

# BLACKSTONE BAY STEWARDSHIP & KAYAKING

PRE-REGISTRATION INFORMATION PACKET



*Your connection to Alaska's parks, forests, and refuges*

## COURSE OVERVIEW

This expedition will take place June 24 – July 3 in Blackstone Bay of the Prince William Sound. The goal of our trip is to have students experience their public lands while contributing to sustainability and conservation projects with their park rangers. The group will be working with park rangers to construct an outhouse and build a short trail so that future users can reduce their impact on the area. Guest scientists and local experts will be part of the expedition, including marine and wildlife biologists, community leaders, and public land management organizations.

The expedition will start and end in Anchorage. A group van will drive from Anchorage to Whittier and back. After a water taxi from Whittier to Blackstone Bay, the group will be base camping on an old glacial moraine. After days of conservation work and kayak exploration, the group will take a water taxi back to Whittier!



# BLACKSTONE BAY COURSE ITINERARY

*This is an example itinerary that is subject to change based on weather conditions, availability of USFS staff, transportation delays, and for unplanned opportunities.*

## **DAY 1 - JUNE 24th**

Group meets in Anchorage (location TBD) at 12pm to review course logistics, review the packing list, and go kayaking at the Alaska Pacific University pool. Please see orientation information included in this packet. We can provide food and camping with AK Geo instructors for the students who do not live in Anchorage.

## **DAY 2 - JUNE 25th**

Group meets at 8:00a am at our downtown office to depart for Whittier and catch a water taxi to Blackstone Bay

## **DAY 3 - JUNE 26th**

Group will settle into camp and explore based on weather conditions

## **DAY 4 - JUNE 27th**

Project Day with National Forest Service rangers & staff. Afternoon exploration.

## **DAY 5 - JUNE 28th**

Project Day with National Forest Service rangers & staff. Afternoon exploration.

## **DAY 6 - JUNE 29th**

Project Day with National Forest Service rangers & staff. Afternoon exploration.

## **DAY 7 - JUNE 30th**

Project Day with National Forest Service rangers & staff. Afternoon exploration.

## **DAY 8 - JULY 1st**

Exploration day

## **DAY 9 - JULY 2nd**

Exploration day

## **DAY 10 - JULY 3rd**

Water taxi back to Whittier, drive back to Anchorage for pick up.

# EXPECTATIONS FOR YOUTH

Students will be expected to actively and positively contribute to the expedition by participating in group discussions, being present during conservation work, and practicing a group-focused expedition mentality. They will be expected to positively participate in building a fun, effective, and inspiring team of peers. All participants will sign a student contract as a commitment to the expedition (found under "paperwork" link).

This field course is an active learning experience set in remote locations on water and land in Prince William Sound and requires a high level of physical exertion. Activities will rotate through labor-based projects, relaxation time, and moderate level exercise. Water-based outings may include paddling up to six miles per day at moderate pacing in tandem kayaks, paddling with another student. Water-based outings have the potential to become strenuous level exercise based on wind and currents. Shore-based outings may include exploring beaches and hiking inland up to four miles per day at a moderate pace over uneven, rocky terrain.

The group will be constantly supervised and guided, but each individual is responsible for attending the trip physically and mentally prepared for variable conditions.

Please reach out to discuss these expectations further if you have any questions.



## WEATHER

Weather in Alaska is unpredictable. Please come prepared for a wide range of weather, especially cold and wet conditions. Temperatures can dip close to freezing in the evening and may warm up to the 80's during the day. Mosquitoes can be abundant at any time in the summer. Our course activities will continue rain or shine, but the itinerary may change based on weather conditions that call for safety concerns.

## FOOD

All food will be provided, including hot drinks and snacks. Menus are extensively planned and portions calculated to ensure enough calories and variety. If you have specific dietary needs to discuss, please provide as much information as possible on our dietary request form (included in paperwork). Unless specifically discussed prior to the program, students are not allowed to bring their own food as all food must fit in bear-secure food containers.

## CAMPING

The group will be based camp at 17-Mile Beach at Blackstone Bay. Tent assignments will be at the discretion of the trip leaders and is subject to change. We will closely follow wildlife-related safety precautions. All food and smell-ables (such as toiletries) will be stored outside tents in a bear proof container. Students will camp together with AK Geo instructor tents immediately nearby.



# ORIENTATION INFORMATION

Orientation will take place in Anchorage, and students will be returning home after orientation (unless discussed otherwise).

