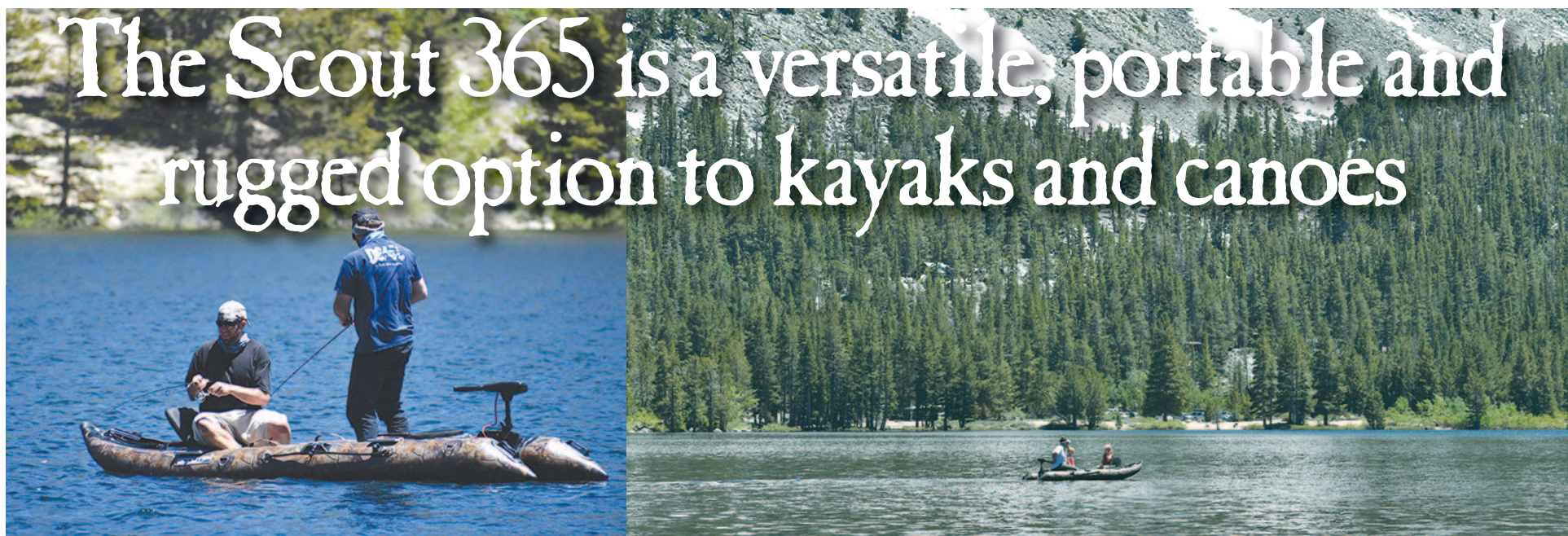


Fall Fishing Guide to the Sierra



THE SCOUT 365 is the ultimate inflatable kayak/canoe alternative. WON PHOTO BY MIKE STEVENS

WITH A 500-POUND CAPACITY, the Scout 365 can carry a wide array of passenger and gear combinations. It's a perfect "water taxi" for shuttling people and gear to otherwise inaccessible shorelines and islands. WON PHOTO BY MIKE STEVENS

BY MIKE STEVENS
WON Staff Writer

MAMMOTH LAKES — I have been saying for a long time, I definitely see a kayak in my Eastern Sierra fishing future. A combination of factors has caused this addition to my trout-fishing versatility to remain on the back burner, and while I was very skeptical at first, I'm now fully convinced I have found the all-encompassing solution.

Prior to the Fred Hall Shows, a kayak/canoe alternative called the Scout 365 kept popping up on my things-to-check-out-at-the-show radar. Seeing that giving it a once-over would serve personal as well as work needs, I headed over to the Scout Inflatables booth on Day 1 of the show.

Portability and the ability to safely store it overnight for up to 10 days (I'm a condo camper, we're talking parking lots where things tend to disappear from time to time) are the biggest reasons I have yet to head north on Highway 395 with a traditional kayak on my roof. How much space it takes up was also a concern, as a guy who travels with at least one or two other dudes, food and supplies for a week, and everyone's luggage, which usually gets put on the roof of my wee-little Ford Escape.

