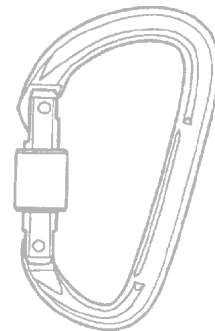


www.canyoneering.net

Canyoneering is a term used to describe an adventure sport that combines hiking, wading, swimming, boulder hopping, rock climbing and rappelling. Some are calling it the next hot adventure sport. Today there are more people exploring canyons in more places than ever before. As interest in the sport grows, so do concerns regarding safety and conservation of our limited canyon resources. Continued access to the canyons and the freedom to choose the rules of our sport will depend greatly on the level of responsibility we accept for our own decisions and actions.

This booklet is published and distributed free by the American Canyoneering Association. It is the result of contributions of time, energy and money from many individuals who all share a passion for canyoneering. We hope that the information and principles presented will help make your canyoneering adventures safer and that an abiding concern for our canyons will become part of your canyoneering routine.



Canyoneering

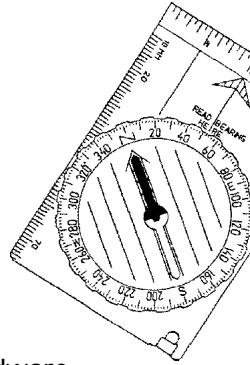
Canyoneering Checklist	4
Canyoneering Safety	6
Flash Floods - Know Before You Go	6
Flash Flood Awareness	8
Flash Flood Response	8
General Safety Concerns	9
Don't Count on Rescue	11
Planning for Escape or Retreat	11
Canyoneering Ethics	13
Leave No Trace	13
Etiquette	14
Permits and Trespassing	15
Anchors	15
American Canyoneering Association	19
Technical Canyoneering Courses	19
FREE Natural Anchor Workshops	21
How to Choose a Canyoneering Guide	22

Canyoneering Checklist

This checklist is provided as a guideline to help you prepare for your canyoneering adventure.

- ✓ **Limit group size** to no more than six people. Break up larger groups into smaller ones. Smaller groups move more efficiently.
- ✓ **Know your abilities** and the abilities of each member in your group, and never exceed the abilities of the least experienced person in your group. Inside a narrow canyon is not an appropriate place to learn how to rappel. Master these skills before you enter a canyon.
- ✓ **Verify route information** prior to entering the canyon. Canyon conditions vary with the season and canyons change from year to year. Some guidebooks are known to contain errors and even the best guidebooks will ultimately become outdated. Check with rangers or other local sources for current information. There's no such thing as too much information.
- ✓ **Study the watershed.** Estimate its overall size to determine the extent of the weather information you will need. Check for recent precipitation, snow and other risk factors such as dams.
- ✓ **Check with rangers** or other local authorities regarding permit requirements and restrictions on camping, hiking and equipment use in the area you plan to visit.
- ✓ **Check the local and regional weather forecast and local weather patterns.**

-
- ✓ **Study your map to identify possible escape routes.**
 - ✓ **Plan ahead for escape or retreat.**
 - ✓ **Hone your navigation skills.**
It is important to carry a detailed topographic map of the canyon, but it won't do you much good if you don't know how to use it.
 - ✓ **Assess equipment requirements** including footwear, apparel, hardware and the rope lengths needed for the longest rappel. If you don't have the equipment you need to descend safely, don't attempt the descent. If you don't know how to use the equipment properly, get professional instruction.
 - ✓ **Wear helmets** anytime there is a risk of rockfall, when climbing or down climbing, and when rappelling. In other words - always!
 - ✓ **Make realistic time estimates**, then add some extra time for contingencies. Things can go wrong and solving problems is always easier in the light of day.
 - ✓ **Get an early start.**
 - ✓ **Prepare for contingencies.** Take a flashlight, dry clothing, extra water and food, first aid kit and rescue gear. Don't let a little problem turn into a tragedy because you are not prepared.
 - ✓ **Tell someone** where you are going, what you plan to do and when you plan to return. If a rescue becomes necessary, it won't begin until someone reports you missing. The odds of a successful rescue will be increased if the search and rescue team knows where to look.



