



Episode 5: The Mighty Gorge
Sept 8-14 2024

EO 2024 Racer Route Book

It is time for the show. What lies ahead will not be easy. For some of you it may not even be possible. But you signed up for something hard, something that will require skill, teamwork, strategy, intelligence, adaptability and a whole lot of physical endurance.

We urge you to take a moment as a team before the race and just soak in the immensity of what it means to step into the unknown like this. You've already done so much to be at this moment, this start line. Be present, look into the faces of those around you and thank them for coming on this quest with you.

Safety - Safety is a tricky thing in these events. We have a robust plan involving satellite tracking, manned CPs, medical response professionals, extrication crew, egress points, a triple vetted course, and YOU. That's right, YOU are the most important part of our safety plan. Because make no mistake - this course and this sport carries serious RISK with it. You must make good choices and at all times consider you and your team's safety and skill. If there is an emergency, your team must be prepared to shelter in place for several hours at the minimum. This is especially relevant for night travel, water sections and once sleep deprivation sets in. And you may have all three of these risk factors simultaneously. So take responsibility for your decisions in regards to these things.

General ARWS rules apply in all instances not specifically mentioned in this route book or race communications regarding mandatory gear. We also know from experience (both racing and directing) that rules are hard to anticipate in regards to complex events like this. We endeavor to have clear race communication, and a fair competition while allowing for teams to think outside the box sometimes. Below are some specific interpretations of rules for this event.

Missing personal items incur up to a 30 min penalty per item, missing team items incur a 2 hour penalty. All CPs are to be obtained in sequential order, and during the specified stages. O-points may be obtained in any order, but only during their specified stages (or sections of stages). Team members must remain within 100m of each other at all times. Every member of the team must be within 10 meters of the checkpoint when it is acquired. Travel along off limits roads or through off limit areas will incur either a penalty, DQ, or time equalization.

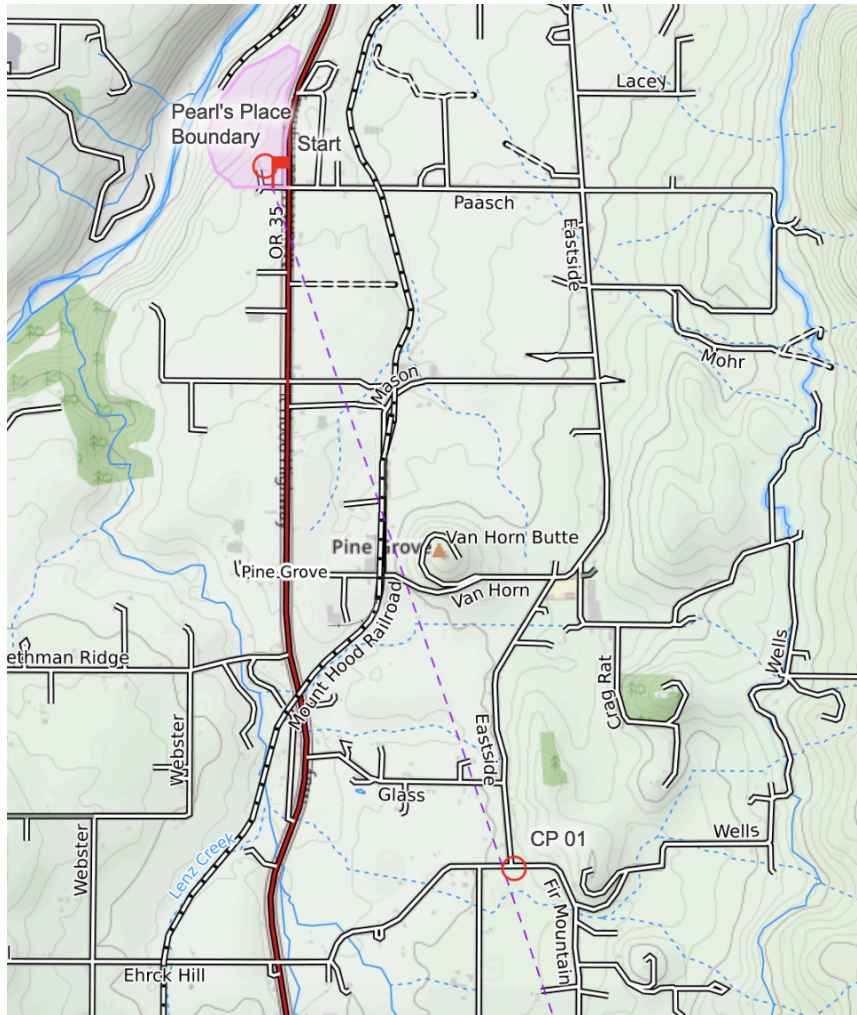
Ranking is determined by # of CPs, then # of O-points, then time. We repeat in different terms - get all the CP you can as these are your first ranking metric. Then prioritize O-points as these are the second metric. Then time. Once you miss a CP, you'll rank below ANY team that gets more CP than you, regardless of how many O-points they get. All TA are MANDATORY in order to get an official ranking.