On the day of our orientation, please bring all of your packing list items along with you. Your items do not have to be packed, as we will spread everything out and repack into dry bags (bring your things in shopping bags, trash bags, etc is fine). You will also be issued all the gear you need to borrow. Once our bags are packed, we will load them up into our van and you will not have access to them again until we arrive at campsite the next day. The only items you will bring home after orientation are items you decided you did not need to bring on the trip, and whatever you would like to wear on day 1 for the drive and water taxi.

After we pack our bags, we will head to Alaska Pacific University to practice kayaking in their pool (availability permitting).

Student pick-up will be at our office in the afternoon. Please refer to the itinerary above for date/time details.

# COVID-19 INFORMATION

All students and staff are required to be fully vaccinated, including the appropriate boosters. Some trips may require entrance and/or usage of federal facilities which require a vaccination card, or a testing attestation form. Since we are not able to adhere to weekly testing while in the field, a Covid-19 vaccination card is a requirement.

Masks will be worn in small, indoor spaces such as our offices and vans. In addition, we will wear masks when interacting with others outside of our group, such as Forest Service staff. Masks will not be required when outside, at camp, or in a tent.

# SEA KAYAKING PACKING LIST

Wearing the proper clothing on your trip is essential to having a positive experience. We have carefully created a packing list based on the various weather conditions your group may experience. Having multiple light layers instead of one heavy layers allows more flexibility. Wool and synthetic materials ("polypropylene", "fleece", etc) are preferred over cotton, as they dry much faster and retain warmth when wet. Please do not bring cotton on the trip.

Clothing designed by outdoor brands is expensive and can often be intimidating to purchase. You are by no means required to have branded outdoor clothing. Old team jerseys, thrift store fleeces, and synthetic leggings are all more than adequate.

**Technical Camping Gear (sleeping bags, tents, etc)** - AK Geo will provide all technical gear needed for camping, kayaking, and conservation work. If you have your own technical gear you'd like to bring, please discuss in our one-on-one pre-trip meeting.

*Please let us know as soon as possible if you need assistance obtaining any of this gear - we are here to help!*

*An asterisk (\*) means you can rent the item free of charge from AK Geo.*

## WHAT TO BRING \*NO COTTON CLOTHING

- 2 long-sleeve base layer shirts\*
- 2 athletic shirts - one short sleeve, one long sleeve\*
- 1 fleece jacket or warm sweater (not cotton sweats)\*
- 1 winter jacket (puffy style) insulation layer\*
- 1 pair long underwear bottoms or running tights\*
- 1 pair athletic style or hiking pants\*
- 1 pair loose fitting warm pants for camp (not cotton sweats)
- 4 pairs of wool or synthetic socks
- 5-8 pairs of underwear, 2-3 sports bras
- 1 pair of tennis shoes or water shoes for kayaking
- 1 pair of camp shoes (crocs, extra tennis shoes, etc)
- 1 pair of calf-knee height rain boots\*
- 1 rain jacket - rubberized/fishing style with hood\*
- 1 rain jacket - regular, packable rain jacket with hood\*
- 1 pair rain pants - rubberized/fishing style\*
- 1 pair of non-cotton warm gloves\*
- 1 warm hat\*
- 1 baseball cap
- 1 thin neck gaiter (ex; Buff)
- 2 cotton face masks or 5-10 disposable masks
- 1 bandana
- 1 bug headnet\*
- Sunglasses with strap (strap can be handmade with AK Geo)
- Toothbrush & toothpaste
- Small flashlight or headlamp
- 2 1-liter wide mouth Nalgene water bottles\*
- 1-2 trash bags for dirty & wet clothing + 5-10 extra ziplocks
- Menstrual products - whatever you use at home
- Journal & pen (optional, one will be provided)
- Personal camera (optional, group camera will be provided)
- Small book (optional)

## MEDICATIONS

- Please inform us of any medications you will need to take while on course. Due to our remote location, please bring double the essential medication needed in durable, non-breakable container
- We will have over-the-counter medications in our extensive expedition style first aid kit. If you often need a specific over-the-counter medication, please bring it and list it on your med form.
- If applicable, YOU MUST BRING YOUR PRESCRIBED INHALER OR EPI-PEN**, even if you have not ever used it.

## GLASSES AND/OR CONTACTS

- If glasses or contacts are essential for you, please bring a spare set. If your only pair of glasses/contacts gets broken or lost, it could result in an evacuation.

## WHAT NOT TO BRING

- Alcohol, drugs, or tobacco. Use of any of these will result in removal from course.
- Soap, shampoo, perfume, unessential toiletries (all toiletries must get stored in bear canisters, extra toiletries will not fit)
- Activated cell phones. Deactivated cell phones may be brought and used for cameras. No games may be downloaded.
- Extra food intended for backpacking

