



## Trips That Bond

Outdoor and active adventure is an opportunity for family therapy

"We can barely keep up with it," said Kathy Stewart, the director of family trips at Butterfield & Robinson, when asked about demand for the trips she organizes. Pamela Lassers, of Abercrombie & Kent, reports that A&K has seen a 30 percent increase in family travel over the past year.

Outdoor- and adventure-travel companies like these have been increasing the number of organized multigenerational trips they offer—in an effort to satisfy clients looking for experiences that will stimulate each person while keeping the group together and happy. "River rafting is one of the best of the family-bonding trips," Lassers said. "We get letters saying this all the time. Sitting around a campfire, with no TV and no computer, brings a family together. In the raft, they have to work as a team to negotiate the rapids and control the boat. And it's great for teens, young kids, and grandparents because it lets some take it easy and others be more active."

These family-specific excursions also relieve the group of the burden of planning several days' worth of different meals, lodging, and activities for individuals with different needs—so that all of the family's members get the freedom to bask in a shared enriching experience.

The following is a smattering of the newest and best family trips on the scene. Groups are generally small, with a high guide-to-guest ratio.

To its 20-plus existing family itineraries, luxury leader **Abercrombie & Kent** adds two new programs this year: one at a guest ranch in the Rocky Mountains and the other at private villas in Scotland, Italy, or France (800-323-7308; abercrombiekent.com).

Multisport adventure outfitter **Austin-Lehman** focuses on North American itineraries. It has four new family

programs this year—for a total of eight—in Alaska, Montana's Glacier National Park, and British Columbia (800-575-1540; austinlehman.com).

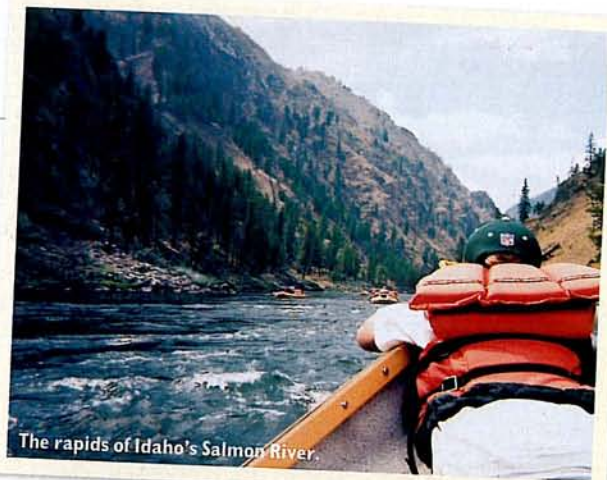
### At what age do CNT readers think that children should start to travel?

6 or under	42%
7 through 12	43%
13 through 18	11%
19 and older	4%

(From CNT online polls, Jan.-July 2002)

The number of guests on **Backroads'** family trips has more than doubled since 1998. This year, the company has nine new family itineraries to destinations that include Thailand, Morocco, and New Zealand. Of its 36 family trips, the two most popular take guests through Yellowstone National Park and through the Grand Tetons (800-462-2848; backroads.com).

"Family travel is the fastest-growing area of business in our company now," said Cari Gray, of **Butterfield & Robinson**, which specializes in high-end active travel.



The rapids of Idaho's Salmon River.

New this year are four trips—to Peru, Costa Rica, New Zealand, and Vietnam—as well as the Home Base program, which operates in Tuscany and Brittany and welcomes families with children of any age (800-678-1147; butterfield.com).

At **Lindblad Special Expeditions**, whose family bookings have increased by 35 percent since 1998, families now get a 25 percent discount for any traveler in their group under 21 (see page 74).

All trips run by **O.A.R.S.** (Outdoor Adventure River Specialists)—

which gears more than 60 percent of its business to families—have a guide-to-guest ratio of one to four (see page 74).

**Off the Beaten Path's** Family Adventure series mixes cultural, educational, and/or historical activities with outdoor sports. There are four new trips—to Dinosaur National Monument, Colorado; Yellowstone; Montana; and Alaska—and a program that matches families and ranches (800-445-2995; offthebeatenpath.com).

—Rebecca Ciletti



## Traveling Teen

A primer on exciting learning adventures that take high school students around the world

To have an extraordinary adventure that provides cross-cultural exchange, youth development, and service, students in grades 9 through 12 should consider traveling with any of the following organizations. Some scholarships may be available.

**Visions Service Adventures** takes small groups of students to one of nine sites in the United States or abroad, including Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Guadeloupe, and Peru, to work intimately on a community project. A premium is placed on youth development and partnership with local people (717-567-7313; www.visions-adventure.com; summer, \$2,500–\$3,650, not including airfare).

Founded in 1961, **Interlocken/Global Routes** has a wide range of

programs in the United States and throughout the world. Its Center for Experimental Learning offers summer, semester, and bridge-year (grade 12 plus) programs—academic, community service, or friendship exchange—with host families (603-478-3166; www.interlocken.org; summer, \$2,950–\$5,050, not including airfare; bridge year, \$11,500 for a semester and \$22,000 for a full year, not including airfare).

Students participating in the **Experiment in International Living** travel in small groups to one of 25 foreign countries or in the United States, to work with the Navajo. Programs emphasize cultural discovery with service, outdoor wilderness/ecology training, and language immersion. Trips include a weeklong homestay (800-345-2929; www.usexperiment.org; 3–5 weeks in summer, \$2,500–\$5,000, including international airfare).

**Global Works** takes students to 14 countries with low political and health risks, such as New Zealand and Fiji, and to one U.S. site to participate in service projects and, often, in outdoor adventures. Many programs include a homestay (814-667-2411; www

.globalworksincl.com; summer, \$2,950–\$3,850, not including airfare).

Sensitive to the culture of Latin America, **Amigos de las Américas** arranges community and leadership development projects for students, placing an emphasis on health-care issues in Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Paraguay (713-782-5290; www.amigosink.com; summer, \$3,400–\$3,850, including airfare from Houston or Miami).

**Putney Student Travel** coordinates adventure, language, community service, and academic travel programs throughout the world, taking students to the Himalayas and Tibet, Costa Rica, Ecuador, the Caribbean, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Tanzania, as well as to Montana and Alaska (802-387-5000; www.goputney.com; summer, \$4,490–\$8,190, including airfare).

**AFS Intercultural Programs** goes just about everywhere, with trips for students and adults to 44 countries that include study, travel, work abroad, and homestays for a summer, a semester, or a year. AFS also brings 10,000 students to the United States each year (800-237-4636; www.afs.org/usa; summer, \$3,900, including international airfare). —Raina Sacks Blankenhorn



Lunch in Laos with Where There Be Dragons.