Check in and out of all TA and O-course areas. Traffic laws apply at all times. Observe no trespassing signs and private property. Keep trackers working and on the outside at all times. Jerseys must be worn as the outside layer at all times except on whitewater paddles.

Stage 1: The EPIC MTB

ALL CP in sequential order (CP 1 - CP 6)

This stage could be a world class endurance MTB race all on its own. Huge elevation, huge views, 25 miles of amazing singletrack and descents so long you'll want to climb again! All under the looming shadow of the Iconic Mt Hood and next to the expanse of the Columbia Gorge. This will be a true test for teams right off the line!



There will be a neutral time rolling start. Teams must follow lead pacers on the bike toward CP 01. There will be no stop and restart, pacers will simply move aside. Rear lights must be on for the start. Obey all traffic laws! CP 01 is virtual. From the intersection you will choose to go right or left to continue, but there is no punch. Note: CP 01 is changed from the map location to the junction of fir mountain and eastside road. (See map to left for new CP 01)

After reaching CP 03 teams MUST stay on single-track until CP 05. Between CP 03 and CP 05 you may only ride trails.

You may *cross* roads at any time during this section if the singletrack you are on crosses a road.

*Note, roads along this section, and in general, are not marked as off limits on your map as this would make the trails harder to see. **Penalty for using roads is a minimum of 2 hours, maximum DQ** (obvious continued use).*

HWY 197 is off limits, and teams must cross it (use caution) at one of the marked Waypoints (WP) to proceed to TA1. Travel along hwy 84, hwy 30 or hwy 35 is also not allowed (should be obvious and easy to avoid).

TA1 Notes:

This is the day use area (between campground areas) on the east bank of the Deschutes River. Please respect quiet hours at the park until 8AM as there are campers in the vicinity. Teams must do their best to observe this rule if they arrive in the early hours of the morning. Absolutely no urination or obvious nudity on the grass/trees in the TA area—there is a bathroom and potable water nearby! Violators of the urination rule, or repeat offenders of the quiet time rule will receive a penalty. Follow TA staff instructions, check in/out and load gear where and when asked.

Stage 2: Multi-sport Madness!

ALL CP in sequential order, 0 points in any order in designated section only.

This is a big day in the Gorge, an adventure race in and of itself! You'll be totally self-sufficient bringing everything you need for a multisport mission. You're starting on the Columbia River where roughly 2% of the world's wheat is transported by rail and barge and in what is a Mecca for downwind sports like windsurfing and kiteboarding. Try not to think about how everyone else likes to go upriver while you're paddling the other direction. Hopefully you're on the river in the morning when the daybreeze is usually calmer. After the paddle, enjoy climbing near pictographs and petroglyphs, trekking through the flowing golden grasslands full of grasshoppers (snacks?) and cheatgrass, and riding over one of the classic local hill climbs.

