

GREAT RAFTING AND TUBING TRIPS

A major part of a good Scouting camping program are outings that are different and adventurous. Many units enjoy adding water sports during warmer months. With any water trip, the BSA Safe Swimming and Safety Afloat rules must be followed 100% of the time. We are lucky in Georgia to have great white-water rafting to the north and year-round springs to the south. Below is information on some ideas you might enjoy sharing with your unit's leadership when planning their outing calendar.

White-Water Rafting

There are 3 rivers that offer great white-water rafting within an easy drive of Atlanta. These are, in order of skill level required (from low to high): the Nantahala River in NC, the Ocoee River in TN, and the Chattooga River in SC & GA. The U.S. Forest Service set a minimum weight of 60lbs for rafting on the Nantahala River and both the Ocoee and Chattooga Rivers have minimum ages to raft on these rivers. An internet search will turn up a number of commercial outfitters that will work with your unit for a safe rafting trip. Be sure to make your reservations early for summer weekends.



Tubing

Florida offers many wonderful springs for year-round swimming, canoeing and tubing. The one closest to Atlanta is the Ichetucknee Springs State Park, southwest of Lake City, Florida. There is no camping allowed at this park, but group and family camping is offered at near-by O'Leno State Park and a privately owned commercial campground is located near the park's north entrance. Many outfitters are located outside the park that offer tube and raft rentals. Some of these outfitters will carrier your large group of rental items into the park for you. The State Park rents canoes. There are a number of rules to protect the river and springs, so be sure to go over them with your Scouts. During the summer the park offers a shuttle for the drivers to place their vehicles at the south end. The number of persons allowed to use the north entrance is very limited during the summer, so plan to arrive when the park opens at 8AM to insure a wonderful day on a spring feed river with no motor boats allowed and no development along the banks.

Florida State Park Website:

<http://www.floridastateparks.org>

