

Course Overview

The North Cascades Canoeing & Rock Climbing course offers young teens the opportunity to explore one of Washington State's most remote and beautiful lakes.

Your course will begin the moment you are picked up at the Seattle-Tacoma airport, and will continue through your trip into Ross Lake and the North Cascades of Washington, where the real discoveries take place. Now deep in the heart of our course area, you will embark on an incredible expedition into one of our country's most beautiful recreation areas. Upon your return from the wilderness, your crew will make a short drive to the Northwest Outward Bound Basecamp in the sunny Methow Valley. Once there, you'll make the short hike to one of our favorite local climbing crags, and have the opportunity to challenge yourself and encourage your expedition-mates.

During this incredible adventure in the majestic North Cascades, you will have the opportunity to share in a unique Outward Bound course where *character development and self-discovery* are the foundations of your experience.

You don't need to have previous sea canoeing or rock climbing experience. We will teach you skills for wilderness travel—how to pack appropriately, paddle canoes, set up tarps, climb, and navigate. The course also includes an emphasis on leadership, character development, and an ethic of service.

From getting up early, packing your bags and cooking breakfast to paddling a canoe or climbing a rock face, traveling in the wilderness is demanding. It can take every waking moment to get from point A to point B. Past students and instructors agree that arriving physically fit will enhance your experience and ability to do well on the course and ultimately allow you to take full advantage of the expedition.

Single Gendered Courses

This all-male identified course, will give you the opportunity to develop your leadership, learn outdoor skills and challenge yourself. A single gendered course allows the group to focus on positive risk taking, work through conflict and communicate about emotions in a peer group at the same developmental stage.

For some younger students, Outward Bound is the first time away from home, which may bring up feelings of homesickness. Thus, each student group is a maximum of 9 students and is accompanied by three instructors to increase the care, supervision, and guidance for each student. We design our courses to set students up for success no matter how much experience you have with wilderness travel and independence.





Course Area

ROSS LAKE, WASHINGTON – Accessible only by boat or trail, this glacier-fed lake borders the dramatic Pickets Mountain Range of the North Cascades. Ross Lake is 25 miles long, and extends across the border into Canada. It is nestled in the North Cascades National Park and the Pasayten Wilderness Area. Nearby Jack and Hozomeen Mountains rise 9,066 and 8,066 feet respectively, soaring up out of the lake and crowning it with jagged ridge-tops. This part of the park is known for the stunning blue-green shade of the water and for the sheer cliff faces and deep glacially carved valleys. The area was made famous by the Beat Generation writer, Jack Kerouac whose writings were inspired by his work as a fire spotter at the Desolation Peak Lookout, on the east side of Ross Lake. Throughout your days on the lake, you may encounter any one of hundreds of natural wonders, including waterfalls flowing into the lake from the glaciers above, eagles soaring overhead in search of trout, and miraculously clear blue waters.

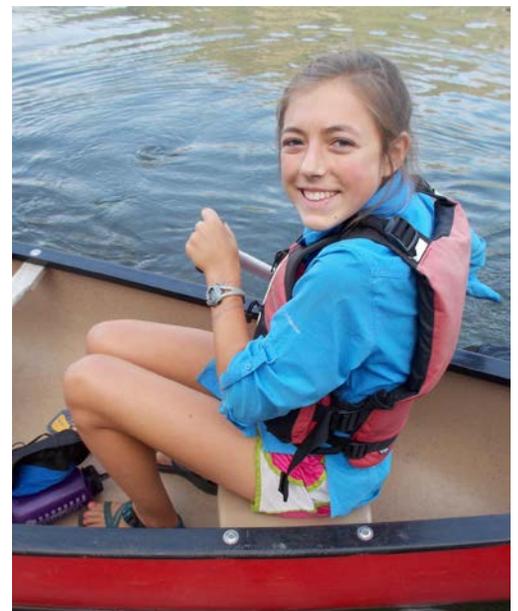


WEATHER – Temperatures typically range from freezing to 80 degrees Fahrenheit. Our course area is on the eastern side of the Cascades, and thus tends to be drier; however, rain and thunderstorms are not unusual.