2.1 Bike-raft (bike on raft)

Boats/pfds must have lit glow sticks if departing during darkness. Teams must carry helmets, bikes, and climbing gear as necessary for the other disciplines on this stage. CP 07 and CP 08 are manned "safety" checks where teams must approach the shore close enough to receive instructions as to the conditions on the main river. Paddle and exit at the marked boat ramp at CP 09. Cross the railroad tracks to CP 9a **BEFORE** deflating boats and dealing with gear. Check in at CP 09a. Bathrooms and water are available a short distance away in the park. *Note - If conditions are too extreme for your team and you decide as a team that you absolutely cannot continue to the takeout at CP 09 regardless of what race staff thinks, you can exit the river paddle at CP 08 and proceed on bike directly to CP 10. You MAY NOT ride to CP 09, CP 09 is only approachable via paddle. Teams skipping CP 09 for this reason will still be on the full course, but ranked behind anyone who made it to CP 09.*

On the river, teams must stay within the high water boundary at the river's edges. Use caution and stay out of the way of barges/commercial boats when crossing the shipping channel. It will generally be better to be in whatever lee you can find rather than in the middle where fetch is the greatest and wind/whitecaps will be more prevalent. **The Railroad tracks are off limits at all times on this bike-raft section.**

2.2: Raft-bike (raft on bike):

From 9a ride to CP 10 bike drop. Ride single file on highway 14 and use caution. Check in with staff at CP 10 to receive maps and instructions to complete the Horsethief O-course (**points O1-O7 in any order on foot.**) **Note, take climbing gear! Each climbing point must be obtained by a separate team member.** Follow all climbing staff instructions. Climbing staff are not there to teach you how to climb, they are there for safety only and will stop any climbers who are not able to climb safely.

Cutoff #1:

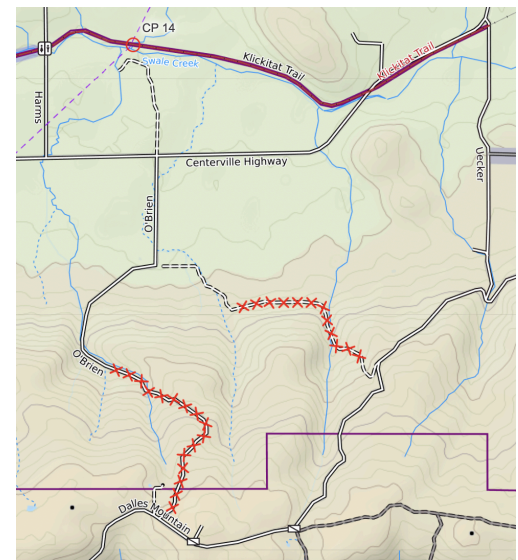
Teams must check in at CP 10 by 6 pm on Monday, September 9th in order to be able do any of the points on the Horsethief O-course, including the climb points.

Complete climbing/orienteering and return to bikes and check out with staff. Collect CP 11 and CP 12 enroute to CP 13. Drop bikes again at CP 13, receive o-map and instructions. When trekking off-trail in this area try not to walk single file, the park has asked us to try and avoid creating social trails. For my Star Wars fans, try to march like Storm Troopers not Tusken Raiders. Complete Dalles Mtn O-course (**O8-O18 in any order on foot**) and return to bikes. There will potentially be several fence lines on the O-course that you will need to cross, make sure you are only crossing fence lines in the designated orienteering area. Check out with staff when you are finished before you leave on bikes.

Cutoff #2:

Teams must check in at CP 13 by 8PM on Monday, September 9th in order to proceed onto the Dalles Mtn O-course. If you arrive after this, you will miss this section and continue on. Also, if FINISHING the O-course after 8 PM, our staff will be gone (the gate to the area closes) so you'll turn in your O-passport at TA 2.

Bike to CP 14 and CP 15 enroute to TA2. Observe private property signs and no trespassing signs. See map below for two private roads not allowed (these are not marked off limits on racer maps, but must not be utilized!). See inset to right for details:



Note, there is no water available at either bike drop, or at TA2. There is water near CP 14 and at many other points on Stage 3.

TA2 Notes:

Primitive bathroom and no other facilities.

Stage 3: The Packraft Trek

ALL CP in sequential order (CP 16-26).

