



# Tomales Bay Bioluminescence Paddle



## **Tomales Bay Bioluminescence Trip**

Paddling on Tomales Bay at night is a special treat, only made better by the abundant bioluminescent plankton in the water. These plankton emit a small burst of light when agitated, meaning that each paddle stroke, swimming fish, or excited harbor seal makes a remarkable streak in the water. It's an incredible sight to behold! During your trip you will first learn the basics of kayaking, then explore Tomales Bay under the cover of darkness. This trip is great for novice to advanced paddlers of varying abilities and backgrounds.

## **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 three main programs: whitewater rafting, sea kayaking, and youth leadership development courses. ETC is recognized as a pioneer in the industry of accessible outdoor adventure and a leader in its field. Most trips are still staffed by volunteer guides, and participants are fully engaged in all aspects 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 trip will begin with an opening circle, giving guides an opportunity to meet your group and orient them to the plan for the evening. Next, the guides will instruct your group on paddling and safety, including any adaptive techniques or equipment, before getting on the water. We'll paddle along the shoreline, exploring Tomales Bay at night and taking in the beautiful bioluminescence. Once we are done paddling, together as a team we'll put the kayaks and equipment away before finishing our trip with a closing circle.

## **Trip Location**

The trip will begin and end at Heart's Desire Beach in Tomales Bay State Park near Inverness, CA. Please see driving directions enclosed in this packet.

## **Guides**

ETC uses primarily volunteer and some paid guides who are highly experienced and trained in sea kayak guiding, First Aid and CPR, and working with people of all abilities and backgrounds. Our guides are enthusiastic, caring, and responsible individuals who give generously because they enjoy sharing these adventures with diverse groups.

## **Group Involvement**

ETC trips are designed to complement each group's unique culture and goals. 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 participants to fully participate in all aspects including trip activities (hikes, games, etc.), equipment setup and cleanup, and meal preparation. 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.

## **Special 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 complete an ETC Roster no later than one week prior to your trips and discuss your group's specific needs with the Sea Kayak Program Manager.

Due to the size limitations of our kayaks, people over 250 lbs or who cannot fit comfortably into kayak seat areas with the dimensions of 35" long x 18.75" wide could be put at risk should the kayak capsize. If you are concerned about a member of your group comfortably or safely fitting inside our kayaks, please discuss this with the Sea Kayak Program Manager no later than one week prior to your trip. Unfortunately, due to the limitations of our insurance coverage, we cannot serve participants younger than 10 years old.

## **Equipment**

ETC provides all sea kayak specific equipment, including kayaks, personal floatation devices (PFDs), spray skirts, paddling jackets, paddles, and safety equipment. ETC does not provide personal equipment, and thus there is an enclosed "Equipment List" outlining what each person should bring with them on the day of the trip. For overnight trips, ETC does not provide sleeping bags, though these can be rented from a number of outdoor gear stores. We understand that outdoor equipment is expensive and do not ask individuals to purchase special items for their trip (many people already own clothing that is appropriate for sea kayaking). If you have questions about equipment please contact the Sea Kayak 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. Both forms must also be signed by the participant or the participant's parent or legal guardian if they are under the age of 18. Both forms are enclosed in this packet. Before signing the forms, participants should review ETC's Essential Eligibility Criteria for Participation and ETC's Personal Care Attendant Policy. These are also included in this packet.



## **Sea Kayak Program**

### **Essential Eligibility Criteria for Participation in ETC Trips**

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#### **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 Sea Kayaking Trips**

- Independently turn from face down to face up and remain floating face up while wearing a properly fitted personal flotation device (life jacket);
- Independently exit a capsized vessel and cooperate with an assisted rescue facilitated by an ETC Guide.
- Be able to comfortably sit in a sea kayak, which has a typical weight capacity of about 250 pounds per person.
- Be able to spend extended time in outdoor environments, where there may be exposure to wind, precipitation, and uninterrupted sun, and the water temperature may be below 55 degrees F.



## **Sea Kayak Program Personal Care Attendant Policy**

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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.



