North of Mat-Su:

Kobuk Valley National Park rafting trip (10 days)
- High adventure trip during the beginning of July, requiring LOTS of advanced planning.
- Raft for about 105 miles down the Kobuk River above the Arctic Circle.
- Fly into Ambler, fly out of Kiana – you need to charter your own airplanes and rent your own canoe rafts that need to be flown in with the rest of your equipment.
- Camp on sandbars. Some are gravel, some are pristine sand.
- GREAT fishing for sheefish.
- Need to travel about 12 miles each day.
- River is mostly shallow (about 4 ft deep), wide (mostly ¼ mile) and slow (about 3 MPH). Paddling will get you up to about 5 to 6 MPH. It is like canoeing on the longest lake in the world.
- Build tripods with your paddles on the sand bars to hang gravity water filter bags.
- Be prepared for afternoon headwinds, and afternoon downpours. Keep breakfast simple and get in the water EARLY each day before the afternoon weather starts.
- Once you get off the sand bars and into the brush, be prepared for the worst mosquito conditions you have probably ever encountered! But the camping experience is worth it.
- Visit Kobuk Sand Dunes – 3 miles hike from the Kobuk River up Kavet Creek (no trail access) through mosquito wonderland.

Denali National Park (7 days)
- High adventure trip. Requires advanced planning.
- Sun: Drive to Riley Creek
- Mon: Drive to Teklanika, hike along Teklanika River
- Tues: Shuttle bus to Tattler Creek, hike up creek to the top of Sable Mountain (Hike #17)
- Wed: Shuttle bus to Polychrome Pass, hike up Polychrome Ridge (Hike #20)
- Thurs: Shuttle bus to Eielson Visitor Center, hike up Thoro Ridge to Thoro Peak (Hike #45)
- Fri: Drive to Riley Creek, hike to Mount Healy over look (Hike #2) or Horseshoe Lakes and see beavers and a big beaver dam (Hike #1),
- Sat: Go rafting with Denali Raft Adventures, visit Honolulu Creek slot canyon on the way back to Anchorage

Denali State Park: Kesugi Ridge (27.5 miles – 4 days)
- Could be considered a high adventure trip. Recommended for older scouts only.
- Lots of stone cairns mark the trail.
- The accents and descents are very steep. Definitely best to go north to south on this trip. Also, the ridge is bisected by a deep valley, so it will be necessary to descend into it and accent out of it. Beautiful white granite outcrops and boulders. Breathtaking views.
- Pump your own water, lots of creeks and lakes.
• Thurs: Drive to Denali North View, camp overnight
• Fri: Little Coal Creek trailhead (leave cars at Byers Lake and Denali North View), camp at 10-Mile Tarn
• Sat: Hike past Skinny Lake, climb the ridge above Skinny Lake, camp at one of the 3 tarns just below the summit.
• Sun: End hike at Byers Lake, drive back to Anchorage.
• Map at: http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/aktrails/ats/matsu/kesugi.htm
• For 3-day trip instead of a 4-day trip, you can descend the ridge using the Ermine Hill trail instead of the Byers Lake trail.

Byer’s Lake Campground:
• Good access to the lake for canoeing, and there is a place you can rent a canoe.
• There are several public use cabins for rent.
• Great hiking trails – hiking around the lake or out to the Cascades waterfall over a cable suspension bridge. The Kesugi Ridge hike is also accessible from here.
• Some geocaches in the area.
• Visit the Veterans’ War Memorial, which is a very short hike (less than a mile) from the main campground.

Mat-Su:

Hatcher Pass
• Great place for winter camping.
• Upper parking lot if the area is still closed to snowmachining, lower parking lot if the area is open to snowmachining.
• Contact the ranger for a free camping permit.
• Park vehicles in front of snow caves to prevent other vehicles from caving them in. All snow cave mouths must face the parking lot.
• Mile-long sledding hill – drive scouts to the top, pick them up at the bottom. Check for safety – hill is not safe if the snow conditions are icy. Wear a helmet.