Welcome to Soda Springs Wilderness area! This spot is popular for hunters, campers, and motorsports. Enjoy the amazing views from the ridges and steep hillsides, but use caution when descending or ascending steep loose areas. Consider wearing helmets or choosing safer lines when things get sketchy. Rattlesnakes are present in this area, if you hear one it is a warning to stop and evaluate. Move away quickly and give snakes space. Try not to reach into nooks and crannies.

Avoid the marked “off limits” area, although you can travel along the boundary fence line. There is not a lot of running water on the first half of the stage, but there is “rugged water” that is part of the fabric of old west expeditions. So bring a bandana to strain from a stock pond or still pool in a creek bed (think of it as a pre-filter), then treat it. Yum! The second half is literally full of water.

Use caution around CP 27 as this is a river feature (pillar, log jam etc). It is passable in boats on river left, but you could also take out river right before the log jam and approach the point this way. Extra caution advised at night.

Sleep card:

Teams must “sleep” for 4 hours (in either 2 hour segments, or a single 4 hour segment) on this stage. This can be done at TA2, TA3, CP 25 or CP 26. If sleeping at a TA teams cannot “Transition” during their sleep time (their boxes/bags must be closed and not in use. No inflating/deflating etc.), there will be a specific area near the TA to bivvy. Teams can re-TA after their sleep if needed.

Teams paddling after 7PM must have glow sticks lit and on their vests.

TA 3 Notes:

Primitive toilets, water nearby. Campground area so be quiet and respectful, especially at night.

Stage 4: *Entry into the Lava Lands.*

CP 28 and 29 in sequential order

Enjoy the transitions! You’re about to bike from the dry eastern slope of the cascades up into the central cascades where the forests start to grow thicker and you’re more likely to find pine trees than poison oak. You aren’t going to quite make it into the rainforests west of the Cascades but this is still big timber country. Many of the old mills have shut down but the log trucks still run the roads during the week, stay single file on the shoulder and give them a wave when they give

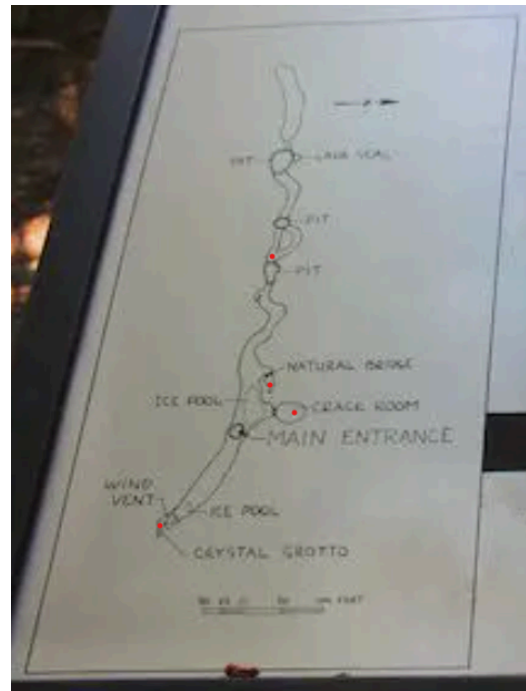
you room. You're touring their home and sharing the land their livelihood is based on. When you pass through small towns keep an eye out for any shops selling huckleberry milkshakes, I hear they are the second best race food behind 4 hour fuel!

Use caution on all roads, especially when riding on sections of some of the more major roads in the area. At CP 28 (ice caves) you must scrub your shoes (as per the bat protection sign) before entering. Respect the caves, and other users. Leave bikes out of the way near the main entrance but not blocking other user's experience. There is ICE and jagged rocks in the cave, so use caution, especially if you are wearing bike shoes with cleats!

4.1 Ice Caves (CP 28)

There is a cave map near the main entrance. There are four small numbers hidden within the cave. Use the clues below and the map to find them. The numbers are written on small thumbtacks in a bit of wood in each location. Add up the numbers from each piece of wood and this is your answer for the CP 28 clue.

- Back crawl of Crystal Grotto, wood block near long log
- Wood block in Alcove of roof of the Crack Room
- Wood block in the small crawl behind Natural Bridge
- Wood block at Eastern end of underground loop between two smaller "pits".



