



### **South Fork of The American River Trip**

Thank you for choosing to raft with ETC this season. We are excited to have you join us to experience the beauty of the South Fork of the American River, and the excitement, challenge, and connection to nature that comes with whitewater rafting. This is a memorable adventure, perfect for both novice paddlers and experienced river runners alike.

### **Environmental Traveling Companions**

Environmental Traveling Companions (ETC) has been providing outdoor adventure opportunities to people of all abilities and backgrounds since 1972. Beginning on the banks of the Stanislaus River, ETC began using volunteers to take people with disabilities and youth from under-resourced backgrounds on whitewater rafting trips. Decades later the organization has grown to include four main programs: whitewater rafting, sea kayaking, cross country skiing, and youth leadership development courses and is recognized as a pioneer in the industry of accessible outdoor adventure. With this growth, ETC has still maintained a strong community, where most trips are staffed by volunteer guides and participants are fully engaged in all aspect of the adventure. An ETC adventure is a unique opportunity to experience nature, achieve growth through challenge, and develop stronger bonds with fellow adventurers.

### **Trip Overview**

The rafting portion of your trip will begin at our River Camp at 10:00AM, regardless of whether your group arrived the evening before or the day of the trip. We'll start with an opening circle, giving the Guides an opportunity to meet your group and orient them to the plan for the day. Next we'll prepare for our trip, which includes vehicle shuttles, instructions on safety and paddling, and accommodation of any special needs. Then we'll get on the water for a day of rafting!

Our day of rafting will include approximately 12 miles on the Lower Gorge Section of the South Fork American River. This stretch starts with mellower Class II whitewater, and then builds to exciting Class III whitewater in the afternoon for fun waves and rapids. Depending on the timing of your trip, the special needs of the group, and water flow, we'll either eat lunch at the ETC River Camp or at a scenic riverside location. Our day of rafting will conclude at about 5:00PM, when we'll either end our trip with a closing circle or head back to camp for a night of camping and possibly another day of rafting.

If your group has signed up for a second day of rafting, we'll spend the night in camp then wake up the next morning ready for another great day of whitewater. We'll have breakfast in camp, then drive approximately 30 minutes to the put in for the Chili Bar Section of the South Fork of the American River. After a paddle and safety refresher, we'll get on the river! This stretch is filled with exciting Class III rapids like Racehorse Bend and First Threat. We'll break for lunch at a riverside location. After lunch, we'll finish the day with calmer whitewater as we raft to the ETC River Camp to get off the water around 3:00PM. We'll then either end the trip with a closing circle, or share one more night of camping at the ETC River Camp.

### **Transportation**

All groups are responsible for their own transportation to and from the ETC River Camp in Lotus, CA. Additionally, groups are responsible for shuttling their participants for the day(s) of rafting. This includes driving participants from the take-out location back to the ETC River Camp on the first day of rafting, and driving the participants to the put-in location on the second day of rafting.

It is possible to have ETC arrange for shuttle transportation for your trip. There is an additional fee for this service. Please contact the River Program Manager if you are interested in this option.

### **Trip Location**

The trip will begin at the ETC River Camp located at 6700 Highway 49 in Lotus, California (driving directions enclosed in this packet).

### **Overnight Accommodations**

If you have booked an overnight trip, you will be camping at our riverfront property on the South Fork American River. Our camp is complete with a full outdoor kitchen, accessible bathrooms (showers are only available to accommodate special needs), a river house for relaxing and group activities, and a campfire circle. Your group will camp in established campsites on our property, and can often sleep under the stars (tents are recommended for trips scheduled before mid-June).

### **Guides**

ETC has volunteer and paid staff Guides who are highly experienced and trained in whitewater rafting, first aid/CPR, Swiftwater Rescue and working with people of all abilities and backgrounds. All Guides are enthusiastic, caring, and responsible individuals who give generously because they enjoy sharing outdoor adventure and beautiful place with diverse groups.

### **Group Involvement**

ETC trips are designed to complement each group's unique culture and standards of behavior. Our Guides try to adapt every trip to each group's needs as much as possible. That said, we have several expectations of all groups. First, ETC trips are cooperative adventures and we ask groups fully participate in all aspects including trip activities (hikes, games, etc.), equipment movement and clean up, and group circles. Secondly, Guides will share trip ground rules and we ask that all group members respectfully follow all instructions to maintain a safe trip and inclusive community.