Nancy Lake State Recreational Area
• Many Public Use Cabins on the various lakes for rental.
• Great canoeing trail with portages to multiple lakes! Go to Tanania Lake for canoe trailhead. Good tent camping sites at Lynx Lake (half-way around the loop).
• Nancy Lake State Recreation Campground, with 30 campsites
• South Rolly Lake Campground, Nancy Lake State Recreation Area:
  o Denali District has had the Fall Camporee here in the past.
  o There are 96 campsites.
  o Good access to the lake for canoeing, and there is a place you can rent a canoe.
  o Good volleyball sand pit.
  o Large open area up the hill from the camp site where you can do activities such as staging a geocaching hunt. It is also the trailhead for the Red Shirt Lake Trail (6-miles round-trip). There are 8 lakeside campsites at the end of this trail, and several public use cabins on the lake.
Anchorage Area:

Eklutna Lake
- Ask the ranger to rent the large group campsite. This way your scouts can be loud but not disturb the rest of the general public camping at the regular campsites. Volunteer for a service project to pick up trash in the regular campsites for a few hours to get a waiver of the camping fee.
- Great bike ride along the length of Eklutna Lake. 10.5 miles one way to reach a large bridge on the trail is a convenient place to stop and will count as two 10-milers toward Cycling merit badge, or go a little further for a 26-miler round-trip to the start of the Eklutna Glacier moraine trailhead. The last 2.5 miles are definitely worth the effort, as there are incredible views of towering mountains and huge waterfalls. The trail has mile markers.
- Good beachcombing. Explore the dam at the mouth of the lake.
- Good hiking trails:
  - Twin Peaks trail, 2.6 miles, trailhead at the main campsite area.
  - Bold Ridge trail, 4.2 miles, trailhead at Bold Creek bridge, about 5 miles down the lakeside trail.
- Yuditna Public Use cabin at about mile 3 of the lakeside trail, and Serenity Falls Public Use Hut at about mile 12 toward the very end of the lakeside trail.
- Remote campsites located at far end of the lake, about 8 miles down the lakeside trail.
- Have ice cream on the way home at the ice cream shop just outside the park entrance.

Eagle & Symphony Lakes
- Accessible from South Fork trailhead, almost the very end of Hiland Road in Eagle River.
- Great scenery, challenging boulder field to hike over!
- Camp along Symphony Lake (glacial water), pump water from Eagle Lake (clear water).

Williwaw Lakes
- Best access is from Glenn Alps trailhead above Anchorage.
- Great scenery, beautiful string of lakes, good access to water to pump from. Hike can be a little muddy in places.
- Can make the trip into a loop and return by hiking up and over the “football field” just west of O’Malley Peak. This leg of the hike will be much dryer (not muddy).
- Good description with a link to a topo map at: http://www.romancingalaska.com/southcentral/SC_williwaw_lakes_hiking_trail.htm

Bird Creek Campground
- Nearby access to Bird Ridge trailhead. Great hike.
• On the bike trail – can bike to Bird Point or go all the way to Girdwood and have ice cream.

Crow Creek Mine
• This is a privately owned location. Call and ask for permission to camp, ask to pick up trash for a service project to reduce or waive camping fees.
• Go gold panning at Crow Creek Mine. Owners will give a discount for scout groups.
• Good access to Winner Creek trail. Hand tram across Winner Creek at about a mile down the trail.
• Good map at http://www.muni.org/Departments/parks/Documents/GWSummerTrlMap.pdf

Portage Valley
• Numerous campsites.
• Good access to bike trail that runs the length of the Portage Valley road.
• Portage Glacier Visitor Center at end of the road.
• Be prepared for unpredictable weather.

Spencer Glacier
• Access is by the Alaska Railroad only.
• Denali District had its Fall 2003 Camporee at this location.
• Backpack in for about a mile, camp on the shore of Spencer Glacier Lake.
• Hiking trail to the glacier.

Kenai Peninsula:

Johnson Pass (23 miles, 3 full-day backpacking trip)
• Leave early Friday morning.
• Start trip at north trailhead, milepost 64 Seward Highway. Stage vehicles for pickup at south trailhead, milepost 32.5 Seward Highway (just west of upper Trail Lake & the fish hatchery).
• This is part of the historic Iditarod Trail. Hiking this trail can qualify your group for a special Iditarod historical trails medal specific for Alaska, as well as the BSA Historic Trails Award. A service project is required. Contact the ranger for details.
• Lots of cow parsnip along trail. The sap can cause severe skin rashes and welts in sunlight, so be careful!
• Fabulous views, including a huge gorge along Bench Creek.
• Some snow on the trail, even during summer.
• Numerous places to camp, but we camped for the first night (Friday) on a tundra meadow at a small designated campground at the summit of the pass, on the northeast end of Bench Lake (9 miles from the north trailhead). On the second night (Saturday) we camped only 3 miles away in a wooded area at the southwest end of Johnson Lake at a designated campground with lots of mosquitoes! I wore my raingear, headnet, and liner gloves at the campsites even though it wasn’t raining. Both locations had bear boxes.
• Good fishing in both lakes.
Ptarmigan Lake (3.5 miles each way)
- Access is from Ptarmigan Creek Campground, milepost 23.3 Seward Highway.
- Best campground is at the very start of the lake, access trail is to your right. There is also a bear box.

