



P.O. Box 68, Moab UT 84532
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Connecting People and Nature: History, Education and Adventure

Women: Wild by Nature, San Juan River Rafting Trip *Lower San Juan River – From Mexican Hat to Clay Hills, UT*

Trip Outline and Itinerary

WELCOME! This program is offered by Canyonlands Field Institute, based in Moab, Utah. Canyonlands Field Institute (CFI) is a non-profit, outdoor education organization that promotes understanding of, connection to and care for the Colorado Plateau through high-quality field studies in natural science and cultural history. Founded in 1984, CFI is headquartered in Moab, Utah and conducts land-based programs at our Professor Valley Field Camp. CFI also operates river programs on the Colorado, Green, San Juan Rivers. CFI is supported through program fees and contributions.

TRIP OBJECTIVES

- To refresh and recharge our mind, body and spirit, as well as share a memorable experience with other trip participants in a unique natural and cultural environment
- Discover the unique geologic and geographic features of the San Juan River Canyon
- To learn about the natural and cultural history of the Colorado Plateau
- To have FUN while boating, hiking beautiful side canyons, and communing around camp
- To promote dialogue about the current issues facing these lands and their inhabitants
- To learn about environmentally sound camping practices for desert rivers

SAN JUAN RIVER

This popular 56 mile stretch is famous for geologic wonders and interesting side canyon hikes, mild/moderate rapids and flat water. The first night orientation at Recapture Lodge in Bluff, UT is followed by our river trip in the stunning Goosenecks Section of the lower San Juan Canyon, a remote wilderness setting. We will use a combination of oar-powered and either paddle raft or inflatable kayaks depending on the season, water flow, group size and interest.

Flowing from its headwaters in Colorado's San Juan Mountains to its confluence in Glen Canyon with the Colorado River, the San Juan River holds intriguing stories and lessons that will unfold during our river trip. CFI naturalists/guides will explore the remarkable geology of the canyon, intriguing plant communities, and the interactions of people and the landscape. There will be quiet and time for personal reflection as well as an opportunity to learn river-running skills, to relax, or to simply soak up the surrounding beauty.

Please note that weather or water level conditions may necessitate changes in the itinerary, the actual stretch or miles run on the river.



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TRIP SCHEDULE

Orientation Evening: Day 1

- 5-6:00 pm** Arrive at Recapture Lodge for check-in
Dinner on your own
- 7:30 pm** Orientation by CFI staff in the lobby or outside at Recapture Lodge
- Welcome to Canyonlands Field Institute & Introductions
 - Trip overview and how to pack your gear in the river bags you will receive at this time for clothing and tents
- Night** Stay at Recapture Lodge

Launch Day

- 6-7:30 am** Light breakfast (buffet style) in Recapture Lodge lobby (included in fee).
- 8:00 am** Walking tour of Bluff and introduction to San Juan area
- 9:30 am** Final packing, check out of lodge, park cars at lodge. Depart for Mexican Hat boat launch in shuttle bus.
- 10:30 am** Arrive at Mexican Hat, safety talk, orientation to boats and gear
- Midday** Launch!
- Afternoon** We will float a few miles, learning to read the river and practice paddling skills. Stop for lunch and explore Mendenhall's Cabin. We camp near the famous "Goosenecks" of the San Juan. Learn how to set up a river camp, help with chores.
- Evening** Dinner, relaxation/ library time.

Days on the River

- Mornings** Breakfast. Break camp. Head down river.
- Afternoons** Picnic lunches on the river's edge.
Informal interpretive sessions and stories on topics such as:
- Geologic Formations and Fossils
 - Early River Runners
 - Mining History
 - Native American History
 - Mormon Exploration
 - Riparian Ecology
 - Plant and Animal Adaptations
- Evenings** Dinner
Relaxing, reading, journaling, socializing time.

Last Day

- Morning** Breakfast. Break Camp. Continue down river.
- Midday** Lunch
- 2:00 pm** Take out at Clay Hills. Load boats and gear on to vehicles. Depart for Bluff.
- 6:00 pm** Arrive at Recapture Lodge. Unpack river bags and say final "good-byes."



