



# River Guide School

2012

May 19-20& 26-28 (2 weekends) \$325

**Oregon River Experiences <sup>LLC</sup>**

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## **Oregon River Experiences**

O.R.E. is one of the Northwest's oldest and most highly respected outfitters. Founded in 1978, we run 1/2 to 9 day whitewater raft trips on some of the most beautiful and exciting wild rivers in the Northwest, including the Rogue, Owyhee, Lower Salmon, Grande Ronde, Deschutes, John Day, McKenzie, North Umpqua, North Santiam, and Clackamas rivers.

O.R.E.'s participatory raft trips focus on experiential learning and personal involvement. We employ guides who possess the maturity, warmth, integrity, leadership skills, and whitewater boating skills necessary to conduct top-notch river trips.

We will have openings for both full-time and part-time employees in 2012, and we will be hiring graduates of our 2012 guide school (as well as people with prior experience) to fill these positions. Our 2012 guide school will be intended primarily to train guides who will become professional members of our 2012 staff, but students with other interests may be accepted into our program as well on a space available basis.

Full-time guides typically work most weeks of the season. Part-time guides may be scheduled in a variety of ways, including weekends only, 2 weeks on/2 weeks off, 3 days per week, etc. Multi-day trip guides will work mostly our longer trips, but may be asked to fill in on an occasional day trip as well. Similarly, day-trip guides may be scheduled for occasional multi-day trips. Our season runs from early April through mid-October.

The profession of river guiding offers an unsurpassed mix of fun, excitement, camaraderie, fresh air, and challenge, all in pristine outdoor settings. The hours are long and the work is demanding. But river guiding is a great way to spend a summer - or twenty summers!

If you are interested in guiding for us this season and you are an experienced river guide, send us your resume. If you're interested

in guiding but you're new to rafting (or if you have boating experience but have not worked as a guide) consider enrolling in our spring Guide School.

## **O.R.E.'s River Guide School**

For over 30 years O.R.E. has been a leader in teaching river running skills in a safe, supportive, and innovative manner. Our primary purpose is to enable students to develop the skills needed to become professional guides, but the curriculum is also appropriate for those who seek to develop the skills needed to run private trips.

Tuition includes individualized, personable instruction by senior O.R.E. staff (1 instructor for every 4 students); meals; use of lifejackets, wetsuits, paddle jackets, helmets, and drybags; all river permits and camping fees; and complementary copies of the "O.R.E. Guide School Handbook," and "The Complete Whitewater Rafter" by Jeff Bennett. Transportation from O.R.E. headquarters or from the Portland airport to the river is also available at no charge for those lacking transportation of their own.

Guide School graduates will receive a certificate of completion, as well as opportunities for additional postgraduate training at no charge, and assistance in finding work with O.R.E. and with other companies.

### **How to enroll**

To apply for admittance please complete a guide school application form (available online) or contact our office for assistance.

Once accepted for admittance you will be asked to complete an enrollment form, and you will need to submit a \$100 deposit to reserve your space. Tuition balance will be due three weeks prior to your session. We accept credit and debit cards as well as personal checks.

## Itinerary

During the school we'll be rafting two or more of Oregon's best day-trip rivers. (Among those we'll choose from are the Clackamas, North Santiam, Deschutes, McKenzie, and North Umpqua Rivers.) Convenient access points and car-accessible riverside camps allow for considerable program flexibility. As a result we can choose our river and stretch of river in accordance with the needs of our students. In addition, this format allows us to minimize camp set-up and break-down time, which means more time on the river. Also, car-accessible camping allows us to keep our rafts light and maneuverable.

## Curriculum

O.R.E.'s Guide School provides a hands-on experience. Dry land and on-river instruction cover a comprehensive array of skills and topics. Our Instructors begin by explaining the basics and teach by example. The emphasis throughout is on learning by doing, so students will be actively involved in every learning experience, from cooking with a Dutch oven to paddle captaining to river rescue to rowing a gear raft.

Our curriculum includes:

### River Skills

River dynamics: understanding the way rivers flow ("reading water")

Raft setup and rigging

Rowing skills

Paddling skills

Paddle captaining techniques

River safety

Swiftwater rescue techniques

Knot tying

## Off-river and Camp Skills

River ecology and minimum impact camping techniques

Menu planning and camp cooking

Equipment selection, repair and maintenance

## Professional Skills

Trip leadership and group development

Interpretive and instructional skills

Permits, regulations, and guide responsibilities

And more!

## Becoming a Guide

What are the chances you'll be able to find work as a guide after the school ends? At O.R.E. we believe that an individual's personality and social skills are the most important elements in the making of a truly superior river guide. While excellent river skills are indispensable, when we hire guides we look first for people who have a high degree of personal sensitivity and social perception. So if you have strong people skills, if you have a good work ethic, and if you're on the way to developing competency on the river the answer is that your chances at O.R.E. may be good.