Palmer Creek Road:
- From milepost 16.2 of the Hope Highway, head south on Resurrection Creek Road and turn left on Palmer Creek Road. At milepost 6 is Coeur d’Alene campground with 6 small campsites. You can continue past the campground and eventually on your left will be an open field where a large group can camp.
- You can drive to the end of the road at the end of the valley. There is a hiking trail to the left that will take you to the top of the ridge where there is a small lake and a great view. You can also go biking up the old mining road.

Swan Lake Canoe Trails, Sterling (4 day trip with 3 days of canoeing)
- Rent canoes and a canoe trailer from Camp Gorsuch. Or, you can rent them from Alaska Canoe & Campgrounds in Sterling (907-262-3583).
- Access is from Swanson River Road off the Sterling Hwy. Turn right onto Swan Lake Road. Look for large sign on right, “West Entrance, Swan Lake Canoe Route”.
- Recommend camping the night before (Thursday) at nearby Dolly Varden Lake campsite. One day to canoe in and camp (Friday), one day of day trips and go back to camp (Saturday, bring a lunch to eat on the trail), and one day to canoe back (Sunday).
- On the way back to Anchorage, stop off at Magpye’s Pizzeria for lunch (Mile 82.7 Sterling Hwy, near the turnoff of Swanson River Road). It helps if your pre-order when you get into cell phone range, 907-262-9397.
- Recommend camping in any of several camp sites on Martin Lake or Spruce Lake, which are connected to each other via a scenic channel through a marsh.
- There are lots of land portages, many of them are long. If you go when the water level is high, some of the portages can be done though the streams that connect the lakes.
- If you want to keep on going beyond Spruce Lake, you can potentially do a loop, but his makes for a much longer trip.
- For the Saturday day trip, we have gone from Spruce Lake eastward to Trout Lake as a hike. This portage is almost a mile long, but it is through an incredible large and tall aspen forest. I have been told that (supposedly) it is the largest of its kind in southcentral Alaska. We have also gone this route as a canoe portage and went through several lakes. We went as far as Konchanee Lake before turning around. The water on these particular lakes are remarkably crystal clear.
- Also for the Saturday day trip, we have gone from Spruce Lake southwest to Otter Lake. The portage to Otter Lake is long so we have only hiked it. The put-in point on Otter Lake is shallow and sandy so it is a good opportunity for the scouts to walk around in the water with their waders on.
- Here is a map (not great resolution) of the canoe trail routes: http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/aktrails/ats/ken/swanlk.htm

Hidden Lake campground
- South shore of Hidden Lake, off of Skilak Lake Road.
• Denali District held a spring camporee there several years ago.

Engineer Lake cabin
• Northwest shore of Engineer Lake, off Skilak Lake Road.
• Good destination in winter where you can snowshoe or ski across the lake to the cabin. Summer access is along a hiking trail. About a mile hike from the parking area to the cabin.
• There is a hiking trail on the northwest side of the lake that goes north for a day hike.
• This is a great little cabin. We used it to cook in and store our food, and we all slept outside in tents or in shelters.