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ARRIVAL AND FIRST NIGHT ACCOMMODATIONS

Please plan to arrive at the Recapture Lodge to check-in and be ready for your orientation in the evening. The Recapture Lodge desk will have a rooming list for check-in. Recapture Lodge is a standard motel with a small town friendly atmosphere. There is a swimming pool and hot tub, a TV in each room. Messages can be left at the front desk for you. *Dinner is on your own.*

During the 7:30 PM orientation meeting you will receive river dry bags for your personal gear, and learn about trip logistics and desert etiquette. We recommend packing that night. The Lodge's light continental breakfast on launch day is included in your program fee.

GUIDE SERVICES

This trip will be led by Karla VanderZanden, the Director and Co-Founder of CFI. She has 40 years of river running and naturalist experience including working as a BLM river ranger on Westwater Canyon. CFI guide/naturalists are licensed Utah river guides with wilderness emergency medical and CPR training. CFI guides are highly knowledgeable about the Colorado Plateau. They are inspiring and creative teachers experienced in working with both children and adults and are wonderful cooks! As we move along the river, CFI staff will offer activities focusing on the local geology, ecology, cultural and natural history of this region.

PARKING/SHUTTLE

Your car will be parked at the lodge for the week at no charge. We suggest you lock valuables in your trunk. The lodge has a storage room, but not a locked safe. On the launch day, the group will be shuttled to the boat ramp to meet the CFI river crew. After the river trip, you will be returned directly to the lodge to pick up your car.

DEPARTURE

We'll take out mid-afternoon on the last day and return to Bluff at approximately 6 p.m. **However, due to the nature of backcountry trips and road conditions, we may be delayed. Please do not make any critical plans for the evening, but do make a motel reservation in advance.**

This program officially ends upon our return to Bluff. Dinner and accommodations are not included in your trip fee for this last day.

WHAT TO BRING AND HOW TO PACK

CFI provides a waterproof bags for your sleeping gear, tent and clothing. We have a variety of bag sizes. The more compact and lighter your gear the easier it will be for you to get from boat to your camp spot. If you have an expensive camera we suggest that you purchase your own waterproof pouch. We suggest that you check with your homeowner's insurance agent about short-term coverage on your camera or video equipment, as CFI is not responsible for damage to or loss of your personal effects. Please see *Additional Information for CFI Programs*.



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You provide your own sleeping bag, pad and tent, or you can rent from CFI if you prefer. Please try to bring compact or compressible sleeping bags; call us if you have questions about your tent or sleeping gear. For summer trips, we recommend bringing a cotton sheet in addition to a light sleeping bag.

Because you will be sleeping on the ground, a sleeping pad is required. CFI rents waterproof sleeping pads that provide excellent support. If you have a self-inflating pad or air mattress, be sure that it inflates properly and is airtight.

We recommend that you practice setting up your tent before arriving, to make sure you have all the parts and to insure a quick and easy set-up. If you rent a tent from CFI, a CFI staff person will demonstrate how to set up the tent on the first night.

Since our program will be outdoors, CFI brings folding camp chairs or stools. You may want to bring a compact, light, folding camp chair such as a "Crazy Creek" type to use at your tent site.

Participants are welcome to bring pop and beer (aluminum cans only), wine (in non-glass containers, please) or other beverages in limited amounts. Drinks can be cooled in the river. Juice, coffee and tea are served at breakfast; water and lemonade are provided at lunch and dinner.

NOTE: If you bring only what is included on the enclosed gear list, plus additional small personal items as appropriate, you will be able to fit everything into the river bags we provide.

Pets are not allowed on this trip.

WHAT TO EXPECT ON THE RIVER

Rafting is a great way to enjoy the beauty of remote backcountry. The river is fairly mild, suitable for novice boaters. We will use paddle rafts and oar-powered boats depending on the size of the group. Participants will receive instructions on how to operate the boats and how to read the river, maneuver and land; we will take turns on the various crafts. A licensed guide is on each paddle and oar raft; we do encourage you to learn under their helpful eyes. We will have a few inflatable kayaks for shared use. Helmets will be provided and must be worn by all kayakers and paddle boaters.

Personal hygiene practices include a "porta-potty" set up each night in camp. All solid human waste is carried out of the canyon in a watertight box. Additional river etiquette will be explained at orientation.

RIVER CAMPS AND MEALS

We will camp on sandy beaches or oak benches above the San Juan River. Some San Juan River camps are BLM designated and reserved sites. These sites are not developed camp grounds, there are no picnic tables, outhouses, or running water. Each day we will put up and



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take down our sleeping and eating facilities. Participants are invited to help with some kitchen duties on a rotational basis.