4.2 Rubble Cave (CP 29)

Also use caution obtaining CP 29 as scrambling is involved. This is one of the few points that might be described as "hidden", take your time and look for flagging.

TA4 Notes:

This is a campsite area, and we'll be using the Day Use area for staging. If/when you travel through the campsite area during the night you must be quiet.

Stage 5: *The Forlorn O.*

(O-points O19-O38 in any order)

Welcome to the 24-hour orienteering test-piece, with three distinct environments (mountains with steep ridges and off trail route-finding; a massive seldom explored lava bed riddled with caves, crevasses, cracks and a huge crater; and a swath of wilderness dotted with tiny subalpine lakes, springs, ponds, and years of history). You might even stumble across the famed and mysterious lava prints near TA 4/5. Bonus, from near O37 you can see both volcanoes (Hood and Adams), the lava crater, the climb-site, the Gorge, and even the ridgeline that you'll descend for the final paddle. Soak it in. It is so stunning we'd even consider a 30 minute nap to wait for sunrise if you are here at 6AM.

Teams can revisit TA 4/5 as many times as they want to resupply during this stage, but teams must carry mandatory gear at all times, and may not use their bikes at any point on this stage.

Use caution in general on this leg. The lava can be rugged and unforgiving, the creeks are sometimes full, sometimes dry. Same with the lakes/ponds. There are a lot of huckleberries to eat, some wild blueberries, and red thimbleberries too.

Note: Any team that starts this leg with NO food or liquid calories and subsists entirely on foraged calories, AND gets all the points on the O-course will win the "Darren Bear Award" - a large carved bear statue with RD Darren's head.

Cutoff #3

TA 4/5 closes at 7AM on the 14th of September. Teams must check out of TA5 by this time. There is no guarantee that teams leaving this late will make the rafting check in cut-off (noon on the 14th).

TA 4/5 Notes:

This is a campsite area, and we'll be using the Day Use area for staging. If/when you travel through the campsite area during the night (sunset to sunrise) you must be quiet. If you revisit this area during the stage (as part of your strategy) DO NOT check out of the TA each time. You only need to check out when you are leaving on the bike (Stage 6). Make sure you turn in your O-passport before leaving on stage 6.

Stage 6: MTB/Climb - The Monte Cristo Range.

(CP30 - 35 in sequential order)

Get ready to explore the rugged Monte Cristo area! Slab climbing like this is rare. Easy, sure, but this expanse of unbroken rock is a sight to behold and a joy to ascend. But, those less experienced might find themselves searching for handholds that just are not there. And if it rains - welcome to the world's biggest slip and slide. And if that was not enough adrenaline, the Monte Cristo slabs will give way to the Monte Cristo ridges with mountain bike trails for the true adventure seeker. Sure there might be a few overgrown trails and a few steep climbs, but when you descend 3500' in the last 6 miles you'll forget all that nonsense.

Cutoff #4

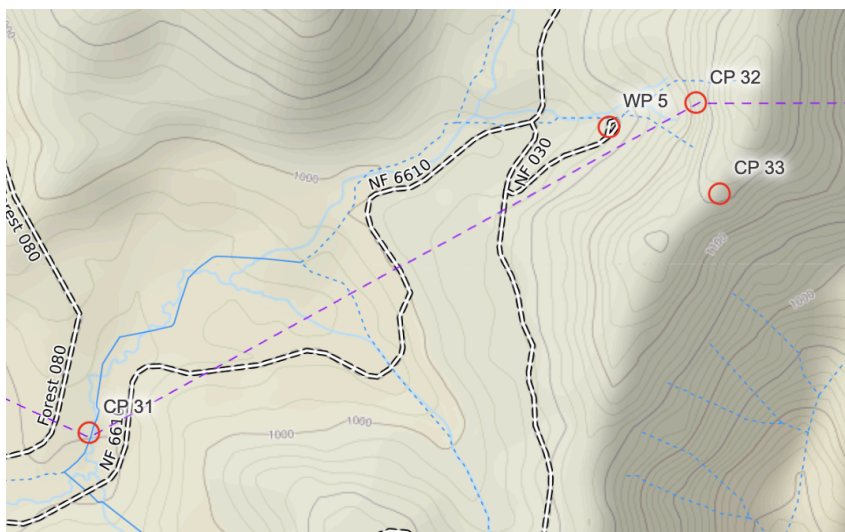
The climb site cut-off (CPs 32-33) is also the 14th of September at 7AM. Note that these points are mandatory, so any team missing these will rank behind teams that have more mandatory points regardless of how many O-points they have. Be smart, keep track of your time, and be honest with yourself about how fast you are moving versus how much of the course is still left to complete.