Canyoneering Safety

Canyoneering is not without risk and accidents do occur just as they do in any outdoor pursuit. Equipment is lost or damaged, injuries are sustained and sometimes there are deaths. The key to your safety will be to recognize, acknowledge and plan for the risks. Only then can you make sound decisions and take appropriate steps to avoid or minimize problems. It can make the difference between walking out, being carried out, or perhaps not getting out at all.

Flash Floods - Know Before You Go

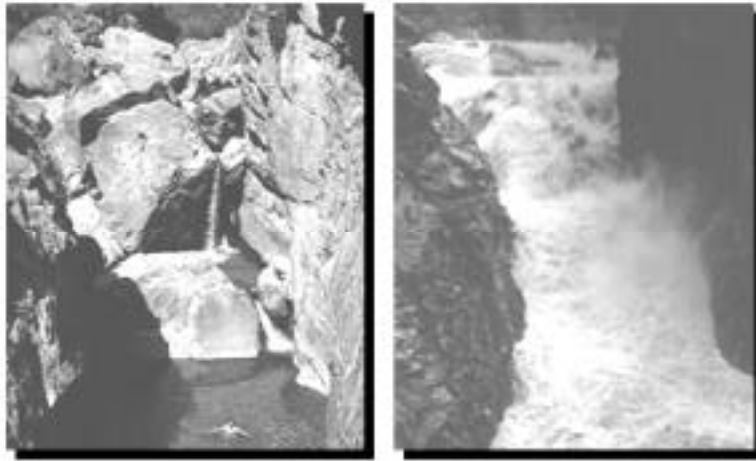
Flash floods present the single greatest threat to canyoneers. Canyons were created by water and they continue to serve as the path of least resistance for rain and melting snow. Floods concentrate in narrow canyons, becoming furious and violent, often raising the water level ten feet or more in a matter of seconds.

There are a number of factors that contribute to the potential for a flash flood - the most obvious of which is the weather. A basic understanding of meteorology is critical for every canyoneer. Before you enter any canyon, be sure to check the forecast for the entire watershed and be aware of local weather patterns. Keep in mind that forecasts are not 100% reliable. You should also consider factors such as watershed, potential runoff, upstream precipitation, snowmelt and dams.

Watershed is the total land area that drains into the canyon. A small amount of rain over a large watershed can cause a dramatic flash flood. Similarly, an intense storm in one part of the watershed many miles away can create a flash flood where you are, sometimes many hours later. Study your maps and scout the watershed terrain. On steep rocky slopes, water will tend to run along the surface rather than be absorbed into the ground. This runoff leads to flash floods.

Upstream precipitation should be your greatest concern when evaluating flash flood risk. How far upstream depends on the size of the watershed that feeds the canyon. If the watershed is small, upstream could mean only a few miles. If the watershed is large, upstream could mean a hundred miles

and the sky above it will be too far away to watch. Checking local weather patterns will give you an idea of the direction from which weather systems develop. If they tend to develop from the west and the canyon runs from east to west, you may see changes in the weather forming as it passes over you moving upstream. If they tend to develop from the east, changes could occur behind you without your knowledge. It will be even more critical to seek accurate and timely weather information and to analyze all of the other factors described in this section.



Flash Flood -- Before and During

Photos by Patrick Gimat

Recent precipitation should also be checked. If the ground is already saturated, it will absorb less new precipitation, leaving more to flow along the surface. Recent rain increases the risk of flash floods.

Snow anywhere within the watershed must be considered. The combined volume of rain and melting snow can create a deluge, even in canyons with small watersheds.

Other risk factors such as dams should also be considered. As you study your maps and scout the watershed, look closely for natural and man-made dams. A beaver dam, or even a logjam, can create a reservoir of water that could be released all at once if it breaks. Even if the watershed is not wooded, don't discount the possibility that a natural dam could have

been created by a rock slide or the accumulation of vegetation. While there may not be much risk of a man-made dam breaking, it is common for water to be intentionally released when the reservoir becomes too full or irrigation is needed downstream. With a telephone call to the dam operator you can determine if a release is likely and inform the dam operator of your plans.

