

# BLACKSTONE BAY TO CULROSS PASSAGE KAYAKING EXPEDITION

*Pre-registration information packet*



Alaska Geographic

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

## COURSE OVERVIEW

This expedition takes place in the Prince William Sound in the Chugach National Forest. The goal of the trip is for participants to develop a stronger connection to the public land in Alaska while fostering a sense of community for Alaska teens. The trip will begin in Blackstone Bay, a 17-mile water taxi from Whittier, and the students will paddle each day to a new camp, exploring the glaciers, tidepools, and day hikes along the way. The camps range from glacial moraines, to rocky beaches, to forested coves. The group will check on heavy use campsites and assist in basic stewardship projects, such as trash pickup and fire ring disbursement, to promote longevity of the Prince William Sound.

The expedition will start and end in Anchorage. A group van will drive from Anchorage to Whittier and back. A water taxi will drop the group off in Blackstone Bay, and pick the group up in Culross Passage.



# 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 18**

Group meets in Anchorage (location TBD) at 12pm to review course logistics, review the packing list, and go kayaking at a community pool. Please see orientation information included in this packet.

## **DAY 2 - JUNE 19**

Group meets at 9:00a at our Anchorage office to depart for Whittier and catch a water taxi to Blackstone Bay

## **DAY 3-10 - JULY 20-27**

Paddle from Blackstone Bay to Culross Passage. Mileage each day depends on weather conditions and destination, to be determined daily by trip leader and through group discussions. Explore the coves and beaches, sit around the campfire with new friends, learn sea kayaking fundamentals, assist in stewardship projects, and take in the wonder of the Prince William Sound.

## **DAY 11 - JULY 28**

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 ten 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 change camps every night. Camps range from rocky beaches to forested coves. Participants will be in tents with 1-2 other participants. 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 a community pool to practice kayaking. (availability permitting).

Student pick-up will be at our office in the afternoon. Please refer to the itinerary above for date/time details. If you are coming from out of town, please contact [education@akgeo.org](mailto:education@akgeo.org)

# 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.