier has limited internet connectivity available to crews.

If there is an emergency at home while you're on trail, Northern Tier may be called at 218.365.4811 and we will get the message to you as soon as we are able. Please note that this means we will not be able to get the message to you until after you get off the ice. We do not maintain regular contact with our crews. Remember, you're in the wilderness. Enjoy it!

What if there is an emergency while we are on trail?

Before we discuss emergency communications, it is important to note that Northern Tier treks are true High Adventure experiences and your crew will be in a vast wilderness area. Northern Tier does NOT maintain regular communication with our crews as it is not necessary and is a drain on resources. If an emergency does happen while on the trail, your Interpreter should immediately contact the base and our management team will work with the Interpreter and Crew to determine the best possible solution.

All Northern Tier crews are issued either an Emergency Radio or a Satellite Phone, depending on their route. Your Interpreter is trained in the operation of these devices and will in turn train your crew. Unless otherwise incapacitated, your Interpreter is solely responsible for any communication with the base.

Northern Tier has an amazing safety record and we rarely need to evacuate someone. When we do have to make that decision, please realize that evacuations can take several hours as our primary method is to evacuate people on foot. This is why it is imperative that every crew have an advisor certified in Wilderness First Aid, CPR, and Weather Hazards, AND every crew must have a WELL STOCKED First Aid kit.

Trading Post (Retail Store)

Northern Tier's Trading Post sells a large supply of gear, souvenirs and snacks. Each participant spends on average \$150 at the Trading Post. For more information go to www.northerntiertradingpost.org.

What about food? What do we eat?

Your crew will typically eat three meals on base. The day you arrive, you will eat dinner in our dining hall. The next morning before you hit the ice, breakfast will be served in the dining hall. You should plan on wearing your trail clothes to breakfast, in order to expedite your departure on the trail.

After you get off the ice, you will eat lunch in the dining hall before you leave.

Holiday stay crews will spend their last night on base and will have dinner the night they come off ice as well as breakfast the following morning in the dining hall.

While on the ice your crew will partake in some of the best trail food in the business. Our commissary is stocked according to an expertly crafted menu. Your Interpreter spends the morning before you arrive at base packing your food. After you arrive, your Interpreter will go through the trail food with you and explain what is included. This also allows you and the Interpreter to double check and make sure everything is packed. Your trail food will be waiting at your cabin when you arrive.

We make every effort to accommodate special diet requests. The key to success is communication – the staff at Northern Tier needs to know about Special Diet needs. They will communicate directly with the individual or individual's parents regarding those needs. Please fill out a dietary restrictions form on each participant with special diet needs in your crew registration portal. It is important that you provide us with a direct email and phone number for that individual, so we can communicate with them. As previously stated, we make every effort to accommodate special diet requests, but in some situations it is not possible.

In those situations we will let the individuals know what we can provide and ask them to supplement additional food on their own.

What are the height and weight requirements?

The following table shows the recommended weights for each height, as well as the maximum weight for that height. **Northern Tier strongly recommends that each participant not exceed the maximum weight on the table for their height. Northern Tier requires that you fall below the maximum (295 pounds) allowed weight for participation. Additionally, Northern Tier strongly recommends that no Okpik Cold Weather Camping participant weigh less than 100 pounds . Smaller participants will have a very difficult time due to the strenuous nature of the trek.**

Weight-to-Height Table Northern Tier National High Adventure Programs		
Height	Recommended Weight (pounds)	Maximum Weight (pounds)
Minimum Allowed Weight ***Participants weighing less than 100 pounds will have a very difficult time and are discouraged from attending. Not Applicable to Cabin Stay.		100 pounds
5' 0"	100 - 138	166
5' 1"	101 - 143	172
5' 2"	104 - 148	178
5' 3"	107 - 152	183
5' 4"	111 - 157	189
5' 5"	114 - 162	195
5' 6"	118 - 167	201
5' 7"	121 - 172	207
5' 8"	125 - 178	214
5' 9"	129 - 185	220
5' 10"	132 - 188	226
5' 11"	136 - 194	233
6' 0"	140 - 199	239
6' 1"	144 - 205	246
6' 2"	148 - 210	252
6' 3"	152 - 216	260
6' 4"	156 - 222	267
6' 5"	160 - 228	274
6' 6"	164 - 234	281
6' 7" +	170 - 240	295
Maximum Allowed Weight ***No participants weighing more than 295 pounds will be allowed to participate.		295 pounds

Okpik Checklist

CHECK, DOUBLE CHECK AND TRIPLE CHECK BEFORE LEAVING HOME

- ☐ ☐ ☐ Adults and youth have a completed BSA Health and Medical Record signed by a doctor within the last 12 months. Youth also have a parent or guardian sign the form.
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Copies of required certification cards: Youth Protection for all adults over 18. One adult must have proof of Wilderness First Aid, CPR and Weather Hazards.
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Required medications – two of each with one for user and one for advisor in case of loss
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Adequate personal gear (see gear list in this guide)
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Financial needs (cash, credit cards, checks, travelers checks, etc.)
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Submitted a Participant Roster online through the online registration system.

