

Clearfield Boy Scout troop canoes in Boundary Waters

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CLEARFIELD — It all began with one simple question last fall, ‘What are the future goals of Boy Scout Troop No. 6 in Clearfield?’

When Scoutmaster Jennifer Queener answered the question in a previous Creston News Advertiser story about her nontraditional Boy Scout troop, which is designed to help boys who haven’t lived on their own to develop life skills, she replied the troop’s dream was to one day go to Boundary Waters Canoe Area.

That dream came true.

“When Boundary Waters was in the story, it got linked to a blog and Sue from Voyageur Canoe Outfitters read the story,” Queener said.

Boundary Waters Canoe Area is located in Superior National Park in northeastern Minnesota, and Voyageur Canoe Outfitters, which is owned and operated by Mike and Sue Prom, offer canoe trips throughout the area.

Many Boy Scout troops from across the nation sign up to experience canoeing in Boundary Waters. Queener said when Sue read about her troop, she got in contact with her and decided to make the trip a reality.

Trip

Seven scouts and two adults went on the Boundary Waters trip from June 23 to 28. Queener said the troop worked hard to raise the \$1,000 for the trip.

However, with less than 24 hours before the troop was to leave for Minnesota, one of the adults had to cancel because of work complications.

Queener said she was calling everybody she knew to see if someone could go because two adults are required for leading a troop in Boundary Waters.

Fortunately, Jerry Hynes of Creston, a former Boy Scout who attained the rank of Life Scout, agreed to chaperon the trip. Hynes was able to fill out all the paper work, get a physical exam and pack everything in less than a day.

Hynes said his previous experience as a Boy Scout led him to going on the trip.

“There’s a lot of good growth from it with the things that you learn,” he said, “just from how to take care of yourself when the odds are against you.”

Skills

The troop improved their camping, canoeing and navigation skills throughout the trip.

“We did cooking, and we did dishes, and we set up tents and canoeing,” said Boy Scout Quentin Hingeley, 18, of Creston.

Queener said in the beginning of the canoe trip, the troops four canoes were strewn about all across the water. However, the scouts learned quickly and were able to work as a cohesive unit on the way back.

“It showed that with experience, and with them being out exploring and just working the canoes themselves, we stayed together coming home,” she said. “It was fantastic.”

Both Queener and Hynes said they were most impressed with how much self-confidence the troop gained in Boundary Waters.

“It was really neat to see the development of my Scout troop,” Queener said. “Instead of just individuals, they became a troop. They worked together as a team, and they went from worrying about themselves to worrying about their partner in a boat.”

Hynes said he saw improvement in the troop's map-reading and fire-starting skills.

“When you're in the wilderness, and this is definitely the wilderness, there are no signs or facilities for anything basically,” he said. “It was interesting to watch them emerge and bring about their skills, and each of them had an individual skill.”

### Self-growth

The Scouts also got to see different areas of nature such as Lake Superior.

“I think we've learned to accept nature as it is, and leaving no trace of yourself,” said Boy Scout Travis Hayden, 21, of Creston.

Now that Boy Scout Troop No. 6 goal has been accomplished, their next goals are to finish their canoeing and camping merit badges.

Hayden said a lot of what he learned in Boundary Waters will help him with his merit badges.

“I truly think I've accomplished a lot of things on this trip,” he said. “I've actually become a better person emotionally.”