

BSA Troop 57, Downers Grove, IL. 2011 Summer High Adventure to the Current River in Missouri. These are crew journals.

June 13, 2011 Andrew B

day one

I woke up to the sound of Max fishing. I got dressed and ate a bagel. Once we get the canoes, the scouts will have water wars with squirt guns we got at a store. Max got 2 large ones and I have a mouser and a cheap other one. Time to read my book.

Day two

It was rainy and miserable. Zach and Dan flipped. There was nothing to do.

Day three

We went swimming. We found a snake and Max said it was a water moccasin. I almost got washed away. It was a good camp out.

Day four

Today we went off the jumping rock. Zach almost lost his knife but found it on the back of Max's PFD. We defied the laws of physics. Pretty cool.

Day 5

Our Trip is over. Matt and Max flipped over. Max M and I had a conversation about fantasy. While shopping at a store, the troop met a friendly German shepherd named Harvey two knives. We threw sticks for him to get. Then we gave him a bandanna for him to keep. After we packed the gear, we left for a camp site. For dessert we cooked cherry cobbler and ate the collar. We had too much and Max M and I decided to walk around to the other people at the camp and ask them if they wanted some. We only had one taker, an elderly couple who had spent time with their grandkids. Also, we chanced upon another group of people. They were about our age, three girls and three boys. The boys were fake surfer dudes always using that "hey man" and "that's like so cool dude". The girls however, were fairly empty headed but were very nice. They thought we were fairly mentally unbalanced, but we were nice.

Day 6

We are driving home. At the last station, the person in front of me was buying 48 beers.

Zach C

6/13/11 Ozarks

It's our second night in the Ozarks. Today Dan and I capsized and stuff in my second dry bag is all wet because there were many holes. It rained all day and it made the day awful. Also my feet are beginning to itch, might be athlete's foot. Dinner was OK because we ate steak. So far trip is kind of depressing.

6/14/11

Damp, damp, and more damp. So far the whole trip has been rainy and wet. All of my stuff is wet or water damaged. Weather is getting better though. Dan is so funny. I was laughing a little today because Dan was being Dan and it sort of lifted my spirits. Capture the flag on the river was fun. I hope we continue throughout the week. Lower legs are really itchy. I itched them until they bled. And I think that I have poison ivy there. I will see in the morning if it gets better.

6/15/11

Today was awesome. The weather was good and I got sunburn all over. Dan is so funny. He is making me laugh so much I can barely write and I couldn't paddle on the river. Fork in the garbage disposal and scary stories from Dr. Dan. We got our passports stamped and we went to jumping rock.

PS I didn't have poison ivy because it doesn't itch.

PPS Full Moon tonight.

6/16/11 Onodaga State Park

Last day on the river was today. It's nice to not sleep on rocks tonight. I bought an awesome knife at a store and a cream soda which was delicious. I saved the cap so I know what brand it was. We made cobbler it was way too sweet for me but it was still really good. Now I'm tired so it's time to sleep.

Matt M

Day 1, Monday June 13

After waking up in the morning at six we got out of our tent and made breakfast. We cleaned up and headed further down the river in the cars to the canoe rental. Then it poured. We finally got on the river. Then it poured.

Day 2, Tuesday June 14

Today we covered 15 miles it was loads of fun. I nearly flipped but still had fun time. All-around it was a great time.

Day 3, Wednesday, June 15

To today we went another 15 miles. We also stopped at sinking creek. While there we went swimming. It was awesome.

Day 4, Thursday June 16

We capsized.

Dan M

Day 1

We began our summer high adventure today by picking up ice at the gas station before going to the church. We arrived at the church at 7:45, 15 minutes late. Zack and I survived the long and boring drive to Springfield by watching Monty Python's *Search for the Holy Grail*. After grabbing lunch at McDonald's in Springfield, we were on the road again by 11:25. The stretch from Springfield to St. Louis was made bearable by *The Life of Brian*. After a short traffic jam due to construction on a bridge, we toured the Gateway Arch. Then we set off for Montauk State Park, where we had dinner. I bought Band-Aids at the store, while everyone else got squirt guns.

Day 2

It took a long time to get going today. We left the state park for Akers after a bagel breakfast. We drove through a severe storm. Upon arriving, we discovered that the outfitters would not let us leave until 12. While waiting at Akers, we ate lunch. When we finally made it to Cedar Grove, we began to set our gear up. As we were about to leave, sudden lightning held us back. We eventually set out, and picked up paddling quickly. Along the way we visited the Welch Hospital. Zack and I capsized not long after. After a stop at Akers, we found a campground. We sang *Happy Birthday* to Max M, with candles in our pudding, after a dinner by Max O and Matt M. We might have seen the ISS fly over at 9:15.

