



Raft Guide School

BC's premier river training program



THE COURSE:

10 days of Instruction

START / FINISH

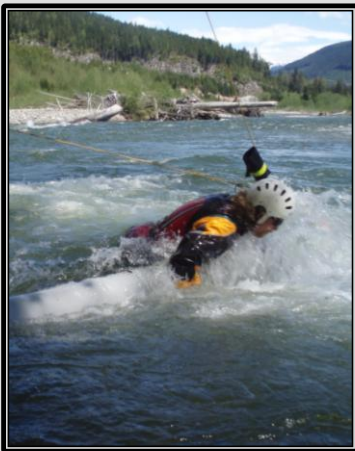
Terrace, B.C.
(2hr flight from Vancouver)

2010 COURSE DATES:

May 17 - 26, 2010

2010 PRICE:

\$2400 CAD + GST / HST



ITINERARY

OVERVIEW

GUIDE SCHOOL – 7 DAYS

Every day of the guide school component of this course is spent focusing on and practical aspect of becoming a river guide: Rowing rafts down rivers. With a ratio of 4 students to 1 instructor you will spend significant time every day in control of the raft. The days begin and end with a theory session with each day building on the last. We start with the basics and progress through advanced techniques eventually covering everything that would be tested on a BCROA raft guides' exam and then some.

The detailed itinerary below outlines the theory sessions and specific field sessions that are built into each day. All this is additional to the main focus of spending time controlling rafts down rivers.

SWIFTWATER RESCUE TECHNICIAN (SRT) CERTIFICATION – 3 DAYS

Every professional working in an environment exposed to moving water is required to provide a high level of safety and care to their clients. That level of safety is recognized internationally as this course and it is expected of fire fighters, river guides, police, and private consultants alike. Skeena Valley Expeditions works with Rescue 3 International and has them tailor the SRT certification specifically to the unique needs of river guides. This is a 3 year certification course.

DAILY PROGRAM

DAY ONE – INTRODUCTION AND BASIC RIVER UNDERSTANDING

We start today like every other day: 8am for some theory before heading out to the river for the day. Today's theory is longer than most days as many basic topics are covered so that students are set up for success when we first get to the river.

Morning Theory:

- Personal equipment
- Basic river features
- Basic rafting operations

Field Theory and Practical Sessions:

- Equipment, checklists, and loading procedures
- Safety briefings
- Guest loading and placement in rafts
- Oar rafting techniques
- Travel order and boat spacing

We finish the day back at the SVE base with a review of the day.



INCLUSIONS:

- High quality instructors are all certified river guides and have at least a decade of raft guiding experience. Also, all instructors are currently employed in the industry ensuring all information is up to date.
- State-of-the-art rafting equipment including self bailing rafts, paddles and oars, rope rescue and training supplies, repair equipment, first aid supplies for training purposes, throw bags for skills practice, etc.
- Some personal equipment if needed such as wetsuits, helmets, lifejackets, splash tops, wetsuit booties, etc.
- All transfers between Terrace, B.C. and the river.
- Lunches and snacks for all field days
- Supplemental learning materials include the Complete Whitewater Rafting guide by Jeff Bennet, the River Rafting Guide Certification Manual by the Government of BC, and numerous lesson plans developed by SVE



DAY TWO – CORE GUIDING SKILLS

In addition to building on yesterday's rafting skills, today we introduce the core skills essential to a river guide that are additional to controlling a raft. These include:

Morning Theory:

- Swimming in whitewater
- Communication in a river environment
- Eddy catching

Field Theory and Practical Sessions:

- Paddle commands
- Highsides
- Throw bagging technique and practice
- Raft flip drills
- Swimming in whitewater

Evening Theory

- Guiding philosophy
- Knots
- Basic Rope Systems

DAY THREE – ADVANCED GUIDING CONSIDERATIONS AND SKILLS

Today the rubber meets the river so to speak and we put the big picture of being a guide together. As always, the core is continuing to develop strong rafting skills but today we bring an understanding of the industry and what the difference between a raft boatman and a guide is.

Morning Theory:

- Advanced rafting techniques
- Industry history and current status

Field Theory and Practical Sessions:

- Knots and rope systems

Evening Theory

- River rescue and first aid considerations

DAY FOUR – REFINING SKILLS

Today we introduce fewer topics but begin to refine the skills already learned. Any skill already taught is "fair game" and we begin to incorporate practicing all the little unique things a guide does in a day at work just about any time and any place as opportunities present themselves. Again, as theory and new skills reduce, every day boat handling and skill practicing time increase.

Morning Theory:

- Safety standards and regulations
- Log books and legal liability considerations
- Advanced river features

Field Theory and Practical Sessions:

- River guiding skills

Evening Theory

- More on equipment
- Paddle guiding



RECOMMENDED GEAR:

- Lots of non-cotton under layers in all sorts of weights
- Drysuit or wetsuit and splash or dry top.
- Wetsuit booties or other thermal and protective footwear
- Lifejacket with quick releasable tether
- River helmet
- River knife, whistle, flip line and carabiner, etc.
- Mesh river bag, towel, etc.
- Neoprene "skull cap" and gloves are nice if you get cold easily

NOTE:

You will be a significantly more educated buyer AFTER this course and you can borrow a wetsuit, wetsuit booties, splash top, lifejacket, helmet, and whistle from us if you want.