Flash Flood Awareness

Even when all possible precautions have been taken, flash floods can catch you unaware. Once you are in a canyon, it is important that you protect yourself by remaining constantly aware of potential warning signs.

- **Water Level.** Watch for a sudden rise in water level or an increase in speed.
- **Debris.** Watch for an increase in floating debris such as pinecones, needles, small twigs and leaves.
- **Water Color.** Watch for sudden or unexpected changes in water color.
- **Smell.** Pay attention to changes in the air. Rain and mud both have recognizable smells and can be a warning sign.
- **Sound.** Survivors and witnesses have described the deadliest of flash floods as a “wall of water” crashing down the canyon. The sound is described as a loud roar like thunder.

Flash Flood Response

Unfortunately, none of these warning signs are foolproof or absolute. It is certainly possible for a flash flood to occur with no warning whatsoever. If you are lucky enough to receive a warning, time will be of the essence - you must move quickly. Better to take an action that turns out to be unnecessary than to hesitate and be swept away.

- **Don't try to outrun a flash flood.** You will lose.
- **Seek high ground immediately.** Preferably at an inside bend in the stream. Centrifugal force will push water higher on the outside of a bend. High ground can often be recognized by dense, mature vegetation. Lines or

erosion on the canyon walls can also indicate high water marks.

- ➔ **Shed your pack.** Don't let a heavy pack or other equipment slow you down. No equipment is worth your life - drop it and get to high ground.
- ➔ **Wait for the flood to subside.** Do not try to travel across or through a flooded canyon. This may require waiting 24 hours or more. Be patient.
- ➔ **Assume the defensive swimming position.** If you are unable to reach high ground and are swept away by the current, roll over on your back, feet downstream. Wearing a helmet will increase your odds of survival.



The aspects of canyoneering that make it so appealing -- remote, pristine wilderness and technical challenge -- also make rescue very difficult. Rescue could take many hours, even days, and there is no guarantee of success. You must take responsibility for your own safety by being prepared.

Photo by Tom Jones

General Safety Concerns

The risks involved in canyoneering include many that are common to all outdoor adventures - getting struck by lightning, bitten by animals, stung by insects, twisting your ankle - plus a few that are unique to canyoneering or exacerbated by canyon environments. Most problems can be avoided if you are prepared. Frequently people neglect to learn about the canyon they plan to enter. They discover too late that they do not have the proper clothing, gear or skills and the result can be tragic. The list below is a guideline of general safety concerns to consider before entering any canyon.

Drowning. It is critical that you honestly assess your swimming ability before committing to a descent that requires long swims or swims in strong current. When in doubt, be sure to have adequate floatation. This could be a life jacket or a dry bag filled with air for buoyancy. Even strong swimmers can sometimes experience difficulty. Fatigue can be accelerated by cold water. Swimming in current wearing a bulky wet suit, heavily laden with ropes and gear, is a lot more challenging than swimming laps in your backyard pool.

Hypothermia occurs when conditions overwhelm the body's ability to maintain a constant temperature. In the cold waters of deep, narrow canyons - beyond the reach of the sun's warming rays - hypothermia is a serious problem. Uncontrollable shivering, bluish lips and fingernails, and slurred speech are warning signs. Hypothermia can cause poor decision making, disorientation and, if not remedied, death. Hypothermia can also be a major contributing factor in drowning. Protect yourself by wearing appropriate apparel. If conditions warrant, wear a wet suit or dry suit. Take a change of warm, dry clothes. Pack them in waterproof bags so they will be dry when you need them.

Heat Related Injuries. Heat exhaustion is caused by prolonged exposure to the sun. Dehydration is the lack of fluid in the body and results from inadequate water intake. Dehydration can speed the onset of other heat injuries. Heat related injuries can cause dizziness, fatigue, disorientation and poor coordination. If not remedied, heatstroke can develop. Heat stroke occurs when the body core temperature rises beyond the capacity of the body to cool or cope. Heat stroke is very serious and can quickly lead to death.

