

BLACKSTONE BAY KAYAKING & STEWARDSHIP

PRE-REGISTRATION INFORMATION DOCUMENTS



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

COURSE OVERVIEW

This expedition will take place 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 help improve campsite areas among the coves and islands of the Prince William Sound. 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 21st

Group meets in Anchorage at 4pm to go over trip logistics and camping gear. Further details will be given prior to this date.

DAY 2 - June 22nd

Group meets at 8:00am at our downtown office to depart for Whittier and catch a water taxi to Blackstone Bay. Set up camp and get settled in.

DAY 3 - June 23rd

Group will settle into camp and go exploring based on the weather conditions

DAY 4 - June 24th

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

DAY 5 - June 25th

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

DAY 6 - June 26th

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

DAY 7 - June 27th

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

DAY 8 - June 28th

Water taxi back to Whittier, drive back to Anchorage for pick up at 3pm.

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 in 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. There is access to an outhouse (thanks to the help from previous AK Geo students!).



ORIENTATION INFORMATION

Orientation will take place in Anchorage. Local students will head home for the night, out-of-town students can camp with us at the Eagle River campground.

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.

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

CLOTHING & GEAR

All essential clothing and gear will be provided at no cost.

COVID-19 INFORMATION

Please see our updated Covid policies and procedures on the Safety & Risk Management page on akgeo.org. We strongly encourage participants to be fully vaccinated. All participants will take an at-home rapid test at orientation. Masks may be required in indoor spaces at time. The safety of our staff is crucial to the success of this trip and our future summer programs for students - please do not attend the trip if you are presenting symptoms of a respiratory illness.

CANCELLATION POLICY

Due to a high volume of applicants and our time sensitive logistics for each trip, we request that students inform us no later than **10 days** before the beginning of a trip if they will not be able to attend the expedition. Failure to do so can jeopardize eligibility for future trip opportunities.