If you plan to take a BCROA exam right away after this course there are certain items you need to have to be a prepared guide.

If you don't have everything you need and you want to take an exam right away we recommend you call us to discuss your individual needs.



DAY FIVE – SOFT SKILLS

Today we introduce the finer points of what makes a great guide. Having some "tools" in your bag of tricks to help change a simple trip down the river into a world class, life changing experience for your guests is what makes the difference. The majority of the day is spent working on previously introduced skills and more time rowing but today's new topics enter the realm of soft skills:

Morning Theory:

- BCROA exam outline and standards

Field Theory and Practical Sessions:

- River guiding skills

Evening Theory

- Customer care, professionalism, and interpersonal skills
- Commercial food and beverage service

DAY SIX – EQUIPMENT REPAIRS, TRIP PLANNING, AND COURSE REVIEW

The final couple days really focus on refining all the skills to date and spending time on the oars. We do a session on repairing rafting equipment and spend a small amount of time on trip planning.

Morning Theory:

- Trip planning
- Risk management philosophy

Field Theory and Practical Sessions:

- River guiding skills

Evening Theory

- Raft and equipment repair

DAY SEVEN – COURSE WRAP UP

Today is still a full day on the river. The morning session is spent reviewing any lingering questions and the afternoon is spent preparing for the SRT component.

Morning Theory:

- Course review

Field Theory and Practical Sessions:

- River guiding skills

Evening Theory

- SRT preparation

DAY EIGHT, NINE AND TEN – SRT CERTIFICATION

For the three days of SRT certification we are in the hands of Rescue 3 International. The first day of the course is inside during the morning and outside but on dry-land only for the afternoon.

The second and third days are spent in and beside the river developing skills to safely and effectively perform rescues in moving water.

NOTE: Often the locations chosen for the SRT portion of the course are very specific and the SVE bus may not be able to get there. Consequently, we ask students to carpool in their own vehicles for the two field days of the SRT.

Also, lunch is provided but students will be setting it up in the field.



WHY SKEENA VALLEY EXPEDITIONS?

- SVE puts great pride into running all its operations in a high end manner and we treat this guide school no differently than one of our normal trips. All the details are taken care of and you are left with the maximum amount of time for learning opportunities.
- We maintain a low student to instructor ratio of 4:1
- We cater the course to various levels of prior experience and ability. For example, people with more basic boat handling skills will be put in the guide's seat in the more straight forward sections of river while those with more developed skills will be in control during the more challenging sections of river.
- We believe the BCROA exam to be the MINIMUM standard for a river guide in BC and run our guide school at a very high skill level. Students coming out of our program have the opportunity to become some of BC's sharpest river guides.
- Anywhere else in North America, a river like the Copper would have 10 or 15 companies crowding into the Matteson Canyon. Here, not only do we have the place to ourselves, but there are 6 other rivers equally as great that we rarely get to...until now...with the guide school we go to a variety of rivers, each building one upon the last so as to provide variety in students' experience.
- We have developed complete and well thought out lesson plans providing an overall course that flows smoothly through all important topics and presents them in a way that is concise, simple and fun.
- While the SRT course included is technically a regular certification, we work very closely with Rescue 3 International and the course offered here has been tailored specifically to the unique needs of the professional river guide.

THE RIVERS

With some of the largest snowfalls in the world the Terrace area is home to world class runoff. This means a great river running season with limitless options. The put ins are commonly in the upper river valleys where the terrain is open, braided and dwarfed by the majestic Coast Mountains with their towering granite walls and spilling glaciers. Cedar, Hemlock and Cottonwoods grace the forest cover near the rivers and paddling past giant waterfalls and lush, moss covered hillsides is nothing out of the ordinary. Then, on the whitewater trips, the rivers descend into deep canyons carved out of smooth dark and deeply colored bed rock. These canyons keep some of the best whitewater in the world hidden and waiting for those lucky individuals willing to show some adventurous spirit and come exploring in Terrace.

We start on the Kitimat River in its gentle, braided channels with opportunity for numerous eddy catching drills and general rafting skill development. After that we move to the Upper Copper River with its silty, churning waters, medium, splashy rapids, and endless twists and turns along the cobbled banks where Grizzly Bear tracks and Bald Eagles are frequently seen. Then we progress to the Copper River's Mattson Canyon where we enjoy big and glaciated mountain views before descending into the exhilarating and beautifully carved bedrock class 3 / 4 canyon. At some point we will spend the day on the Kitsumkalum River in some large volume water only Terrace can offer and run the canyon so many dub as some of BC's most scenic and spectacular whitewater. We may do a field trip out to the Bulkly River for some more variety in big volume, world class whitewater.

OUR ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENT

Skeena Valley Expeditions is committed to the preservation of wilderness habitats in the Pacific Northwest. Our trips are therefore designed to promote an understanding of this unique region's delicate ecosystems while preserving their natural integrity. We take a low-impact, self-contained, leave-no-traces approach, carrying in what we need and carrying out all garbage and human waste. After enjoying such incredible natural beauty, we want to know that we've left the environment unspoiled for a future generation of explorers.