Foot Injuries. Wet feet, blisters, sprains, broken bones - foot injuries of all types are common in canyoneering. Finding the right footwear is very important. Wear shoes that provide adequate support. It is easy to roll an ankle walking on river rocks. Sandals and other lightweight shoes are generally not appropriate. Soles with good traction on wet rock will help prevent slips and falls.

Deep inside a canyon, even a minor injury can create major problems.



Don't Count on Rescue

Canyoneering will take you into some of the most spectacular and remote landscapes you will ever see. The technical problems that you encounter will challenge your abilities and heighten your sense of adventure. But keep in mind that the very elements that make canyoneering appealing will also complicate a rescue if it becomes necessary. If you or someone in your group becomes injured, it will be difficult for a search and rescue team to find you, gain access to render medical care, and extricate you from the canyon. Rescue could take several days and there is no guarantee of success. You must take responsibility for your own safety by being prepared.

Planning for Escape or Retreat

As you descend a canyon it is critical that you constantly consider your options for escape or retreat. Escape refers to exiting the canyon to the rim through breaks in the canyon wall - climbable cracks, tributaries, steep gullies, lower-angled slopes, or a series of shelves. Retreat refers to retracing your route and returning upstream by climbing the rock or ascending fixed ropes. Planning for escape or retreat is especially important during first descents when the difficulty of the terrain ahead is unknown. It is also important when you question the reliability of the information you received regarding the canyon (i.e. anchors, rope length required, water volume) or you are concerned about the likelihood of a flash flood. An awareness of your options will allow you to make better decisions in an emergency or to change your plans if you discover that you miscalculated the time required to complete the descent.

The planning process should begin even before you enter the canyon. Study your topographic map to identify potential exits. If possible, scout each exit from the rim. If it does not appear that any natural exits exist, consider hanging fixed ropes over the rim at strategic locations to facilitate your exit if it becomes necessary. Once you begin your descent, refer to the map often to remain aware of the location of each potential exit. Is the closest exit a little ways ahead of you or behind you? As you pass each exit, study it to determine if it is actually doable. Can you exit here quickly or will it require setting up protection and belays? While you're at it, keep your eyes open for high ground. Constantly ask yourself; "If a flash flood came right now, where would I go?" This mental exercise can drastically reduce your reaction time in the event of an actual flash flood and could save your life.

If you are uncertain about your ability to escape to the rim, it will be wise to plan ahead for the possibility of retreat. Do not pull your rope immediately after a rappel. Leave it fixed until you are certain of an exit downstream. Then return to pull the rope.

Canyoneering is fun and we encourage you to explore, but remember that your safety is your responsibility. Your decision to enter a canyon when the risks are high or you are unprepared could have dire consequences.

When in doubt, stay out!
The canyon will still be there tomorrow.

Canyoneering Ethics

Part of the attraction of canyoneering is the sense of discovery and adventure we feel as we descend each canyon for the first time. This sensation is heightened when we find them in their natural state, showing minimal evidence of previous visitors. Unfortunately, impacts that were insignificant or went unnoticed when there were fewer canyoneers have begun to accumulate and diminish the natural character of our canyons. Many ethical issues have arisen as participants debate appropriate ways to protect the pristine nature of our canyons in light of increased use.

Once in a while we hear someone refer to "THE canyoneering ethic." But each time we hear the term we hear a different definition, especially as it relates to the use of fixed artificial anchors. There is not enough agreement among participants to establish one set of rules for this emerging sport and it is not our intent to dictate such rules. We only wish to suggest some things that you should consider doing to help maintain the natural beauty and serenity of our canyons.

