



Urban Wilderness Canoe Adventures (UWCA)

B'dote Field Trip

Route: Hidden Falls Park to Fort Snelling State Park

Suggested Grade Level: 7th

Timeframe: 4½ hours

Distance: Approximately 5.25 mi.

Trip theme: The confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers is a place where Dakota and Euro-American cultures came together and interacted with nature and each other in both positive and negative ways.

Key Learning Objectives:

The student will observe and describe examples of how the two rivers and two cultures have interacted over time and the importance of the rivers to the history of interactions between Euro-American cultures and Dakota Indian people in the fur trade and early white settlement periods.

The student will observe and describe examples of multiple perspectives in art, writing, historical sources, and cultural beliefs, with special focus on the different cultural perspectives on relationships between people and nature and between people.

Overview of Field Experience:

Students will canoe 2 miles down the Mississippi River to the tip of Pike Island. There, the group will observe the turbid waters of the Minnesota River mixing with the cleaner waters of the Mississippi. They will disembark for a brief program on the beach at the tip of the island, where they learn both the Dakota word for confluence, b'dote and the importance of this b'dote in Dakota tradition and Minnesota history. The students will then return to the canoes and paddle an additional 1.75 miles to Picnic Island for a lunch and restroom break.

After lunch, the groups will paddle about .5 mile to the old steamboat landing below the restored 1820s Fort Snelling. There, the students will be divided into smaller groups to circulate between four different stops, spending about 20 minutes—including travel time—at each site. Boat captains will direct the groups to the appropriate site.



Minnesota Academic Standards

The field trip and supporting materials will address or enable classroom involvement with the following Minnesota Department of Education standards.

Minnesota History

- IIA-1 (Evidence of indigenous cultures in Minnesota)
- IIA-2 (History of Dakota and Ojibwe culture, role of oral history)
- IIB-1 (Early explorers and fur traders)
- IIB-2 (Economic and cultural impact of fur trade, Fort Snelling)
- IIC-1 (Impact of early settlers on political, cultural, and physical landscape)
- IIC-2 (How Minnesota became a territory and state)
- IIC-3 (History and impact of major treaties)
- IID-3 (Perspectives, causes and effects of the Dakota War of 1862)

Historical Skills

- IV-B (Using primary and secondary sources, drawing conclusions based on evidence.)

Science

- 5.1.3.2.1 (Minnesota American Indian tribes and communities have been involved in engineering design and scientific inquiry)
- 7.1.1.1 (Science is a way of knowing about the natural world and is characterized by empirical criteria, logical argument and skeptical review)
- 7.4.2.1 (Natural systems include a variety of organisms that interact with one another)
- 8.1.1.2.1 (Scientific inquiry is a set of interrelated processes incorporating multiple approaches... Use logical reasoning and imagination ...)

Geography

- V-D Interconnections (Humans influence the environment and are in turn influenced by it. And several others related to land use, technology, patterns of settlement, etc.)

Recommended Classroom Activities

Journaling Project

Students will make a journal in class before the trip. On the front cover, they will create a collage of their impressions of river nature or what they expect to see on the trip. Collage materials will be supplied by UWCA. The journals will then be used to take notes about their experiences on the trip. Students will be asked to answer the following open-ended question related their river impressions/experiences:

7th Grade B'dote: How does your cultural perspective shape how you relate to nature and to other people?

The students will write their responses in their journals before the trip. Bring journals and supplies along on the trip so that students may write notes or draw pictures. They may finish their writing in a trip follow-up session in class. The intent of this journaling exercise is to allow students to “Live Inside the Questions”, and to analyze what they have learned.



In a follow-up class session, students will complete the back covers of their journals by doing another collage of their post-trip impression. Students may use the materials provided by the UWCA or draw their own images.

Pre-trip Classroom Activities

See <http://www.nps.gov/miss/forteachers/> or other related websites as noted below.

- The historical and cultural interactions between Dakota people and the outsiders who eventually took their lands and exiled them from Minnesota have been documented in many places, but usually from a white perspective. A new website sponsored by the Minnesota Humanities Commission provides a rich collection of Dakota voices and perspective on this interaction.
<http://www.bdotememorymap.org>
- Contrast this with the more traditional white perspective on this history at this Minnesota Historical Society website:
<http://discussions.mnhs.org/collections/2008/01/picturing-fort-snelling/>
- Northern Lights (first edition text) activities can be conducted from the books provided by the MPS. Additional resources are available at the Minnesota Historical Society site supporting the current edition
<http://content.mnhs.org/education/north-lights/>. Closely related to the trip's theme is "Chapter Five: Winter Count." Compare the two sources describing the 1822 strike of a giant meteor at the confluence, a letter by Colonel Snelling and "A Winter Count," by Swift Dog. Make your own winter count. Evaluate the role of oral tradition with connections to on-line accounts.