## **Sea Kayak Program Terms and Conditions**

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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 (12 for Angel Island Overnight Trips). If your group does not meet the trip minimum, you will still be charged for 10 (or 12) 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 they are under the age of 18. ETC works to accommodate people with special needs, though we reserve the right to exclude or remove anyone 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.**



## Sea Kayak Program Tomales Bay Bioluminescence Trip Equipment List

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### **Paddling Attire:**

- Pants or shorts (synthetic material is best)
- T-shirt or long sleeve shirt (synthetic material is best)
- Wool or fleece sweaters
- Shoes that can get wet and will stay on feet (old tennis shoes, sport sandals, wetsuit booties)
- Baseball cap or visor
- Sunglasses (with retention strap)

### **Other Personal Items:**

- Sunscreen
- Bright headlamp or flashlight (needed on land and for emergency use while on the water)
- Lip balm with sun protection (SPF)
- Reusable water bottle with secure lid
- **Personal medications (epi pen, inhaler, etc.)**

### **Optional Accessories:**

- Camera
- Binoculars

### **Items Not to Bring:**

- Electronics (including cell phones)
- Expensive watches and jewelry

*Weather on Tomales Bay is highly variable. Please be prepared for both warm and cold weather.*

## **Tomales Bay Sea Kayak Program Driving Directions**

*Do not solely use GPS navigation, as it is often unreliable for this area and coverage is limited.*

### **FROM HWY 101 IN NOVATO OR HWY 37**

Driving Time: From 101 it is approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes

- Take the South Novato Blvd exit onto South Novato Blvd. and continue on Novato Blvd. for approximately twenty minutes.
- You will go through the town of Novato and eventually end up in a rural area, passing Stafford Lake. The road will dead end a few miles after at Point Reyes/ Petaluma Rd.
- Turn left onto Point Reyes/Petaluma Road. Continue on this road until you reach a stop sign at Platform Bridge Road.
- Turn right (remaining on Point Reyes/ Petaluma Road) and follow until it ends at Hwy 1.
- Turn left and continue on Hwy 1 through the town of Point Reyes Station.
- After crossing the small bridge out of town, turn right onto Sir Francis Drake Blvd.
- See \* below for remaining steps

### **FROM HWY 101 IN PETALUMA**

Driving Time: From 101 it is approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes

- Take the Petaluma Blvd North Exit and stay on Petaluma Blvd North through town to D street.
- Turn right on D Street. D Street will eventually turn into Point Reyes/ Petaluma Rd and continue on this road until you reach a stop sign at Platform Bridge Road
- Turn right at the bridge to stay on Point Reyes/Petaluma Road and continue until it ends at Hwy 1.
- Turn left on Highway 1 and continue through the town of Point Reyes Station.
- After crossing the small bridge out of town, turn right onto Sir Francis Drake Blvd.
- See \* below for remaining steps

### **FROM SAN FRANCISCO ON HWY 101 NORTH OR HWY 580 (SAN RAFAEL BRIDGE)**

Driving Time: From Hwy 101 or the West end of the San Rafael Bridge it is approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes.

- Take the Sir Francis Drake Blvd/San Anselmo exit and drive approximately 21.5 miles through a series of towns and Samuel P. Taylor state park until the road comes to a T at Highway 1 in the town of Olema.
- Turn right (north) on Highway 1 towards Point Reyes Station
- After 1 block turn left at the Point Reyes National Seashore sign onto Bear Valley Rd. Pass Park Headquarters and continue for 2.3 miles to a stop sign.
- Veer left, back onto Sir Francis Drake Blvd. To continue, see (\*) below.
- See \* below for remaining steps

### **\*CONTINUED STEPS**

- Continue traveling on Sir Francis Drake Road, passing the towns of Inverness Park and Inverness.
- Take a slight right at the fork onto Pierce Point Road and drive 1.2 miles to the Tomales Bay State Park entrance.
- Turn right into the park entrance and follow the road for about 0.5 miles (you will drive through the kiosk where park visitors pay\*\*)
- Turn left into the main parking lot for Heart's Desire Beach where you will see two large green containers on your right hand side and your guides will meet you for the trip.

***\*\*ETC Guides will provide each person with a parking pass and thus it is not necessary to pay for a parking permit at the entry kiosk.***



## Sea Kayak Program Instructions for Health and Liability Forms

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Attached to your booking are two forms that must be completed by all participants, including any agency staff. The first is a Health Form and the second is a Liability Release. Please remember the following guidelines when filling out these forms:

- Separate forms are required for each participant. Participants in the same family or household cannot use the same forms.
- Please complete these forms using blue or black ink.
- **It is very important that both forms are filled out completely. Please do not leave any field blank unless the question does not apply to you. Participants will only be allowed to participate if they have forms that are completely filled out.**
- For participants under the age of 18, both forms must be signed by a parent or guardian.
- Please do not return these forms to ETC in advance of your trip. Instead, please bring them with you on the day of the trip and ETC Guides will collect them from you upon your arrival.
- If you have any questions or concerns about a medical condition or your ability to participate on an ETC trip, please do not hesitate to contact the Sea Kayak Program Manager at 415-474-7662 x13 or at [kayak@etctrips.org](mailto:kayak@etctrips.org) in advance of the trip date.
- Spanish versions and accessible type-friendly PDF versions of these forms are available upon request.

Thank you very much for your assistance!