

### Course Overview

The Northwest Sea Kayaking & Alpine Backpacking course is an expedition through two of Washington's most beautiful and diverse ecosystems: the San Juan Islands and the North Cascades Mountains. You don't need to have previous sea kayaking or mountain travel experience. We will teach you skills for wilderness travel—how to pack and what to wear, how to paddle kayaks, set up tarps, how to backpack, and navigate using a map and compass. The course includes a focus on cultivating skills around leadership, character development, service to others and interpersonal development. From getting up early to hiking or paddling all day, wilderness travel is demanding. You do not need to have any previous experience but arriving physically prepared and excited for the opportunity for personal development will enhance your experience and allow you to take full advantage of the expedition.



### Outcomes

Outward Bound promotes character development, leadership, and service in the most engaging classroom possible ... the wilderness. In real time, students experience the effects of their decisions on themselves and the other members of their group as they work to complete difficult tasks necessary for wilderness travel. Instructors challenge students to try new things and step outside their comfort zones. They also provide individualized feedback to students that can be implemented on course, as well as afterwards upon return home to their communities.

### Course Areas

**THE NORTH CASCADES, WASHINGTON** – Known as the “American Alps,” the North Cascades offer glaciated mountains, alpine lakes and high alpine meadows for endless exploration. The North Cascades host the greatest concentration of glaciers outside of Alaska, and are full of high mountain meadows peppered with wild flowers. The Outward Bound course area hosts some of the most stunning alpine climbing and backpacking routes in the United States. Temperatures range from freezing to 80 degrees Fahrenheit. Early-season courses (May, June) may spend time camping on snow, while mid-summer courses tend to have more moderate temperatures.



**SAN JUAN ISLANDS, WASHINGTON** – Nestled between Vancouver Island and the North Cascades, the San Juan Islands are a unique coastal cruising ground of sparkling water and mountain scenery. You will encounter sandy and rocky beaches, shallow and deep harbors,

placid and reef-studded bays. Sightings of harbor seals, porpoise and eagles are common as well as the rare glimpse of an Orca whale. The islands get less average rainfall than the surrounding area due to the rain-shadow effect of the Olympic Mountains. Summertime high temperatures are around 70 degrees Fahrenheit while lows could be in the 40s.

### Course Activities

**SEA KAYAKING** – Participants will paddle from island to island and get acquainted with the fascinating natural and cultural history of the Pacific Northwest coast. Instructors will teach students the technical skills, teamwork, and communication skills necessary to travel as a group in a working waterway. Students may also have the opportunity to do a service project with a local land agency, hike to an island vista, or just comb the beach.

**ALPINE BACKPACKING** – Students will work together to explore the high mountain landscape of the North Cascades where they will learn the essentials of backcountry travel necessary to carry them into remote meadows and high mountain vistas. Activities include: leadership and communication skill seminars, navigation with map and compass, Leave No Trace ethics, first aid and backcountry cooking.

**PEAK ATTEMPT** – Depending on the group and the conditions, an attempt to summit one of the many rugged alpine peaks in the course area can be made. The peaks we attempt are often day-long ventures, they are challenging and beautiful, and often require scrambling skills, taught by our experienced instructors. On backpacking courses we do not climb peaks that require technical gear or ropes.

**FINAL EXPEDITION** – Outward Bound believes that an appropriate amount of independence is a powerful educational tool. During the travel sections of this course, Outward Bound instructors purposefully and gradually transfer certain leadership responsibilities to the students culminating with our “Final Expedition.” Near the end of course—if the group has demonstrated the necessary leadership, team problem solving and wilderness living skills—students may have the opportunity to travel without instructors immediately present. Many of our students feel this phase of the course is the most rewarding, as the group learns to work as a team, problem solve, and accomplish a goal independently, while utilizing all the skills they have acquired.

**PERSONAL CHALLENGE**— 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.



**SOLO** – In order for profound learning to take place, students spend time reflecting on their experience, and Solo is that opportunity. The Solo experience provides an important break from the rigors of the expedition and gives students the opportunity to reflect on their Outward Bound experience. With sufficient food and equipment, students will set up camp at sites of their own, using the wilderness skills learned during the first portions of the course. The amount of time students spend on Solo is based on course length, weather, student condition, age, and Instructor preference. Solo campsites are chosen to offer as much solitude as possible (yet be within emergency whistle-signaling distance of other group members). 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. Instructors check on each participant at regular intervals, as safety is always a top priority.

**SERVICE** – Service to others and to our environment is a core value of Outward Bound and is integrated into each course. Groups follow Leave No Trace ethics as they engage in acts of service while leading and supporting fellow participants. Designated service projects are coordinated with land managers like the US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and National Park Service to collaborate on land restoration projects. Additionally, students may have the opportunity to work alongside select social service agencies like nursing homes, hospitals, and organic farms. Students see the impact of their actions firsthand, and may develop a desire to continue service in their home communities.



### Sample Itinerary

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

#### 15-Day Course

<b>Day 1</b>	Course Start
<b>Day 2</b>	Intro to sea kayak skills such as wet exits, rescues, and basic paddling
<b>Day 3-6</b>	Explore the San Juan Islands by kayak; continued kayak and camp craft skills
<b>Day 7</b>	Switchover
<b>Day 8-10</b>	Backpacking and navigation skills
<b>Day 11</b>	Peak attempt
<b>Day 12</b>	Solo
<b>Day 13</b>	Final expedition
<b>Day 14</b>	Personal Challenge Event & Service
<b>Day 15</b>	Course end and transportation home



## Course Description

### Northwest Sea Kayaking & Alpine Backpacking

#### 22 Day Course

<b>Day 1</b>	Course Start
<b>Day 2</b>	Intro to sea kayak skills such as wet exits, rescues, and basic paddling
<b>Day 3-10</b>	Explore the islands by kayak; continued kayak and camp craft skills
<b>Day 11</b>	Switchover
<b>Day 12-14</b>	Backpacking and navigation skills
<b>Day 15</b>	Peak attempt
<b>Day 16-17</b>	Solo
<b>Day 18-20</b>	Final expedition & possible peak attempt
<b>Day 21</b>	Personal challenge event & service
<b>Day 22</b>	Course end and transportation home