First Aid Kit

EVERY CREW MUST BRING ONE FULLY STOCKED FIRST AID KIT

All BSA crews traveling are required to carry a first aid kit. The kit should be personalized to meet the needs of the crew. The BSA National Health and Safety Committee recommend the following items for Scouting and Venturing units participating in High Adventure activities. First aid kits should be stored in waterproof containers¹ for use en route as well as at Northern Tier and should contain the following items.

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adhesive bandages
(assorted sizes) | <input type="checkbox"/> Antibiotic ointment | <input type="checkbox"/> Small bar soap |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Knuckle and fingertip
bandages | <input type="checkbox"/> Disposable alcohol wipes | <input type="checkbox"/> Lip balm |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Steri strips | <input type="checkbox"/> Triangular bandage | <input type="checkbox"/> Thermometer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Moleskin/molefoam | <input type="checkbox"/> Acetaminophen | <input type="checkbox"/> Scissors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Second skin | <input type="checkbox"/> Ibuprofen tablets | <input type="checkbox"/> Tweezers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gauze pads—3" x 3" | <input type="checkbox"/> Cold caplets | <input type="checkbox"/> Safety pins |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adhesive tape—1" x 15' | <input type="checkbox"/> Antacids | <input type="checkbox"/> Side cutters |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1" or 2" roll of gauze | <input type="checkbox"/> Antihistamines | <input type="checkbox"/> Nitrile or latex gloves |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4" elastic bandage | <input type="checkbox"/> Steroid cream | <input type="checkbox"/> Barrier device for
resuscitation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Oval eye patch | <input type="checkbox"/> Anaphylaxis kit (if needed) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sunscreen |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Throat lozenges | <input type="checkbox"/> First aid manual |

* **SHARE** this list with all crew members, advisors and parents prior to departure for

****CHECK** all medical forms prior to departure for Northern Tier, ensuring allergic considerations are noted. Be prepared to explain important information upon arrival

*****PRESCRIBED MEDICATION** should be supervised by an adult advisor. Any person carrying prescription medication should personally carry the medication. A back-up supply is

Sample Itineraries

OKPIK-KAPVIK HOLIDAY STAY SCHEDULE

December 27	December 28	December 29	December 30	December 31	January 1
Day One (1)	Day Two (2)	Day Three (3)	Day Four (4)	Day Five (5)	Day Six (6)
Arrive	Hit the Ice!	Enjoy the Ice!		Come Off Ice	Go Home

December 27

- ☐ Arrive between 1:00 and 4:00 PM and meet your Interpreter. You can eat in town prior to arrival, or you can eat dinner at the base provided you arrive before 7:00 PM
- ☐ Complete Check-In: pay any final fees, turn in BSA Health and Medical Records and discuss the specific trip goals of your crew.
- ☐ Get situated in your on-base accommodations and complete a Gear Shakedown
- ☐ Attend a “First Night Orientation” – an Interpreter led introduction to Winter Camping
- ☐ Get outfitted with group gear and supplemental personal gear.
- ☐ Visit the Trading Post– remember, our Trading Post carries some of the items you are required to bring (just in case you forgot).

December 28-30

- ☐ Breakfast at 7:30 AM in the program center.
- ☐ Finish checking out group equipment and food. Prepare for hitting the ice.
- ☐ Start your Okpik Adventure!

All meals after breakfast on Dec. 28 will be cooked by your group until the evening of Dec. 31. We recommend spending the rest of the day setting up camp at one of our remote campsites

December 31

- ☐ Morning: Enjoy your last day on the ice. Begin preparations to return to base.
- ☐ Mid-afternoon: Arrive back at base. Return borrowed gear, take a shower or sauna and settle back into on-base accommodations.
- ☐ Dinner will be served at 5:30pm in the dining hall
- ☐ Visit the Trading Post and celebrate the New Year!

January 1

- ☐ Visit the Trading Post and Depart for home after breakfast at 7:30am in the dining hall

CABIN STAY SCHEDULE

DAY 1:

- ☐ Arrive between 1:00 and 4:00 PM and meet your Interpreter. You can eat in town prior to arrival, or you can eat dinner at the base provided you arrive before 7:00 PM
- ☐ Complete Check-In: pay any final fees, turn in BSA Health and Medical Records and discuss the specific trip goals of your crew.
- ☐ Get situated in your on-base accommodations and complete a Gear Shakedown
- ☐ Attend a “First Night Orientation” – an Interpreter led introduction to Winter Camping
- ☐ Get outfitted with group gear and supplemental personal gear.
- ☐ Visit the Trading Post– remember, our Trading Post carries some of the items you are required to bring (just in case you forgot).