The Climbing site closes at 7AM on the 14th. Teams after this will not be able to obtain CP 32 or CP 33. So as you ride past it without getting the climbing points you can think about what choices you should have made to make it here on time for this amazing section. Boohoo.

The race map does not show CP 33 (as it is too close to CP 32). See below for details. Drop bikes at WP 5, and approach the base of the slab.

(TAKE CLIMBING GEAR) Check in. Helmets must be worn during climb, and at the base of the wall, so keep them on when you get off your bikes!

Teams must return to the base of the climb after obtaining 33 to drop off their fall arrester devices with staff. This should be done with all possible efficiency to allow another team to ascend.



A minimum of 2 climbers are required to climb to get 32 and 33. **For each teammate that does not climb, a 1 hour "skills equalization penalty"** will be assessed to the team's race time.

Avoid private property and roads (grayed roads on main map) due east of TA 6. At the end of the stage some routes will require you to ride a short distance on HWY 141. Ride a single file and use caution.

TA 6 Notes

Zoller's Outdoor Outfitters. You can sleep here as this is the river DarkZone. See staff for details. Be respectful of property and other users. Toilets and water is available.

Stage 7: The Guided Paddle

(No CP, just TA 6 to TA 7, Guided Paddle).

Little boats. Class IV canyon ending in the largest commercially guided drop in the Pacific Northwest and the 4th tallest in the world! Kayakers travel from all over the world to upskill on this single drop! Rated at class V, this 12' cascade is sure to get your blood pumping...so listen to your guide when they shout "Get down and hold on!" Don't worry, safety will be positioned at the falls to pick up the carnage. This time.

DarkZone #1

Teams must have transitioned and be *ready to paddle* by 6:30 PM each night or else wait until 6:30 AM to complete this section. Teams stuck in the DZ will leave at 6:30 AM in the order they arrived. Teams not ready to go when their raft is available (4 rafts in rotation, 1 raft per team) will forfeit their position to any team behind them that is ready.

Equalization: If a team is in the DarkZone when it starts, the DZ clock will start at 6:30 pm. Otherwise the clock will start as soon as the first team arrives (after 6:30 pm) on a given evening. For the first 10 minutes, the race clock is considered 'live' and any subsequent team arriving in those 10 minutes will not be equalized. Any teams arriving outside the first 10 minutes of the DZ clock will incur a 10 minute equalization time for every hour, or portion thereof, on the DZ clock. This equalization time will either be served at Northwestern Park, a short distance before CP 36, or added on to the teams final time (at the RD's discretion), depending on whether it could potentially matter to final results. Outside of the DarkZone being in effect, no equalizations will be given.

TA 7 Notes:

Teams will transition to packraft here, but they will have access to their paddle bags only.

Teams must leave here by 5:30 PM in order to continue toward the finish line. Teams that do not make this, can shelter for the night across the street at Wet Planet Guides. A race staff will be there to tell you where to bivvy.

Stage 7: Through the Canyon and into the Gorge

(CP 36 only)

Note: Teams that leave TA 7 before 5:30, should be able to make it to the end of the canyon and onto the Columbia by dark. If not, they may be stopped at CP 36 for a cold miserable night.

The Lower White Salmon is an ultra-classic beautiful canyon. The moderate whitewater is lined by narrow and sheer walls in some areas, contrasting with the vast Mighty Gorge it leads to. A few class 2+/3- will keep your attention. At the end, all that stands between you and the finish line of America's Toughest race is a 1-mile wide river world famous for wind sports. Problem is, you'll be wanting to go straight across and depending on the time of day and the wind, you might just find yourself in the middle of 100s of windsurfers, kite boarders and down wind paddlers.

