



River Kayak Fishing

Instructor Endorsement Criteria

Course Overview: The **River Kayak Fishing** endorsement course is designed to enable ACA Level 2: Essentials of River Kayaking instructors (or higher) to teach beginner paddlers to safely and enjoyably kayak fish on gentle rivers.

Essential Eligibility Criteria (EEC):

ACA courses are open to all individuals who acknowledge the ability to perform the following essential eligibility criteria.

1. Breathe independently (i.e., not require medical devices to sustain breathing)
2. Independently maintain sealed airway passages while under water
3. Independently hold head upright without neck / head support
4. Manage personal care independently or with assistance of a companion
5. Manage personal mobility independently or with a reasonable amount of assistance
6. Follow instructions and effectively communicate independently or with assistance of a companion
7. Independently turn from face-down to face-up and remain floating face up while wearing a properly fitted life jacket*
8. Get on / off or in / out of a paddlecraft independently or with a reasonable amount of assistance*
9. Independently get out and from under a capsized paddlecraft*
10. Remount or reenter the paddlecraft following deep water capsize independently or with a reasonable amount of assistance*
11. Maintain a safe body position while attempting skills, activities and rescues listed in the appropriate Course Outline, and have the ability to recognize and identify to others when such efforts would be unsafe given your personal situation*

** To participate in adaptive programs, participants must acknowledge only the first six EEC listed above. Entry-level adaptive programs will involve teaching and practicing EEC #7-11.*

Course Prerequisites: None

Instructors: ACA Level 2: Essentials of River Kayaking Instructors (or higher) or ACA Level 2: Essentials of Sit-On-Top River Kayaking Instructors.



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Course Duration: 2 days (16 hours)

Course Location / Venue: Flat water and moving water through class I whitewater

Class Ratio - 5 students: 1 Instructor; with an additional instructor or qualified assistant the ratio can be 10 : 2

Succeeding courses:

Level 3: River Kayaking

Level 4: Whitewater Kayaking

Level 5: Advanced Whitewater Kayaking

The following is a general summary of course content for the **River Kayak Fishing Endorsement** course. The content covered and sequence of instruction should be adjusted to best fit the participant's needs, class location and time allowance.

Course Content

Introduction, Expectations, & Logistics:

- Welcome, introductions, paperwork
- Student & instructor course expectations and limitations
- Course itinerary & site logistics
- Review waiver, assumption of risk, challenge by choice, medical disclosure
- About the ACA
- PFD policy (always wear on water)
- Appropriate personal behavior
- No alcohol / substance abuse
- Proper etiquette on & off the water
- Respect private property
- Practice Leave No Trace ethics

The Paddling Environment:

- Wind
- Waves
- Weather
- Water

Personal Preparation:

- Personal ability
- Swimming ability

- Water comfort & confidence
- Fitness, conditioning, and warm up
- Safe paddle and boat handling
- Safety and rescue considerations
- Personal equipment (reviewed by Instructor)
- Judgment. In addition to learning hard skills, the importance of developing personal judgment and group responsibility increases on more difficult paddling venues.
- Selecting appropriate locations, route, and equipment, shuttling, assessing group and individual paddling capabilities, lead and sweep concept leader's responsibilities, permits, use fees, reservations, registered guides or licensed trip leaders and other state requirements
- Fishing licenses & launch permits when needed

Getting Started:

- Warm-up and stretching
- How to pick up a kayak safely



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- Car topping: loading and unloading, racks, straps
- Launching and landing
- Boarding, three points of contact, weight kept low, etc
- Posture, safety, comfort, effectiveness, rocking, balance
- Water comfort and confidence
 - Wet exits
- How to empty a kayak
- Basic Terminology
- Types of strokes (covered in this course): power, turning
- Safe and effective body usage

Equipment:

- Life Jackets (PFDs): types, fit
- Fishing Kayaks: types, materials, parts
- Paddles: types, materials, parts, length, blade size & shape, hand position (both bent and straight shaft)
- Gear: portage packs, dry bags, gear bags
- Safety equipment: First aid kit, tow rope, throw bag, thigh straps
- Personal equipment: water, food, shoes, hat, sunscreen, bug repellent, sun glasses, eyeglass straps, protective clothing for heat or cold, sponge, bailer/pump, whistle, knife, light
- Optional equipment and outfitting
- Care of equipment

Fishing Gear Organization & Loading

- Managing multiple fishing rods
- Managing tackle, tools and loops (reducing entanglement potential)
- Loading gear bags

- Securing gear, balancing, trim and weight (minimize)

Fishing Skills

- Forage Assessment
- Cover & Structure
- Seasonal Habits/Patterns
- Common Lure Presentations/tackle set ups (live bait or lures depending on fishery & target species)
- Basic knots for attaching leaders/lures

Achieving Fishing Related Tasks While on Water

- Accessing gear & tackle in rear tank well
- Don't open hatches that effect hull integrity while on the water
- Landing fish safely; nets, grips, by hand
 - Fight big fish over the bow of the boat
 - Keep weight centered
 - Rod's length of line
 - Use your reach/net

River Reading:

- Current speed, direction and changes caused by stream bed features

River Hazards:

- Strainers
- Sweepers
- Foot Entrapments: Safe Swimmer Position
- Undercuts
- Hydraulics

Safety & Rescue:

- Exercising judgment, safety as a state of mind.
- Principles of Rescue



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- Priorities: first people, then boats, finally other gear
- Responsibilities of the victim
- Responsibilities of the rescuers
- Responsibilities of the group
- Types of Rescue
 - Self Rescue
 - Boat assisted rescue, towing or bulldozing a tired swimmer, towing or bulldozing a capsized boat
 - Shoreline Rescue: Extension rescues, use of throw ropes/bags
- Wedge
- Feet on Ground & Heel Hook
- Drifting (point boat upriver or downriver to slow drift)
 - Keep head on a swivel
- Drifting & Dragging Presentations
- “Pry Technique” when fish pulls you toward cover
- **Anchoring kayaks in a river environment is beyond the scope of the River Kayak Fishing Endorsement course therefore is not recommended.**

Maneuvers:

- J-lean / Heeling the boat
- Paddling in a reasonably straight line.
- Spins
- Stopping
- Ferries
- Eddy Turns
- Peel Outs
- Moving Abeam

Strokes:

- Forward
- Back (stopping)
- Draw
- Sculling draw
- Sweep (including Stern Draw)
- Reverse Sweep
- Rudder
- Low / High Brace

Positioning for Fishing:

- Paddle on lap (at the ready)
- One handed paddling (it’s your trolling motor)
- Eddy Out

Conservation:

- Value of Catch & Release or “Selective Harvest” (based on water)
- “Hero Shot” Procedures

Conclusion & Wrap Up:

- Group debrief / Individual feedback
- Course limitations
- Importance of First Aid & CPR
- Importance of additional instruction, practice, experience
- Importance of appropriate level of safety & rescue training
- Demo advanced maneuvers
- Life sport / Paddling options
- Local paddling groups / Clubs
- Handouts / Reference materials
- ACA Membership forms
- Course evaluation
- Participation cards



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