Beginners should generally expect to spend between 2 and 4 weeks in post guide school training before graduating to a paid guide position. How long you spend as an assistant guide depends partly on your own skills and also on whether you are training for day trips (a shorter training period in most cases) or multi-days (a longer training period). During this training period assistant guides may still earn pay when driving shuttles, assisting in the shop, or (in some cases) rowing baggage boats on multi-day trips.

O.R.E.'s pay scale is based on seniority, river, and other factors, and runs from \$75 to \$150 per river day (not including tips).

Please note: If you're looking for employment as a river guide you'll need to complete a First Aid and CPR course. Basic First Aid is the minimum requirement. Advanced First Aid or Wilderness First Responder courses are recommended but not required.

## **Preparing for Guide School**

### **Where and When to Meet**

Our program begins with an orientation meeting, starting at 7 PM on Friday, May 20, at O.R.E.'s headquarters in Beaver Creek (near Portland). Please contact our office for directions and further information.

### **What to Bring**

Students will need to bring their own clothing and toiletries as well as most of their own camping equipment. (However, O.R.E. does have tents and sleeping bags for rent. See below for rental information.)

### ***What to wear***

We hope for sunny skies and warm weather during our guide school. But cool, wet weather is a possibility. In addition, we'll encounter cool *water* for sure. So please pay close attention to selecting your clothes and gear. If we're lucky you'll never need much of the cool-weather gear we recommend that you bring. But it is vital that you do bring it, just in case!

### **✓ For cool weather**

O.R.E. will provide each student with a wetsuit and a splash jacket for use during the guide school.

-- Please be sure to complete the height and weight sections of the registration form when you enroll so that we may provide the proper sized wetsuit for you.

-- Our wetsuits and splash jackets are available in sizes to accommodate persons from 5'2" and 100 pounds to 6'4" and 240 pounds. Our wetsuits are a 1/8" thick, one-piece "farmer john" style which fully cover the legs and torso but which leave the arms free. The splash jacket helps to protect your arms from the cold water, and may be worn with a layer of insulation underneath.

-- In mild weather you may not need to don a wetsuit. In cold weather you may need a wetsuit plus additional clothing. In either case, appropriate cold-weather river clothing is clothing that dries quickly, and keeps you warm even when the garment is wet. Modern high-tech synthetic fabrics such as polypropylene, capeline, and polyester fleece do both. (Wool provides warmth when wet, but does not dry quickly and is less comfortable. Wool is often less expensive, however, especially when purchased from Thrift or Military Surplus stores.)

Think in terms of layers of clothing for changeable and cool weather. As conditions change you can add or subtract layers as needed. The first layer in cool weather should be long underwear made of synthetic materials such as polypropylene or capeline, which provide warmth and wick moisture away from your skin. The middle layer(s) should consist of polyester fleece (or wool), and will provide further warmth. The outer layer consists of a rain jacket and rain pants (ponchos are not recommended). Rain gear made of modern waterproof, breathable fabrics such as Gore-tex are best. But for a less expensive option, coated nylon will work, too.

All three of these layers may be worn with or without a wetsuit.

A surprisingly large percentage of heat loss occurs from our heads. For this reason, a wool or synthetic hat will go a long way towards keeping you warm.

✓ For hot weather

Nylon shorts, bathing suits, and cotton T-shirts are recommended, as well as a hat to keep the sun out of your eyes. Long-sleeved cotton shirts and slacks may be worn to keep cool and to ward off sunburn.

Avoid wearing cotton on the river on all but the hottest days. When wet, cotton sucks warmth from your body at an amazing rate. (An exception to the “no cotton” rule: cotton shorts may be worn over a wetsuit to reduce slippage while sitting on a raft.)

✓ On your feet

For footwear while on the river we recommend nylon or canvas athletic shoes, sports sandals such as Tevas or Chacos, or hard soled wetsuit boots (particularly for spring session). Sport sandals are comfortable for rafting, and are preferred by many of our guides. But they're often more expensive to purchase, and do not protect your feet as well as do shoes.

Students will most likely want to wear their O.R.E.-supplied wetsuit boots each day, but you'll need a pair of backup river footwear as well.

✓ For your hands

Learning to row and to paddle can be tough on one's hands. For this reason we recommend you bring a pair of gloves. Bicycling or weight lifting gloves seem to work well for many people.

✓ Off the river

You may want a change of shoes, as well as comfortable clothing for dry land activities. While cotton clothing may be worn on shore in dry weather, you may want to bring a second set of polypropylene and fleece for rainy weather.