CP 36 is a mandatory portage. Get out early at the big obvious eddy and traverse the shore and ledges on river left, using hand lines and short via ferrata as necessary. This will be a manned safety point. Follow any race staff instructions. The put in here is not easy even when not exhausted from several long days of racing, breath and take your time. Make it through the narrows and enjoy the last few rapids before the "flatwater". Teams paddling across the Columbia River to the finish after 7PM must have glow sticks lit and visible.

DarkZone #2:

Teams arriving at CP 36 after 6:45 PM will be held at CP 36 until 6:30 am the following morning. Teams leaving TA 7 close to 5:30 pm will be making a bit of a gamble on their paddling ability (and not swimming!) and those not succeeding in getting all the way through the gorge should be prepared for a cold and miserable night.

Finish line

You will finish during the day with lots of people around. Wave and make your way up the stairs at river's edge to the Iconic EO arch! Now it's time for beer, food, and sleep! Congratulations! You finished America's Toughest Race.

SLEEP CARD (TA 2, TA 3, CP 24, or CP 25). 2 x 2 hr or 1 x 4 HR

SLEEP #1 (minimum 2 hours)

SLEEP #2 (minimum 2 hours)

CP/TA staff	Time start	Time finish	CP/TA staff	Time start	Time finish

C=clue P=punch S=sticker M=manned

CP	O	Description
1		Virtual CP
2	C	How many power lines on tower?
3	S	sticker on jct sign
4	S	sticker on jct sign
5	C	Jct sign Miles to campground?
6	P	Under bridge
7	M	Shore in middle of park
8	M	Boat launch area
9	M	small boat ramp
10	M	parking lot
	O1	C climb site group A
	O2	C climb site group B
	O3	S Trail barrier near end of trail
	O4	S Trail barrier near end of trail
	O5	P ledge above path
	O6	P under boulder in steep gully
	O7	P rocky viewpoint
11	C	info sign - year damn built?
12	P	Up tree near reentrant
13	M	Old Barn
	O8	P highpoint (punch only)
	O9	C Power pole (punch only)
	O10	P Hand Dug well
	O11	P Between reentrants
	O12	P ridge between drainages
	O13	S Old tank
	O14	P Bush below boulder
	O15	P Rock below confluence
	O16	S NE corner Trough (sticker)
	O17	P Boulder Hole above draw
	O18	P Tank near big tree
14	P	in culvert
15	C	Sign. Whose fav camping spot?
16	P	Local top
17	P	W edge dry pond
18	P	base of makeshift treestand
19	C	color of buckets here
20	P	tree above steep confluence

21	C	Power pole (last 5 digits of #)
22	P	cairn at viewpoint (punch only)
23	P	confluence
24	P	overlook near top
25	M	campsite near water
26	M	campsite/boat ramp along river
27	P	Top of rocks/island near logjam
28	C	Ice Caves (see route book)
29	P	small lava cave in sinkhole
	O19	P S edge of clearing on hillside
	O20	P Pond with water in it
	O21	P seasonal peninsula
	O22	P seasonal island
	O23	P S edge seasonal pond
	O24	P peninsula
	O25	P Base of falls
	O26	P tree west edge of seasonal pond
	O27	P bend in creek
	O28	P Top of seasonal falls
	O29	P between seasonal ponds
	O30	P bottom main creek bed
	O31	C Survival shelter, what type?
	O32	P local high point on ridge
	O33	C Geocache in boulders at bottom of crater, take a pic playing badminton
	O34	P Big tree in open lava field
	O35	P seasonal pond/marsh clearing
	O36	P ridge near end of old road
	O37	C Ridge top (website on flag)
	O38	C Top, how many tower footings left?
30	P	East side of river across from camp
31	P	log across creek bed
32	M	Climb site (check in)
33	P	Ridge
34	S	Sign @ trailhead (sticker)
35	S	benchmark survey marker (sticker)
36	M	Safety take out (river left)
Finish	M	Expedition Oregon arch