At Fred Hall, I saw an inflated Scout 365 on display in the booth and immediately noticed its sturdy, beefy looks, and the boat version of "kicking the tires" made me think of (not joking, it really did) the Kevlar pontoon raft Chuck Norris scored in the original *Missing in Action* movie. Point being, I knew right away that the giant treble hook on a just-unsnagged Thomas Buoyant traveling at 100 mph back at me wouldn't put a hole in the thing and put some serious drama into my day.

That bulletproof feel comes from its PVC fabric with polyester support that serves as its exterior armor. Hand-glued seams, overlapped sheets of material and dual

layers of reinforcement means maximum strength and durability. The drop-stitch Air Floor creates a rigid bottom (the more air you crank into it, the better) increasing stability, allowing for easy stand-up casting (5-11, 240-pound me not only stood and casted with ease, but I *tried* to dump myself into Rock Creek Lake to no avail) and an effortless glide over the water. To borrow a sportboat term, the Scout 365 sits "high on the water" regardless of the load.

The bottom of each pontoon has an 8-inch wide skid-pad that allows a worry-free drag from truck-to-shore. The Scout Inflatable staffers I met actually encouraged me to drag it to my heart's content.

It took me about 20 minutes from out-of-the-bag to into-the-water, but it's advertised as a 10-minute set-up which I easily accomplished on my second go-around. It packs into a big duffel bag, and accessories can fit into a similarly-sized bag. I had the boat bag, and a second bag containing two batteries, the Air Floor, oars, bench seats and seats with backrests, the included foot pump and an after-market electric pump that saves some time, and various other knick-knacks like rod holders and PFDs. All that was not bagged was the optional trolling motor that sat atop both bags in the back of my Escape with plenty of room to spare.

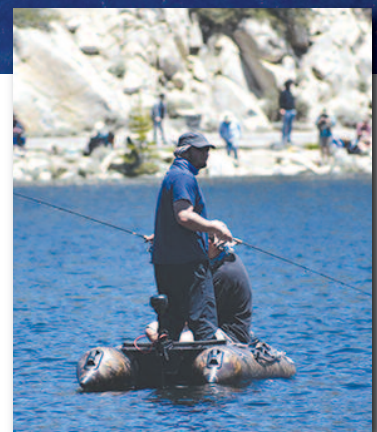
The Scout 365 is ideal for RV owners, tent or car campers, anyone who bounces from lake to lake like one might do in the Eastern Sierra, or anyone who needs maximum portability and easy set-up and take-down without sacrificing performance or safety. It's perfect for shuttling people and picnic supplies from one end of a lake to an otherwise unreachable beach or island for the day as well as a limitless variety of other non-fishing uses. A great craft for on-the-water family activities, I zipped around with ease with my 6- and 4-year-old girls, then my wife and baby boy, and I gave it a real test by putting the two heaviest guys in my fishing party out on Rock Creek Lake and told them to have at it, and the performance was the same as with a lighter load. It has a 500-pound capacity and can take up to a 3.5-horsepower outboard or various sizes of electric motors.

Scout Inflatables' pro staffer Ryan Moriarty uses a Scout 365 (the exact one I field tested, actually. He made me give it back) as a support boat in salt-water kayak tournaments as well as in the Colorado River. He's made plenty of videos trying to tip the thing over, too.

There's a lot more to the Scout 365, including the optional tent feature that turns the boat into a comfy 1-man shelter worthy of overnights or using as a duck blind. Scout Inflatables is also



CUSTOMIZING the Scout 365 to fit your needs is limitless. Here it is at the Fred Hall Show with the optional tent attachment which Scout Inflatables staffer Ryan Moriarty multi-day camped in during an Eastern Sierra trip. WON PHOTO BY MIKE STEVENS



INFLATABLE floorboards maximize stability and allow an angler to easily stand and cast. WON PHOTO BY MIKE STEVENS

developing support bars to further improve the ability to stand up and cast, which is a feature fly-fishermen will be all over.

For more information and all the specifications of the Scout 365, visit ScoutInflatables.com.

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