Leave No Trace

- **Check with rangers** or other local authorities regarding restrictions on camping, hiking and equipment use in the area you plan to visit.
- **Stay on established trails.** If no trail exists, walk on the most durable surface possible.
- **Stay as low in the watercourse as possible when you are in a canyon.** This way, your footprints will be washed away more quickly and you will be less likely to cause erosion.
- **Be careful not to step on or damage plants,** including cryptobiotic soil.
- **Minimize disturbances to the environment.** Never modify an area to make a campsite. The best campsites are natural and do not need to be improved. Camp on slick rock or open sand.



-
- **Use a tent** rather than build a natural shelter. In an emergency, if you have to build a natural shelter, dismantle it and scatter the remains before you leave.
 - **Clean up after yourself.** Do not leave wrappers, food or any other refuse in the canyon. You packed it in - you can pack it out.
 - **Leave the canyon cleaner than you found it.** Pick up all litter you find in the canyon.
 - **Bury or pack out all human waste.** Human waste left in narrow slot canyons, in alcoves, under overhangs, under rocks, or in any other dark, cool environment will not break down readily. Bury it at least six inches deep and 200 feet away from any water. The best location will have maximum sun exposure - on bare ground away from vegetation. In many canyons this is not possible, so you must be prepared to carry out your waste. Pack out your toilet paper, or, if fire warnings allow, burn it thoroughly.
 - **Use stoves instead of fires** whenever possible. Fires leave long lasting scars and impact the surrounding ecology.
 - **Leave ruins, artifacts and pictographs as you found them** so that others may enjoy them, too. Do not touch.
 - **Be sensitive to wildlife**, especially during mating and nesting seasons. Never feed wild animals. Feeding them spreads disease and increases their dependence on humans. Watch and listen to wildlife from a distance.

Etiquette

- **Talk quietly.** Respect other peoples' desire to enjoy the serenity of the canyon by avoiding loud conversations and other boisterous behavior.
- **Allow others to "play through."** Canyons can be very narrow, providing no room for faster groups to pass slower groups. As a result, bottlenecks can develop, especially at rappel stations. Be considerate of others. The efficiency and safety of both groups can be improved through cooperation.
- **Park only in designated areas** or along roadways that are not posted. Car pool whenever it is practical.



Vandalism is vandalism, no matter who does it. The owner of this property was more concerned about his rights than the 2000-year-old pictograph he destroyed. Photo by Shane Burrows

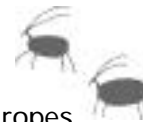
Permits and Trespassing

Canyons exist on private land, public land and Native American land. Some are freely accessible. Some are accessible only with the required permits. Others are closed completely. As canyoneers we must respect the rights and responsibilities of all land managers if we hope to insure our future access to the canyons. When fees are required, they are usually only a few dollars - a small price to pay for the great pleasure we derive from our canyoneering experiences.

Help maintain positive relationships between canyoneers, other recreators, landowners and managers by obeying the regulations that apply to users of these lands.

Anchors

Many canyons require the use of rope to descend. Using ropes usually necessitates some kind of anchor. There are two basic types of anchors -- natural and artificial. Natural anchors are constructed using materials found in the canyon; trees, rocks and other natural features. Artificial anchors are constructed by placing fixed hardware in the rock, typically bolts and hangers. Constructing any anchor is a serious issue; your life



depends on its strength. Placing artificial anchors properly is much more difficult than simply tying a piece of webbing around a tree. Improperly placed bolts are not only unsightly, but also very dangerous. If you place a bolt, people descending the canyon after you will place their lives in your hands. For this reason, **artificial anchors should only be placed by experts.**

Issues to consider as you weigh your anchor options:

1. Safety

Your single most important concern when descending any canyon should be the safety of your group. At least one member of your party should be able to (a) accurately judge the safety of any anchor you may find, and (b) construct solid natural and artificial anchors. Risking life or serious injury by using an anchor of unknown or marginal strength, whether natural or artificial, is foolish. Be sure to bring plenty of webbing to build your own anchors if needed, and to replace unsafe slings left by previous parties. A bolt kit may also be a good item to carry, IF you know how to use it. **A bolt kit should not be considered as a substitute for good natural anchor building skills.**

2. Environmental Impact

Your second concern should be for the long-term impact on the canyon. As canyoneers, it is our responsibility to respect and conserve our canyon resources by supporting minimum impact practices.

