

Sandy River Outdoor Adventure Park, Rice, VA

Troop 1288 (7th grade Cadettes) spent June 3 at the Sandy River Outdoor Adventure Park in Rice, VA. The troop spent 2 hours doing "Team Building" exercises and games, and then 2 hours either doing Ropes course or Kayaking on the nearby reservoir (some of our troop did not want to do Ropes).

We "camped" at the Hill Lodge in Twin Lakes State Park, which sleeps 16 (about \$150/night). It was really nice - fully stocked kitchen (plates, pots & pans), nice bunk beds with lines and towels. We were glad to be in the lodge when big thunderstorms came through. The rangers at Twin Lakes were AWESOME! and set up a (free for us) program on nocturnal animals to help our Cadettes work on their Night Owl Badge.

Pros for Sandy River: The facility is really nice, and the owner (Candace) and staff were very easy to work with. They gave a scout discount and set up a program specially for our troop. Their weather policy seems reasonable (you can reschedule 24 hrs in advance if you want). The "Team Building" exercises were really well done, and can count toward scout badge work (like Cadette Finding Common Ground). We had a picnic lunch under a shelter. The ropes staff were also very supportive. The reservoir where we kayaked was beautiful and it was pretty easy to put in. There are other things nearby that would be good for Scouts (the High Bridge Bike Trail is only 10 minutes away; the Appomattox River is nearby).

Cons for Sandy River: The ropes course is smaller than the one at the Va. Beach Aquarium - so if your scouts just want to do ropes, you might choose the Aquarium. Bring your own drinking water or buy bottled water there. We did an "unguided" kayak trip - and it was totally unguided - they just showed us where the kayaks were, and asked us to lock them up when we were done. Don't do an unguided trip unless you are really comfortable on the water (it is a big reservoir).

Main message- Sandy River is great for half-a-day if you combine it with other things you want to do, like the State Parks (Twin Lakes and/or High Bridge), or canoeing the Appomattox River or Reservoir. Sandy River did a great job with the team building exercises. If your Scouts just want to do ropes, though, you can do the Va. Beach Aquarium which is closer.