### **Agency Staff Responsibility**

ETC Guides are experienced in facilitating rafting trips and working with people of all backgrounds and abilities. We expect the staff accompanying a group on an ETC trip to be responsible for discipline and personal care issues that arise on trips. We emphasize group participation on every trip and ask staff members to lead by example to ensure all members of your group are engaged in all aspects of the adventure.

### **Special Needs Accommodations**

ETC is committed to making outdoor adventure accessible to people with special needs and our Guides are experienced in making adaptations for a wide range of physical and cognitive abilities. In order for us to be prepared for your group, we ask that each group complete the "**Special Needs Trip Roster**" no later than one week prior to your trips and discuss all special needs with the River Program Manager.

## Equipment

ETC provides all whitewater rafting specific gear, including rafts, lifejackets, paddles, and first-aid and safety. Additionally, ETC provides all kitchen equipment for food preparation. ETC does not provide personal equipment, and thus there is an enclosed "Equipment List" outlining what each person should bring with them. Additionally, ETC does not provide overnight equipment including sleeping bags, sleeping pads, or tents. While the weather is typically favorable for camping under the stars, we recommend groups with trips scheduled earlier than mid-June have tents in the event of rain or cold weather. If you have questions about equipment please contact the River Program Manager

\*Our Coast Guard approved lifejackets can accommodate persons with a max chest size of 58". If your group will have someone that exceeds this limit, please discuss this with the River Program Manager no later than one week prior to your trip.

## Water Flow

Water flows in the South Fork American River result from releases from hydroelectric facilities located upstream. Such water releases are not subject to the control of El Dorado County or commercial rafting companies operating under Permits from the County of El Dorado. ETC has scheduled your trip when we believe water flows will be favorable for rafting. However, ETC may have to change trip plans or cancel trips based unforeseen fluctuation in water flows.

## Food

To keep trips affordable, ETC does not typically provide food. For overnight trips, we ask groups provide food for themselves as well as approximately five Guides. We have provided menu suggestions in a separate document, though if you have any questions please contact the River Program Manager. If you would like ETC to provide food for your trip, please contact the River Program Manager.

## Trip Forms

Each person participating in the trip, including staff, is required to complete two forms: a health form and a liability release. The forms are included in this packet.

- Both forms must also be signed by the participant or the participant's parent or legal guardian if he or she is under the age of 18.
- Please bring these forms with your group to the ETC River Camp on the day of your trip. Do not return them to the ETC office in advance of your trip.
- Separate forms are required for each participant. Participants in the same family or household cannot use the same forms.
- Please ensure forms are completed using blue or black ink.
- It is very important that both forms are filled out completely. Please ensure no fields are left blank unless the question does not apply. Participants will only be allowed to participate if they have forms that are completely filled out
- Spanish versions and accessible type-friendly PDF versions of these forms are available upon request.

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## TRIP PLANNING CHECKLIST

### PRE-TRIP CHECKLIST:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Deposit paid (within two weeks of booking trip)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Transportation arranged
- \_\_\_\_\_ Food/Meals arranged
- \_\_\_\_\_ Distribute Equipment List, Health Form, and Liability Release to each participants.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Contact ETC no less than 7 days prior to trip to confirm group size and trip plans
- \_\_\_\_\_ Final Balance submitted no less than 7 days prior to trip
- \_\_\_\_\_ Complete & submit the "Special Needs Trip Roster" no less than 7 days prior to trip
- \_\_\_\_\_ Health & Liability Release Forms signed for each participant and staff

For more information, please contact the River Program Manager at 530 642 8189 or [riverprogram@etctrips.org](mailto:riverprogram@etctrips.org)