You should always try to:

- ✓ **Remain in the watercourse to minimize erosion.** If you must leave the watercourse, try to minimize your impact by staying as close to the watercourse as possible and moving only on solid rock.
- ✓ **Locate anchors used by previous parties.** This can often eliminate the need to build additional, unnecessary anchors.

-
- ✓ **Clean up each anchor you encounter.** Remove old webbing and carry it out. Replace the old webbing with new; do not add your new webbing on top of the old. This practice can quickly create an unsightly (and difficult to inspect) “rats nest” of tattered webbing.
 - ✓ **Consider other options before building an anchor.** Do you really have to rappel? Down climbing, when within your ability, will eliminate the need for an anchor. Be sure to consider the abilities of everyone in your group. Perhaps the best climber in your group can provide a belay for others, then downclimb solo. For short down climbs, spotting from below may be adequate.

Just because it's there doesn't mean it's solid. You are responsible for your own safety. Inspect every anchor, natural or artificial, to make sure it is solid before you trust your life to it.

Photo by Tom Jones



-
- ✓ **Combine rappels.** Using a single anchor for one long rappel will eliminate the need to place additional anchors.
 - ✓ **Use natural anchors whenever possible.** All things being equal, use a natural anchor for your rappel. Learn to rig the rope so that nothing is left behind, including webbing.
 - ✓ **Use only natural, subdued colors if you must leave webbing behind.**

-
- ✓ **Consider the health of the vegetation used for anchors.** In remote, seldom-traveled canyons, these natural anchors only support an occasional canyoneer. In heavily-traveled canyons, however, the repeated use of a single tree may ultimately kill it.
 - ✓ **Give extra thought to the anchors at the first and last rappels in the canyon.** Anchors in the canyon are typically only seen by other canyoneers. Other recreators, such as hikers, can often see the first and last anchors. They may not appreciate your anchor marring their otherwise pristine view.
 - ✓ **Place artificial anchors only when the alternatives are unsafe or would result in a greater environmental impact to the canyon.** If alternatives exist, but require skills that are beyond your ability, do not place artificial anchors. Learn the necessary skills to utilize the alternatives and return to the canyon when you are better prepared.
 - ✓ **Place artificial anchors correctly and securely** (considering the type of rock and the watercourse), so that subsequent users will not have to place additional anchors. Rather than backing up a bad bolt with a good bolt, remove the bad bolt(s) and replace it/them with good ones. Placing reliable bolts requires training and practice.
 - ✓ **Do not remove artificial anchors placed by others unless they are obviously unsafe.** If you do remove an artificial anchor, do so cleanly. Fill the hole with epoxy or Bondo mixed with sand and do your best to return the rock to a natural appearance.



American Canyoneering Association

The American Canyoneering Association (ACA) was founded in 1999 in response to canyoneering's growing popularity and the obvious need to provide accurate and timely information regarding safety and ethics. Membership is open to both recreational canyoneers and professional canyoneering guides.

The ACA provides:

- Comprehensive technical canyoneering courses.
- Canyoneering Rendezvous four to six times each year.
- Certification programs for canyon leaders and professional canyoneering guides.
- On-line forums for sharing ideas, information and technical tips.
- A photo gallery for sharing photos of favorite canyons.
- Canyoneering gear and guidebook reviews.

Our goal is to provide information and education for canyoneers of all experience levels. For additional information, please visit our web site at www.canyoneering.net.

Technical Canyoneering Courses

Canyoneering is not a new sport; it has been around for decades. It has, however, enjoyed a tremendous surge in popularity over the past few years. Unfortunately, many of the people who are discovering this exciting sport remain unaware of the inherent risks and the complex technical skills required to enjoy it safely.

