

MTL PADDLING LEVELS



NOTE: Please be aware that conditions can change dramatically with little or no warning. Paddlers should be appropriately equipped for the trip with a PFD, whistle, pump, and in some cases, a spray or deck skirt.

Paddling plans may need to be changed or adjusted to conditions and the needs of the group. It is not unusual for a Level 1 trip, for example, to change to a 2 or 3 if the wind picks up or in the event of an impending storm. Each paddler must use his or her own judgment in making the decision to join a paddle. **Paddlers participate in an MTL kayaking event at their own risk and accept all responsibility for their own safety.**

A **Level 1** paddle is typically a relaxing trip of about 6 miles on relatively protected, calm waters that is covered in a couple hours. The trip will have a slow pace with time to chat, and typically include a break and possible stop on a nice beach. If you have some modest experience paddling, you should be fine to join a Level 1 trip.

A **Level 2** trip is for paddlers who have become comfortable in their boats and are looking to stretch their skills a bit. The average trip covers about 6 to 10 miles at a slow pace. You may have to cross some open water, and sprint briefly to cross a channel or avoid an approaching vessel. You may encounter some modest conditions, so if you are happy splashing through some small waves and don't mind a little wind, this is probably a suitable trip for you. A typical trip will include paddling for 1 to 2 hours before breaking for a snack or lunch.

On **Level 3** trips, you can expect to find paddlers who are becoming more comfortable in rougher water. These trips often cover 8 to 12 miles and you can expect to be in your boat for over 2 hours at a time, maintaining a moderate pace with extended periods of non-stop paddling. With a greater likelihood of wind and higher waves, you may at times have to work fairly hard to maintain headway and brace with your paddle to keep your balance. If you are becoming a more self-sufficient paddler, this may be the trip for you. Spray or deck skirts are usually recommended for these paddles, especially if they involve choppy waters.

*Much of the narrative for the level descriptions is presented courtesy of the **ConnYak Paddling Club**.