Post-trip Classroom Activities

This field trip presents many opportunities for students to connect to the goals of the Arts for Academic Achievement Program. Because of the complex questions of cultural perspective, justice, and relationships raised by this history, art in various media allows students to spend more time "Living Inside the Questions."

Journal writing and poetry: This may be both accounts of their trip experience, but also reflective upon the history and the issues that it raises. A key question to consider: How does your cultural perspective shape how you relate to nature and to other people? Follow up questions can include: Why did Dakota people value the confluence area? Why did the United States Army find this place important? What differences do you notice in how Dakota people speak about this place and their relationship to this history compared to non-Dakota people?

Map/ Painting comparisons: The extensive documentation of this area provides a wealth of material to compare, contrast, and analyze for evidence of the changes that took place over time. Contrast the presence of the Dakota people in many of the early paintings with the photographs of prisoners from 1862. Note the changes in the landscape over time, including the dredging of a new route for the Minnesota River and cutting of most trees in the area for firewood. Many images and maps are available at



the following site: <http://www.mnhs.org/places/sites/hfs/history.html>

Painting your perspective: After examining other images of the confluence area, students can paint or draw their own image depicting either what they think it looked like in the past, what they think it looks like now, or what they can imagine it looking like in the future.

Detailed Route Description and Trip Activities

Start: The trip will convene at the Hidden Falls. Safety, canoeing, and activity orientation will be provided by Wilderness Inquiry. Emphasis will be placed on the trip as a “Leave No Trace” experience. Boat assignments will also be made at this time. Boat captains (sterners) or pod leaders (lead groups of 3 canoes) will provide introduction to route activities, including understanding the river confluence area. We will also look at a map and discuss geological time and waterfall recession. The students will be asked to imagine themselves as earlier peoples, such as Dakota or Ojibwe Indians travelling this same route. What might these people think of what they saw?

After this discussion, the groups will look at a map of the route to understand how the rivers come together around Pike Island, and why Fort Snelling and the American Fur Company headquarters were located in the area. Historic images and maps can be used to illustrate the significance of these places. The concept of a b'dote will be introduced, and students will start thinking about this as a place where there is confluence of both rivers and cultures.

Once on the river, we'll pass Fort Snelling on the bluff to the right. We'll note how this location would give the U.S. Military control of the confluence area. The group will stop for a brief time at the tip of Pike Island to hear about the Dakota oral tradition of the confluence as a center of the earth and place of creation. We will discuss the evidence of these beliefs from both oral tradition and the archaeological record of people who have lived in the area for thousands of years. Mention will be made of Zebulon Pike and the Pike treaty of 1805.

Lunch: We will break for lunch at Picnic Island, where restrooms will be available. Following lunch, we will pick up any litter and waste, and then gather by boat or pod to review what students found on first section of the trip. Some time will also be spent showing artifacts related to the fur trade, and images of the Mendota area at this time. We will then introduce students to the upcoming land-based activities.

After the debriefing, the groups return to their canoes to paddle from Picnic Island to the historic steamboat landing on the point below the historic fort. We will work together to move the canoes and gear off the river. Four groups will be formed (keeping together with their stern leaders in the four larger groups), and rotated on an assigned sequence to visit four different land stops.



Mississippi National River
and Recreation Area



Wilderness
Inquiry

The following four sites will be visited in small groups after the lunch break:

1. The Thomas Savage Visitor Center.
2. The Dakota Memorial at the location of the 1862 prison camp.
3. A tipi setting for a Dakota presenter (possibly with an associated three sisters' garden).
4. A Fort Snelling soldier at the landing road.

Finish: The groups return to the landing to share final reflections on the day's paddling and what we've experienced. What will we remember about this river? Why should we care about it? What did we learn about ourselves?

Additional Classroom Activities and Learning Resources

The general story of Dakota/White interactions in Minnesota is recorded in many books and can be considered in the context of treaties and state history as developed in the current *Northern Lights* curriculum and other materials. In addition to this core story, the related stories of the fur trade and river transportation is developed in two additional activities from the *Northern Lights*, First Edition:

- Chapter Seven: "Autobiography of a Canoe" (connects the technology of the canoe to the native inventors and its role in the fur trade.)
- Chapter Eight: "Getting to the Land" (Follow the map of the Zebulon Pike's expedition as you learn how he, and later settlers, used the river systems for transportation.)

Two Twin Cities Public Television Video productions are closely connected:

1. Seth Eastman <http://www.pbs.org/ktca/setheastman/>
2. Dakota Exile <http://www.tpt.org/archive/dakota/>

An interesting account of the archaeological work at Mendota is found at the following site: <http://www.fromsitetostory.org/tcm/21dk0031mendota/21dk0031.mendota.asp>