DAY 2:

- ☐ Breakfast at 7:30 in the Dining Hall
- ☐ Enjoy the day: go sledding, hiking, skiing or snowshoeing. Try out ice fishing or snow sculpting. Try to build a snow shelter or explore the snow villages that other Okpik crews have already created. If the weather is particularly cold or wet, indoor activities are also provided – but crews are encouraged to spend as much of the day outside as possible.
- ☐ Cabin Stay crews will cook all of their own meals.
- ☐ At night, tell stories around a winter campfire, explore the stars with a star scope or go for a night hike before going to bed in a heated cabin.

DAY 3:

- ☐ Eat trail Breakfast
- ☐ Check in personal and group gear at the Bay Post by 10:00 AM
- ☐ Clean up with a shower and sauna
- ☐ Visit the Trading Post
- ☐ Lunch at 12:00 PM in the dining hall
- ☐ Head home

OKPIK-KAPVIK COLD WEATHER CAMPING WEEKEND SCHEDULE

Day One (1)	Day Two (2)	Day Three (3)
Arrive	Hit the Ice!	Off Ice and Go Home

DAY 1:

- ☐ Arrive between 1:00 and 4:00 PM and meet your Interpreter. You can eat in town prior to arrival, or you can eat dinner at the base provided you arrive before 7:00 PM
- ☐ Complete Check-In: pay any final fees, turn in BSA Health and Medical Records and discuss the specific trip goals of your crew.
- ☐ Get situated in your on-base accommodations and complete a Gear Shakedown
- ☐ Attend a “First Night Orientation” – an Interpreter led introduction to Winter Camping
- ☐ Get outfitted with group gear and supplemental personal gear.
- ☐ Visit the Trading Post– remember, our Trading Post carries some of the items you are required to bring (just in case you forgot).

DAY 2 and Succeeding Days if out more than 1 night:

- ☐ Breakfast at 7:30 AM in the dining hall (Day 2 only).
- ☐ Finish checking out group equipment, personal equipment and food.
- ☐ Travel out into the wilderness. Set up a campsite. Try out cross-country skiing, snowshoeing or ice fishing.
- ☐ You will cook and eat your meals on the ice.

DAY 3

- ☐ Eat trail Breakfast and pack up camp
- ☐ Return to Base by 10:00 AM
- ☐ Check in personal and group gear at the Bay Post
- ☐ Clean up with a shower and sauna
- ☐ Visit the Trading Post
- ☐ Lunch at 12:00 PM in the dining hall
- ☐ Head home

Suggested Reading

- ✎ Conover, Garret and Alexandra. *A Snow Walker's Companion: Winter Trail Skills from the Far North*
- ✎ Dunn, John M. *Winterwise: A Backpacker's Guide*. Lake George, NY: Adirondack Mountain Club, 1997.
- ✎ *Field Book*. Irving, Texas: Boy Scouts of America, 1984.
- ✎ Forgey, William W. *Basic Essentials: Hypothermia*. Old Saybrook, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 1999.
- ✎ Gilpatrick, Gil. *Building Snowshoes*. Skowhegan, ME: Gil Gilpatrick, 1998.
- ✎ Gorman, Stephen. *AMC Guide to Winter Camping: Wilderness Travel and Adventure in Coldweather Months*. Appalachian Mountain Club, 1991.
- ✎ Hampton, Bruce, David Cole and Denise Casey. *Soft Paths: How to Enjoy the Wilderness Without Harming It*. Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1995.
- ✎ OKPIK: *Cold-Weather Camping*. Irving, Texas: Boy Scouts of America, 1990.
- ✎ Prater, Gene. *Snowshoeing, 4th Edition*. Seattle, WA: The Mountaineers, 1997.
- ✎ Randall, Glenn. *Cold Comfort*. New York, NY: Nick Lyons Books, 1987.
- ✎ Stokes, Donald W. *A Guide to Nature in Winter*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown, and Co., 1976.
- ✎ Watts, May T. and Tom. *Winter Tree Finder Nature Study Guide*. Berkeley, CA: Wilderness Press, 1970.
- ✎ Weiss, Hal. *Secrets of Warmth for Comfort or Survival*. Seattle, WA: The Mountaineers, 1992.
- ✎ Wilkerson M.D., James A. *hypothermia, Frostbite, and Other Cold Injuries – Prevention, Recognition, and Prehospital Treatment*. Seattle, WA: The Mountaineers, 1986.