

Rafting and Tubing Trips

A major part of a good Scouting camping program is outings that are varied and adventurous. Many units enjoy water sports activities during warmer months. With any water trip, the BSA Safe Swimming and Safety Afloat rules must be followed the entire time. We are lucky in Georgia to have great white-water rafting opportunities to the north and year-round springs to the south. Below you'll find some information and ideas that 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. Each river is serviced by a number of commercial outfitters that will work with your unit to make sure you have a fun, safe rafting trip. Be sure to make your reservations early for summer weekends, because they fill up fast!



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 nearby 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 and offer tube and raft rentals. Some of these outfitters will carry 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 before you enjoy your outing. During the summer, the park offers a shuttle for the drivers to park 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 ensure a wonderful day on a spring feed river with no motor boats allowed and no development along the banks - completely pristine!

Florida State Park Website:
<http://www.floridastateparks.or>



Cave Camping

One of the most exhilarating experiences in Scouting is cave camping. There are many caves in north Georgia and neighboring States. Caving is a perfect noncompetitive team activity that builds self-confidence and can be offered to Scouting groups of all ages. Scout units find this type of trip to be a very nice outing in the winter as the caves are the same temperature year-round: about a comfortable 60 degrees. Just a few hours north of Atlanta, in Tennessee, are three commercial caves that offer groups wild cave expedition trips and allow spending the night in the cave. All these caves require reservations and provide experienced guides. This is a very good way to introduce your Scouts to the excitement of caving in a safe manner; Scouts should never enter a cave without very experienced spelunkers leading the way (i.e. outfitters). Due to the nature of the sport, safety must always be a top priority in the caves, but a safe caving trip is always a fun one.