Day 3

After a breakfast of grits, we left camp around 9. Fortunately, nobody capsized today. Much of the day on the river was spent trying to get a flag from the other canoes. We stopped for lunch at Pulltite. Shortly after, we visited the Pulltite Spring and cabin. Afterwards, we pushed on. Ultimately, Zack and I won the flag shortly before our arrival at Sinking Creek around 2. Sinking Creek is our favorite place so far. I found a snail fossil [sic, it was actually an Ammonite, I later learned] in the campground. The overall experience today was better than yesterday. We got to end it with a conversation around the campfire.

Day 4

Today was our last full day on the river. We are currently on the same gravel bar as we were at this point last year. Today was also more uneventful than yesterday. The game of capture the flag continued, but it was inconclusive. We stopped at the Round Spring Ranger Station to get passport stamps. Later on, we ate lunch at William's Landing, where we met another group and someone with a motorboat. There were a lot more power boats today. We ended our day shortly after a visit to Twin Rocks for a cold jump in the river.

Day 5

Our last day on the river was planned to be uneventful, but the course of events took its own path. Max O and Matt M had a bit of a mishap and fell out of their canoe. They were pulled to the safety of a gravel island using a throw rope. I parked the kayak I used from Two Rivers on, and walked upstream to their

island. I made sure they were safe, and we set off again. After our lunch at Powder Mill, we awaited our bus. As soon as we finished packing up our gear, Troop 383 from Omaha joined our ride. I had Troop 57 help them pack up the bus. After a motion sickness inducing bus ride, set off from Akers to Onondaga State Park.

Day 6

This morning the cave tour almost never was. The scouts voted in not going, but it ultimately resulted in the tour happening. This has been a very good trip, with plenty of inside jokes (Maxine, Baby, the fork in the garbage disposal). We ate lunch under a tent in the cave parking lot. We stopped to read a plaque commemorating the Battle of Leesburg. Most of us are excited to come home, but had a very good experience on the river. The ride home, like the ride down, was made bearable by movies. This time it was *The Meaning of Life* and *Spaceballs*.

Tom Mohr, adult leader

Day 1

We leave Downers Grove at 0805 and I'm sure I forgot something. I press on regardless. We make good time and stop in Springfield at a McDonald's for lunch but it's only 1045 and the lunch menu is not up yet so we wait. We get to St. Louis at 1245 far too early for our 230 Arch tour time. Road construction slowed us to one lane over the Mississippi River. We think we can avoid a line for arch entry by following the NPS signs to the south entrance only to find it's closed. Thanks for the sign. We go back to the north entrance and go through security check. They let Zach in his less than 4 inch scout knife. We have about 30 minutes before the tour time and use it to shop and visit the museum on site. Everyone enjoyed the ride up to the top of the arch. We get down and out and head to I- 44 west at about 4:00 PM. We get to Montauk a bit after 7:00 PM. After setting up camp we get dinner at the lodge. The next morning Zach and Max M try their luck at fishing at Montauk blue ribbon waters. Trout taunt them like the French taunting King Arthur in Monty Python's Holy Grail. We get out of Montauk just as heavy rains start to fall and severe thunderstorm warnings come up. We get to Akers at 10 AM and they tell us the next bus to Cedar Grove is at noon. The scouts hang out throwing stones across the river. We decide to have lunch there and avoid a stop later. We get to cedar grove in time for another downpour. We get on the water about 2:50PM. The weather cleared and we had good paddling. At about Welch Spring another wave of storms caught us. I ask Dan to pull over so we can wait it out as there was lightening. Dan and Zach hit a tree root mass and tip dumping Dan out. He swims to shore and the boat is now full of water. It takes about 15 minutes to bail it out it head on to Akers. We only stop briefly at Akers to get more refreshments then go downstream about 2 miles to a nice gravel bar. The boys do a great job on steaks.

Day 2

The group gets going pretty early. Grits for breakfast. We need to tell the cook, Max M, that's way too much water and you can get a better idea by reading directions. The boys police the grounds once but Dan and Zach note it's not good enough so one more time. Out on the water by 9:10AM and we make good time to Pulltite where we stopped for lunch. We meet a venture crew from Dallas. We head downstream and visit Pulltite cabin for some photos. We do not stop at the 2009 flood site but note it is not very camp-able now. We pass a school group from Northern Illinois and scout troop from Southern Illinois we met earlier. We get to Sinking Creek before 3:00 PM and set up camp. The boys walk up and float down Sinking Creek. Dinner goes well. A nice campfire. Some good guitar by Mr. Meier. 50% chance of storms so we stow our now dry clothes.