Course Activities

ORIENTATION & CANOEING – The first day, you and your new travel companions will get acquainted with each other as well as your new surroundings. You'll learn all about using expedition gear and food, packing a backpack, and cooking in the backcountry. You'll spend the next nine nights under the brilliantly clear stars (or under waterproof tarp shelters during inclement weather).

On the second day of the course your team will continue onto the next phase of the journey, a seven-day canoe trip into the heart of the North Cascades National Park. Emerald-colored Ross Lake is surrounded by glacier peaks and flanked by blankets of lush green fir forests, interspersed with wild-flower meadows; this will be your home for the next week. You will hike two miles down to the lake with camp gear and food and then paddle a short distance to the first established campsite along the lake. After reaching your campsite, you and your crew will learn the art of setting up a



backcountry camp. You will set up shelters, cook meals, and help make travel decisions on and off the water. Throughout the course you will continue to develop the skills necessary to live and travel as a responsible team member, including navigation and route finding. Along the way, you'll encounter many of Ross Lake's natural wonders, including waterfalls flowing into the lake from the glaciers above, eagles soaring overhead in search of trout, and miraculously clear blue waters reflecting the peaks above.

Activities include: leadership and communication skill lessons, exploration by canoe to new destinations each day. Leave No Trace® camping techniques, navigation and first aid are additional skills students will learn. You will learn how to work as a group while backpacking in to and out from of Ross Lake, and earn the trust of your team members while paddling together across the lake.

ROCK CLIMBING – Toward the end of your course you will travel to the Outward Bound basecamp, tucked in the shadow of Goat Peak against the dramatic and glacially carved Goat Wall. You'll rock climb at our climbing sites known as "Fun Rock" and "Finster's Crag" where you will learn the basics of climbing technique, belaying, and knots. Rock climbing is physically, mentally, and sometimes emotionally demanding. For many students, rock climbing is a high point of the course. For others, it's a major mental challenge to face.



SOLO – In order for profound learning to take place, there must be time to reflect on the experience. The Solo Experience provides this opportunity to reflect, rest and practice the campcraft skills you have been learning throughout the course. Solo length is based on length of course, weather, student condition, age and instructor preference. You will not travel during this time and your instructors will check on you occasionally, but you will be mostly alone for the duration of your solo. Instructors will choose your solo site to offer as much solitude as possible, within a safe distance for emergency contact with them, and you will be provided with sufficient water, food, and equipment. Most students spend their Solo time journaling, drawing, reflecting, thinking and resting as they process lessons of the course to focus on their goals for the future.

SERVICE – Service to others and the environment is a core value of Outward Bound and is integrated into each course. Groups follow Leave No Trace ethics as service to the environment and engage in acts of service while leading and supporting fellow students. Students develop a value of service, seeing the impact of their actions firsthand, and transfer this desire to serve their communities back home.

FINAL CHALLENGE EVENT – We typically end our courses with a Final Challenge Event—an individual final physical push. This might take the form of a run or a triathlon-style challenge.



OUTCOMES – This course will introduce students to the ideas of leadership, character development, and service that are integral to Outward Bound. Students will begin to develop these skills in an expedition setting so that they can continue to grow once they return home. Instructors will work to challenge students to try new things and step outside their comfort zones. As a team, each group will work together to complete difficult tasks necessary for backcountry travel.

Sample Itinerary

The following is an example of what your 10-day itinerary may look like. Your actual course plan will vary according to weather, student skills and abilities, and instructor preferences.

Day 1	Course Start
Day 2	Hike to lake, introductory lessons on campcraft, wilderness travel, and canoeing
Day 3-7	Explore Ross Lake, including possible peak hike
Day 8	Rock climbing
Day 9	Final Challenge Event
Day 10	Course End and transportation home

Reflection from a NW Outward Bound School Alpine Backpack Alumna:

“I learned so much about self-sufficiency and leadership. Attending Outward Bound has affected me in a positive way, and taught me things I will use for the rest of my life.” - Hetty Meissner