Right Beach, Katchemak Bay State Park (4 days, we did Friday-Monday)
• High adventure trip, requires pre-planning for transportation. We did this in mid-June.
• This trip is weather dependent because most of the travel is dependent on water transportation.
• Drive to Homer Spit. Get transportation across Katchemak Bay to Right Beach.
• We brought two zodiacs with us and we hired a water taxi. We rented zodiacs from Danny’s Inflatable Repair, 5821 Arctic Blvd in Anchorage.
• Best water conditions for crossing are early morning or evening. The first time we did this campout, we starting driving from Anchorage early Friday morning, arrived in Homer early afternoon, and crossed in the afternoon, which was not great timing because the seas were rough. When we did this same campout several years later, we drove from Anchorage Thursday night, camped in Stariski State Recreational Site that evening, then arrived in Homer on Friday late morning and crossed around noon. This was a better plan because the seas were much calmer. Also the second time we did the campout we deflated the zodiacs and the water taxi carried them onboard with the motors.
• Right Beach is located just to the north of Halibut Cove. Great campground on the right side of Right Beach. There is a round “yurt” cabin on the left side of Right Beach. Yes, there is a “Left Beach”. It is used by climbers when they climb the “Katchemak Crack”, a geologic feature known as a dike and is a sheer cliff.
• Great clamming at low tide on the south side of Halibut Cove, go digging around the cliff face and beach near the solitary house at that area. Travel by boat.
• Great hiking on the trail system to the north of Right Beach. Travel by boat to the Glacier Spit trailhead. Take Grewingk Glacier Trail to the tram that crosses Grewingk Creek. Have the scouts cross the creek on the tram several times. Back-track on the trail and take Glacier Lake Trail to Grewingk Glacier Lake. Some of our group did not want to take this hike so we split into two groups. One group went back to the boats and the other group went to the glacier lake. We met up with the boats at Saddle Trail trailhead.
• Trail map: http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/units/kbay/kbaytrs.htm

Childs Glacier, Chugach National Forest (7 days)
• High adventure trip, requires pre-planning for transportation and accommodations.
• Campground information: http://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/chugach/recarea/?recid=6654. Reserve several RV camping spots that are near each other. The tent camping spots are too remote to haul in all your gear.
• We did this trip in mid-July (2006 and 2009) to make sure all the snow had melted.
• Highlights of the trip are Childs Glacier (the most incredibly actively calving glacier I have ever seen, as the Copper River is constantly undercutting it) and the Million Dollar Bridge, the true Alaskan “Bridge to Nowhere”, as the road ends 2 miles on the other side.

• Be prepared for rain for most of this trip! Make sure you have lots of tarp and all the tents have rain flies.

• This was our original trip plan:
  o Day 1: Take ferry from Whittier to Cordova, stay overnight at Skater’s Cabin on Eyak Lake. Drive to the end of Eyak Lake Road, by a bridge, to watch bears fishing in the river late at night. There is also a boy scout troop cabin on the other side of the lake. Contact the Cordova boy scout troop for details on staying there.
  o Day 2: Bike the first 25 miles for the cycling merit badge. Especially visit the Alaganik boardwalk (a good lunch stop) and get in some world-class birdwatching. Drive the rest of the way to the Childs Glacier campground.
  o Day 3-5: Stay at campground. There is a very large lunch shelter at the campground, which we spent a lot of time at because of the rainy weather. For one day, walk bikes across the Million Dollar Bridge and bike to the very end of the road where it ends at a river. On the way back to the bridge, there is a trail to the right (not maintained) that leads up to the top of a high hill with a radio wave repeater tower. Incredible views at the top of this hill!
  o Day 6: Bike back to Cordova, either 25 miles or 50 miles. Stay overnight in the old Moose Lodge in the Wells Fargo Building (call up Wells Fargo to plan this). Visit the Cordova museum and have dinner at the Reluctant Fisherman restaurant.
  o Day 7: Get up very early the next morning and catch the ferry to Valdez and Whittier. Drive back to Anchorage.

• One of the bridges on the Copper River Delta washed out in spring 2012 at Mile 36. AK Dept of Transportation currently has no plans to repair it. However, there is a company that transports people across the river and then drives them to the Childs Glacier campground. Contact Jack Stevenson, 907-424-7135 (in Cordova), or 907-491-1424 (cell). His website is www.riversideinnCORDOVA.com. He gives a discount to scout groups.

• Even if you decide not to make the river crossing, there are still lots of places you can go in the Copper River Delta area. I recommend staying in the boy scout cabin and doing day trips to various destinations on the west side of the Copper River Delta.
Eklutna Lake Campground. Group campground is to the left side of map.
Eklutna Lake Trail map.
Eagle and Symphony Lakes, Eagle River
Crow Creek Mine / Winner Creek Trail area, Girdwood
Swan Lake Canoe Trail System, Sterling
Swan Lake Canoe Trail System, Sterling
Right Beach, Katchemak Bay State Park
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