



# Team River Runner OuttaSight Program

## Guide Leaders Endorsement

### Day 2 On-Water Lesson Plan – Level 1

#### **Course Location / Venue**

Local flat water venue such as Lake Williams, Memorial Lake, and certain slow-moving sections of the Susquehanna River.

#### **Class Ratio**

1 Instructor to every 4-6 Guide Leader students (1:5) / 2:10 with an additional instructor or qualified assistant.

**Time Required:** 4-5 hours

#### **Arrival Logistics**

- Students will receive site safety briefing immediately upon arrival, before any equipment is unloaded.
  - Location of bathroom facilities
  - Park rules & regulations
  - Weather emergency briefing
- Brief students on plan for the day

#### **Session 1 – Planning the Pod**

1. Guide Leader students will establish roles for paddlers on a flat-water trip based on numbers, the trip plan, etc.
2. Each paddler will spend time in each of the following roles:
  - a. Guide
  - b. Safety/Support
  - c. OuttaSight Paddler
3. Establish the amount of time between role-switching based on total training time, number of Guide Leader students, and any other criteria of note.
4. Ensure that there are enough safety boaters to provide overwatch during the training session. Ideally, one or two trained boaters roving to assist with unplanned swims or problems that may arise. Also, one or two shore-based assistants should be on hand to provide support as required. Consider



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switching out the water-based and shore-based assistants to prevent boredom.

5. Keep in mind throughout this training session that paddling with little or no vision can be very intimidating. The goal of this training session is to provide a safe experience so that boaters can learn some of the intricacies of paddling sightless while still having fun.

### **Session 2 – Basic Flat Water Safety**

1. Each student will swim blindfolded maintaining a good safe swimmer posture and following the instructions provided by their guide. Focus should be on situational awareness and maintaining a calm attitude.
2. Each student will perform a wet-exit and be rescued while blindfolded. Focus should be on situational awareness, maintaining a calm attitude, and retaining control of their paddle.

### **Session 3 – Basic Skills**

1. Students pair up and spend a fair amount of time doing dry-land instruction for specific skills:
  - a. Paddle Strokes:
    - i. Four basic strokes (forward, reverse, sweeps, draw)
    - ii. Low Brace
    - iii. High Brace
    - iv. Stern Draw

### ***BREAK AND SWITCH (other paddlers now under blindfold)***

- b. Wet Exit
2. Students launch boats – the student under blindfold acts as the OuttaSight paddler while the other student acts as a guide. Students should switch roles occasionally so that will have adequate training and skills performance time.
  3. Students, in conjunction with a safety boater, will work in calm-water on the following in-boat rescue techniques:
    - a. Bow Rescue



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- b. Hand-of-God Rescue
  - c. OPTIONAL – if the boater can demonstrate a good Eskimo roll, practicing these while blindfolded is a good idea.
4. Guides will work with their boaters to perform the following maneuvers, paying close attention to verbal guiding techniques:
  - a. Paddling in a straight line forward and backward.
  - b. Paddling in a Figure-8 while maintaining a slight edge to assist with the turns. Paddle the figure-8 in both directions.
  - c. Paddling to a specific destination and back (at least 100 meters).
  - d. Blindfolded paddlers will rescue their guide following a simulated flip. The guide must direct the paddler using verbal and other sound cues.

### **DEBRIEFING – Review the Day**

Discuss as a group (no blindfolds) how the day's training went.

- Talk about the day's training – what are your impressions about direction finding, noise, etc.?
- What was surprising?
- What worked well?
- What could be improved?
- How does guiding paddlers without vision differ from how you usually teach?
- As a paddler who can't see, what surprised you about the experience? What didn't?