Group camping gear and kitchen supplies will be carried on the rafts. We carry *some* fresh water from town. While on the river, we will also filter and boil river water for drinking/cooking purposes. River water will be used for dishwashing, followed by a Clorox rinse. Cooking is done on propane stoves and over charcoal. Please note that sometimes fires are restricted due to wildfire danger. CFI provides all dishes and cooking gear. Collapsible tables are brought along for food preparation. We will have a large tarp for shelter in case of a rain shower in camp.

Meals on the river will be provided by CFI, from lunch on the first full day through lunch on the last day. River meals are anything but “roughing it”. You will enjoy a variety of fresh, home-cooked meals. We use locally grown and organic produce and meats whenever possible for varied and delicious meals. While we are not able to offer, nor promise fully customized meal plans for individuals in a group, we will try to accommodate for special dietary needs & restrictions where practical. In some cases, individuals may be required to bring some of their own supplementary food. CFI can now cater to Vegetarian/Vegan, Dairy Free, Gluten Free, Halal/Kosher, etc., and will consider other dietary requests. This information needs to be provided during individual registration.

We provide snacks midmorning, mid-afternoon and before dinner. Please contact the CFI office about special dietary needs if you think you will need to bring your own food so that we can provide adequate storage. CFI provides all dishes and cooking gear. Participants are asked to help with kitchen duties on a rotational basis. We carry some fresh water from town. While on the river, we will also filter and boil river water for drinking/cooking purposes.

We carry a small traveling library of plant and animal guides, maps and books on the cultural and natural history of the area. We encourage you to read in advance about the area. Please see the enclosed reading list.

Since there is no hard schedule for a river trip, we ask that you be flexible and focus your interest on events as they unfold. For example, we may stop for an hour to play in the river’s edge or a gooey mud hole. Our daily routines will vary according to the weather, river conditions and neat things to see and do. Please attend with an attitude that allows you to “go with the flow” and be open to new experiences.

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

This is an active trip. You may be involved in paddling, and helping with gear and kitchen equipment. The program demands the ability to camp outside for several nights, to put up and take down your own tent, and to enjoy moderate hiking on hilly slopes. Please assess your personal condition and make sure you are capable of these activities before committing to the trip. We strongly encourage you to exercise and stretch prior to joining us.



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FIRST TIME CAMPERS WELCOME

This is not a “survival” trip. Our river trip will be a gentle interaction with the outdoors. Time can be set aside for those who need to learn camping basics -- how to pitch a tent, attend to sanitary needs, etc. Please call if you have questions or concerns regarding the nature of activity and comfort.

GROUP DYNAMICS

Though this trip is guided, all participants share the journey. Group members will be involved in some decision-making and are viewed as being responsible for themselves as a member of a team.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE AND EVACUATION

Generally, at least a full day is required to reach medical assistance while on the river. CFI does not carry radios or cell phones due to the rugged nature of the country and our desire for a true wilderness experience. CFI staff will have a spot device or satellite radio available for use if an emergency requiring evacuation is needed. Please refer to *Additional Information for CFI Programs*.

HEAT

We may experience temperatures near 100 degrees with very low humidity. If proper care is taken, everyone will be quite comfortable and healthy on the trip. An occasional case of heat-related illness can occur when someone does not dress or behave appropriately. It is imperative that everyone wear a sun hat at all times during the day. It is important to wear a shirt under your life jacket to get wet or dunk often during midday hours (some say this is the best thing about being on the river!). You will need to drink plenty of water; at least a gallon a day. You are expected to follow these guidelines for your own health. Please note that soda and beer are not effective substitutes for water!

PRIVATE BOATS

Due to Utah State Boating regulations and insurance concerns, we ask that you do not bring your own water craft or personal flotation devices. (You may bring your own waterproof bags for gear if you like.) State law requires all commercial passengers to wear Type V life-jackets, which CFI will supply.

BRING TO SHARE

We also encourage you to bring games, songs, quotes, poetry, personal journals, art supplies, simple musical instruments or other entertainment for free time or evening gatherings. We often “dress up” in some crazy or fun way for the last night’s dinner.

Thanks for registering! We look forward to seeing you soon!