The American Canyoneering Association has established a standard curriculum that covers the essentials of safe canyoneering. Topics include: canyon topography and rating systems; gear selection, care and use; knots and anchors; evaluating and rigging anchors and belay systems; proper use of tension-releasing hitches and contingency anchors; passive lowering systems; ascending; multi-pitch rappelling; swift water rescue; technical rope rescue; jumps and water slides; canyon navigation and route finding; and much, much more.

Beginner through advanced courses are available. Basic courses are appropriate for recreational canyoneers seeking instruction in fundamental canyoneering skills and for professional guides interested in acquiring a broader base of skills for both wet and dry canyons. Advanced courses include topics such as canyon rescue and specialized guiding techniques.

Special rates are available for backcountry rangers and active members of search and rescue teams who work in areas with technical canyon terrain.

For additional details and course schedule please visit our web site at www.canyoneering.net.

Comments from Students:

"This course will easily become the standard by which any other canyoneering course will be judged. It was amazing that the professional mountaineering guides found a lot to learn, but the pace was such that a neophyte like me could also pick things up quickly."

"I have been a rock climber for over a decade and didn't really expect to learn anything new. Was I ever wrong. I didn't realize that there were so many specialized systems employed in canyoneering. All of it makes sense. Rock climbing systems are fine for dry rock, but not at all appropriate in a canyon, especially if there is water present."

"This was a great opportunity for me to get exposure to a myriad of new techniques for use in future canyoneering exploits. The experience and perspective of the instructors added another dimension and contributed greatly to the value of the course."

FREE Natural Anchor Workshops

Anchors used in canyoneering can be single stout trees or complex self-equalizing rigs using multiple tie-in points. They can be natural or artificial, temporary or fixed. What you use will depend on what is needed, what is naturally available and what is appropriate. What is appropriate is subject to local canyoneering ethics. In many areas the problem solving skills needed to build an anchor (in the absence of an obvious natural or artificial one) is considered a major part of the challenge.

Most canyoneers prefer natural anchors over fixed anchors when they are safe and convenient. Quite often, however, natural anchor options do exist that are safe, but the canyoneer lacks the expertise and/or confidence to build and rely on it. The purpose of this free workshop is to impart to our students the skills and techniques necessary to identify and evaluate natural anchor opportunities and how to construct single- and multi-point systems.

Topics covered include:

- basic anchor principles
- anchor tie-in methods
- modeling and sequencing to maximize anchor efficiency
- how to avoid shock loading and load multipliers
- how to test anchors
- evaluating existing anchors
- using vegetation and rock features
- pickets, deadmen and bollards
- cross beams
- wedges and jammed knots
- hooks and pitons
- retrievable anchor systems

During the workshop students will build and test nearly a dozen different anchors. The result will be a new found confidence in your ability to construct and evaluate natural anchors and less reliance on fixed anchors.

For additional details and workshop schedule please visit our web site at www.canyoneering.net.

How to Choose a Canyoneering Guide

In the U.S. training of professional guides in most outdoor adventure programs is very loosely organized. While some guide services conduct their own in-house training, few guides have any formal training. This is especially true in emerging disciplines like canyoneering. As a result, anyone can print up some business cards and claim to be a guide.

Imagine yourself halfway through a canyon. Your guide didn't adequately evaluate the weather or the watershed. The sky is clear overhead, but water begins to flow and it is getting deeper. Your guide's rock climbing and rappelling skills have proven adequate so far, but the rappels ahead of you are no longer dry. You will be rappelling over high-volume waterfalls. Getting out of this dangerous situation will require expertise and training far beyond the basics.

One of the goals of the American Canyoneering Association is to raise the technical and professional standards of canyoneering guides in the United States to an international standard. The ACA is this country's only organization to offer guide training and certification programs recognized by the Commission Europeene de Canyon (CEC). While it is impossible to eliminate all risks, choosing a guide that is certified by the ACA ensures that the individual has demonstrated an acceptable level of skills that separate the professional guide from the recreational canyoneer. For you as a consumer, ACA certification provides a decisive tool for choosing the right guide.



Photo by Stefan Hofmann



AMERICAN CANYONEERING ASSOCIATION

www.canyoneering.net