River Temperature 67, Sinking Creek 75

Day 3

The boys are up at 6:30 AM as they like setting up camp earlier in the afternoon so they can relax or have fun later in the day. Garbage was not stored. Invaded by Sasquatch no doubt. Too bad we did not use the garbage cans at this campsite. We left camp and 8:20 AM and we do a quick stop at the Round

Spring store for water and snacks as it's been about 45 minutes since we last ate. We stopped about 1/2 mile further down river to go to the Round Spring ranger station and get passports stamped and to view the Round Spring. Paddling leisurely with one stretch going east for about 1/2 miles we had a strong wind at our back and we floated at 4 miles per hour. We had some rambunctious sessions of capture the flag and stop for lunch at Williams Landing. It was nice to compare our pace to that of last year's loaded in the GPS. Overall we make better time as the group is smaller. Weather was sunny and warm. We needed to apply sunscreen several times. We stopped at twin rocks for swimming for about 1/2 hour. We left at about 3:00 PM and made camp at the same place as 2010. This works out well as we now only have about 10 miles on Thursday to Power Mill. When the wind is in our faces it moves the canoe making steering difficult. A 10 mph wind from the west on Thursday should be a modest challenge. Dinner is Chicken C, what could be better? This is living. Forecast for tonight is clear and a low of upper fifties. No sleeping bags so we'll see how warm they stay.

Water temperature 70.

Day 4

Very cold waking up. Dew on the inside and outside of my tent. I hear the boys getting breakfast ready. I opted to stay in my tent until the sun hits it at 7:00 AM. Boy, we sure have a lot of food. Is that grits and my coffee? We head out 10:45AM. A leisurely paddle to the Two Rivers stop. We buy more junk food and get the group photo. We get out from Two Rivers at about 10:45 AM and plan on a leisurely 7 miles or so to Powder Mill. Our bus gets there at 2:00 PM, so we plan on getting there 1:00 PM, do lunch and arrange our gear. But..... the river had other plans, nasty plans, and devious plans. The river is very deceptive. It appears easy but danger lurks below. We get to a small rapid called Coots Chute. Very short with the turn to the left. I go through with Zach and we spin out into an eddy. I decide to wait there as Max O and Matt M approach. Their canoe had been tipping to port and they were having a few steering problems. As they get closer I decide to get the throw bag ready. Good idea. As they turned left they hit a rock and tipped dumping both out. Canoe and boys go floating down stream. Zach paddles our canoe to a gravel bar in midstream so we have solid footing. I toss the throw bag and get Max and Matt over to the gravel bar. The canoe has gone downstream about 100 feet and is pinned against a steep bank. Dan alerts the downstream boats with some whistle blasts. Others are not sure there's a problem because up to this point the whistles were used for fun and not what they were brought for. Zach and I leave Max and Matt on the gravel bar. Zach and I paddle to the swamped canoe and move it downstream another 100 feet to shore where we can more easily get the water out. Bill and Chris muscle back upstream to help bail. I take the canoe solo back into the mainstream. Dan meets me at the midstream shoal in the kayak and we walk the canoe over to Max and Matt. Max and Matt take the canoe and paddle back to their boat. I swim across the current to Zach, Chris, Bill, Max, and Matt. We bail with our hats and hands. We get everything back eight to normal and had downstream. A nice 30 minute diversion. We see a lot of turtles and Max M keeps diverting to them. We have a lot of time but this might push it a bit. We get to Powder Mill around 12:45 PM. We meet venture crew 473 that we've met previously. We finish a lunch and have all gear stored when the bus comes at 1:40 PM. We load up and wait for another scout group, Omaha 383, that pulls in around 2:10PM. All of our guys are on the bus as the other group began loading. Dan offers our help and

loading goes quickly. The rolling ride through the hills back to Akers has scouts talking about their experiences. About 45 minutes later most are sleeping. We load up our cars quickly but not before one more stop for ice cream at Akers. We meet a group from University of Michigan that stopped there to camp on the way to a conference in Oklahoma. Too bad Mr. Camp was not here. A nice ride to Onodaga State Park and we set up camp and have dinner. I take a shower. It's 10:00 PM and the boys want to take the garbage to the dumpster. They can't seem to find the dumpster one campsite away. So they began roaming the park looking for a dumpster. They seem to want to go several campsites over to some people they met while offering leftover cobbler. I think they really were not looking for a dumpster at all.

Day 5

Friday morning and the boy led troop has decided they don't want to visit the caves they want to go home. After some discussion we convince them to just go over and check out the gift shop and see what's going on. When we were there, we met a tour guide that had been briefed that the scout troop would be there. The guide directs the boys into a meeting room for a short talk and video about Onodaga Caves. After viewing of video we have very nice to work the Onondaga caves. The boys thought it was a great tour and were glad they had decided to see the caves after all. We ate lunch in the parking lot just as it began to rain heavily. We finished our drive home stopping only briefly. It was a great trip.