*Where to find it*

Most sporting goods stores that cater to outdoor sports (hiking, backpacking, etc.) rather than team sports should have most of the items you need. Gear is also available through mail order and on-line by contacting REI (800-426-4840, or [www.rei.com](http://www.rei.com)), L.L. Bean (800-341-4341, or [www.llbean.com](http://www.llbean.com)), or Northwest River Supply (800-635-5202, or [www.nrsweb.com](http://www.nrsweb.com)) and others.

*Rental equipment*

O.R.E. offers camping equipment for rent to those who do not own or do not wish to transport this gear. High quality, two-person backpacking style tents are available for \$15. Sleep kits (Polar-guard sleeping bag, cotton bag liner, self-inflating sleep pad, and ground cloth) are also available for \$15.

**Equipment Checklist**

✓ River Gear

- \_\_\_\_\_ swimsuit, or shorts and T-shirt (avoid cotton shorts)
- \_\_\_\_\_ tennis shoes, sport sandals, or hard-soled wetsuit boots
- \_\_\_\_\_ wool or synthetic “ski” hat — for cold/rainy days
- \_\_\_\_\_ gloves to prevent blisters (bicycling or weight lifting gloves work well)
- \_\_\_\_\_ wide-brimmed hat (preferably with chin-strap), or cap — for sunny days (wide-brimmed hats do a better job of keeping the sun off, but a baseball cap can be worn beneath the helmets we wear on occasion)

- \_\_\_\_\_ 2 pair warm socks (wool or synthetic, or neoprene)
- \_\_\_\_\_ waterproof rain jacket and rain pants
- \_\_\_\_\_ Polypropylene or Capeline long underwear tops and bottoms (midweight or expedition weight is preferred)
- \_\_\_\_\_ warm sweater or jacket, polyester fleece or wool
- \_\_\_\_\_ water bottle or canteen
- \_\_\_\_\_ waterproof sunscreen (SPF 15 minimum), lip balm
- \_\_\_\_\_ sunglasses, with strap (i.e. “chums” or “croakies”)

✓ Extra river clothing, camp clothing

- \_\_\_\_\_ camp and hiking shoes (or lightweight hiking boots)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1 pair long pants
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1-2 pair shorts
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1-2 long-sleeved shirts
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1-2 short-sleeved shirts
- \_\_\_\_\_ socks and underwear

✓ Camp Gear (Note: the guide school will not camp until 2nd weekend.)

- \_\_\_\_\_ compact, lightweight tent (freestanding is preferred)
- \_\_\_\_\_ compact, medium-weight sleeping bag
- \_\_\_\_\_ compact foam sleeping pad (Thermarest is a popular pad), or air mattress
- \_\_\_\_\_ small tarp (to place beneath your tent, or as a groundcloth for sleeping under the stars)
- \_\_\_\_\_ personal toiletries, including small towel, biodegradable soap, dry-skin lotion, and prescription medicines
- \_\_\_\_\_ small flashlight or headlamp with extra batteries

✓ Optional Items

- \_\_\_\_\_ a second warm sweater or jacket, polyester fleece or wool, and fleece or wool pants (both are recommended)
- \_\_\_\_\_ wool or synthetic gloves — for cold/rainy days
- \_\_\_\_\_ binoculars
- \_\_\_\_\_ camera and film
- \_\_\_\_\_ reading material
- \_\_\_\_\_ pen and journal or notebook

- \_\_\_\_\_ compact fishing gear
- \_\_\_\_\_ spare glasses, sunglasses
- \_\_\_\_\_ small daypack, ammo box, or small dry bag
- \_\_\_\_\_ soft drinks or beer (up to 2 six-packs per person), wine or liquor — all in unbreakable containers. (We provide coffee, tea, and juice; also wine with some dinners). Please note: Consumption of alcohol is prohibited during the day — but is okay once we arrive in camp (for those of age, of course).

Please do not bring: pets, guns, valuable jewelry or radios (personal mp3 and simiar players are okay).

**Recommended Reading**

The O.R.E. Guide School Handbook, and The Complete Whitewater Rafter will be provided to all students. We also recommend:

*For a detailed introduction to river rescue and safety:*

Whitewater Rescue Manual, by Charles Walbridge and Wayne Sundmacher. (1995).

River Rescue, Slim Ray and Les Bechdel. (1997).

*Also worth a look, if you can find a copy:*

What the River Says by Jeff Wallach. (1996. Out of print). Stories of life on the river from a guide’s perspective.

**For Additional Information**

If you have any questions about our Guide School or about working as a river guide please feel free to contact us. We can be reached by phone, mail, e-mail or fax.