### **For All Activities**

- Be able to manage all personal care and mobility independently or with the assistance of a friend, family member, or attendant (see Personal Care Attendant Policy below)
- Be able to breathe independently, not require medical devices to sustain breathing
- Perceive, understand and respond to commands given by a guide independently or with the assistance of an interpreter
- Be able to effectively signal or notify guides or other trip participants of personal distress, injury or need for assistance
- If taking prescription medications, be able to maintain proper dosage by medicating independently or with the assistance of a personal care attendant or staff member
- Be prepared to participate in physically strenuous activities that may require physical ability beyond what many people are accustomed to in their day-to-day lives
- For overnight trips, be able to move about the campsite or building independently or with the assistance of a companion, on trips that include overnight camping
- Be able to remain adequately hydrated, fed, and properly dressed so as to remain generally healthy and be able to avoid environmental injuries such as hypothermia, heat-related illness, sunburn and frostbite
- Be able to wear all safety equipment correctly such as, but not limited to, helmet, spray skirts, or personal flotation device
- Be comfortable traveling in remote settings where access to advanced medical care may be significantly delayed

### **For Whitewater Rafting Trips**

- Minimum Age: 10 years old
- Minimum Weight: 60 pounds
- Independently turn from face down to face up and remain floating face up while wearing a properly fitted personal flotation device (life jacket)
- Remain seated and balanced in a floating raft with the use of adaptive equipment, if necessary. Adaptive equipment cannot impede or lessen the effectiveness of the safety procedures or equipment. No one may be strapped or belted into a watercraft.
- Be able to spend extended time in outdoor environments, where the air temperature can exceed 100 degrees F and the water temperature may be below 55 degrees F. During the trip there may also be exposure to wind, precipitation, uninterrupted sun.



ETC guides are trained in making our adventures adaptive, (including assisting with transfers in and out of kayaks and rafts and getting around camp), but they are not trained personal care attendants. Many participants with disabilities find that they need more support in the less familiar environments of our trips than they do at home.

ETC's overnight trips are usually camping trips, and some only have portable toilets and buckets for washing that are set up each night (i.e., no running water). ETC provides tents and cots for those who need them. You will need to be able to get into your tent and on and off either a cot or the ground on your own. Also, you will also need to be able to do your own toileting, washing, and dressing.

If you think that you will need assistance with any of the following: toileting, eating, taking medicines, dressing, and getting in/out of bed, ETC asks that you bring a personal care attendant with you. ETC does not want the additional cost of bringing an attendant to hinder you from being able to take part in our trips, so we offer scholarships and special pricing for attendants.



We look forward to sharing an ETC adventure with your group. Below is a list of Terms and Conditions for your trip booking:

### **Reservations and Cancellations**

- A deposit for 50% of the total trip cost is required 2 weeks after the booking date to secure the reservation.
- Cancellations made 90 days or more prior to the trip date will receive a full refund.
- Cancellations made 60-89 days prior to the trip will receive a credit for the deposit amount which can be applied to any ETC trip within one year of the original trip date.
- Cancellations made 59 days or less prior to the trip date are not refundable unless special accommodations are made in advance with the ETC Office.
- **The trip balance is due no later than 7 days prior to the trip date.**

### **Trip Numbers and Cancellations**

- A minimum of 10 people is required for any trip. If your group does not meet the trip minimum, you will still be charged for 10 people.
- If the number of participants increases less than 7 days prior to the trip, this must first be approved by the appropriate ETC Program Manager and the group will then be charged for the added participants.
- If the number of participants drops less than 7 days prior to the trip, the group will still be charged for those spaces and no refund will be issued.
- ETC reserves the right to cancel the trip due to weather conditions, tide/current conditions, water level, or for other unforeseen reasons. If ETC cancels the trip, the trip payment will be refunded in full.

### **Transportation**

- ETC does not provide transportation to or from the program location.
- Transportation during whitewater rafting trips can be arranged at an additional fee.

### **Medical**

All participants must complete a Health Form, which must be signed by the participant or the participant's parent or guardian if he or she is under the age of 18. ETC works to accommodate people with special needs, though we reserve the right to exclude or remove someone from a trip at any time if doing so is related to the safety of the trip. Participants or agency staff will be responsible for the administration of any medications they may take regularly. ETC Guides are never to be responsible for the administration of a prescription medication.

### **Liability**

Due to the nature of the activity, a condition of participation is the completion of a Liability Release acknowledging the inherent risks of the trip activities. This form must be signed by the participant or the participant's parent or guardian if he or she is under the age of 18. Participants who refuse to sign the liability release will not be allowed to participate.

**Payment of your trip deposit indicates that you agree to the above Terms and Conditions.**