



Summer Backpacking

Preparing for the Olympic Coast Science Adventure

A guide for middle school students and parents

August 2–8, 2020



Welcome!

Welcome to the Olympic Coast Science Adventure: Middle School! in Olympic National Park! You are about to embark on the adventure of a lifetime. Over the course of a week, you will visit beautiful places and overcome physical and intellectual challenges with a group of people who share your passion for new experiences. On this trip, you ask the questions, you find the answers, and you go home with fantastic stories to tell.

You are about to become part of a trail group whose success depends on trust, communication, and participation. Friendships forged on wilderness trips can last a lifetime. Two NatureBridge Environmental Science Educators will lead your team. These educators have years of experience leading groups into wilderness areas and introducing people to the natural beauty of wild places.

We hope that you have a wonderful trip that will inspire you to continue exploring and adventuring. If you have any questions, please ask us. It is our job to make sure that you get the most out of this experience.

Looking forward to seeing you soon!

The NatureBridge Education Team in Olympic National Park

Program Overview

Experience the best that Olympic National Park has to offer on this week-long wilderness adventure. Spend a day at our beautiful campus on the shores of Lake Crescent, getting to know your group and preparing your gear before departing for the Olympic Wilderness. The next four days will fly by as you backpack along the rugged Olympic Coast, hiking to a new campsite each night and carrying everything you need in your backpack. You will hike about three miles a day, carrying a large backpack weighing 30-40 lbs. You will learn the basics of backcountry travel, experience the work of field scientists while conducting ecological research, and bond with the other members of your group. After four days in the backcountry, you will celebrate your accomplishments (and take a shower!) during a final night in a campground. This backpacking trip is perfect for all experience levels, including those who are new to backpacking and those who already love backpacking!

In this packet, you will find information about:

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Required Paperwork

Let's get this out of the way first! Before we head off on our adventure, we need some information from you. NatureBridge requires you to complete the following documents before attending our program:

- [NatureBridge Participant Registration form](#) – Requires a parent or guardian's signature.
- [NatureBridge Medical Exam](#) - To be completed and signed by a Physician, Licensed Nurse Practitioner, or Physician's Assistant.
- [NatureBridge Backcountry Student Contract](#) – Requires a student signature.
- Complete the [Student Pre-trip Survey](#).

Please email all forms to Katie Draude by May 15, 2020.

Email forms and direct questions to:
Katie Draude, Summer Programs Manager
Email: kdraude@naturebridge.org
Phone: 415-598-9832

Pre-Trip Preparation

“Do I have enough backpacking experience for this trip?”

Yes, you do! No prior backpacking experience is necessary. We expect that you have a positive mental attitude, that you have a willingness to learn, and that you are an active participant in the entire experience. If you meet those expectations, this will be a rewarding experience for everyone.

Physical Preparation

Students, please prepare physically for the course through regular exercise. You will be hiking about three miles per day while carrying a 30-40 lb. backpack on uneven terrain, including rocky and sandy beaches. Practice hiking before the trip with a weighted backpack and the hiking shoes you plan to wear. Conditioning will help you to avoid injury and will add to your enjoyment and ability to participate in the course.

Equipment List

Look over the gear list in this packet and compile your gear for the trip. Please contact Katie with questions about specific gear needs or if you need to borrow equipment.

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Travel Logistics

Olympic National Park is on the Olympic Peninsula of Washington. It is your responsibility to get to and from Olympic at the beginning and end of the course. Travel options are listed below. Please note the course starts at the NatureBridge campus on Lake Crescent in Olympic National Park, WA and ends at the Dungeness Recreation Area campground in Sequim, WA (50 minutes east of campus).

Program Dates: August 2–8, 2020

Travel by Plane

We offer a shuttle service to and from Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SeaTac) on the first and last day of the session. This service costs \$75 each way (\$150 round trip).

Many airlines have special policies and fees for children ages 14 and under who are traveling as unaccompanied minors. Please check with your airline to be sure you understand their policies. Please also call Katie Draude, NatureBridge Summer Programs Manager (415-598-9832), to discuss your child's travel logistics before purchasing your tickets.

****Important****: To use the shuttle, participants should purchase tickets for a flight that arrives before 12 p.m. on August 2 and departs after 1:30 p.m. on August 8.

Many airlines have special policies and fees for children ages 14 and under who are traveling as unaccompanied minors. Please check with your airline to be sure you understand their policies. Please also call Katie Draude, NatureBridge Summer Programs Manager (415-598-9832), to discuss your child's travel logistics before purchasing your tickets.

Travel by Car

Please arrive at the NatureBridge campus on Lake Crescent in Olympic National Park between 3:30–4 p.m. The campus is at 111 Barnes Point Road, Port Angeles, WA 98362. You can refer to [our Google map](#) for directions. We will be ending the program at the Dungeness Recreation Area Campground in Sequim, WA. Please pick up your student at the campground (see [Google map](#)) between 9–9:30 a.m.

Lodging Options in the Olympic Area for Family and Friends

If you wish to stay in the area before or after the trip, there are some great options for lodging either in Olympic National Park itself or in nearby communities.

For lodging and camping options within the park, visit the Olympic National Park website page, "Lodging Within Olympic National Park" at <http://www.nps.gov/olymp/planyourvisit/lodging.htm>. Lake Crescent Lodge is the closest option and is in walking distance of our Barnes Point campus.

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Sample Itinerary

Day(s)	Topics/Activities*
Sunday, August 2	<p><i>Arrival/Orientation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrive at our campus on Lake Crescent in Olympic National Park between 3:30–4 p.m., begin to learn about the place and get to know the other members of your group. • Sleep in a dorm-style cabin on our campus.
Monday	<p><i>Introduction to Olympic National Park ecology and backpacking gear check</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare gear for backpacking. • Learn about the ecology of Olympic National Park. • Sleep in a dorm-style cabin on our campus.
Tuesday - Friday	<p><i>Begin 4-day backpacking expedition</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You and your trail group will depart for your 4-day backpacking expedition. • Groups will hike approximately three miles each day to a new campsite, carrying backpacks weighing 30-40 lbs. Groups will hike along the Olympic coastline, across both sandy and rocky beaches. • Learn and practice camping and backpacking skills. • Conduct environmental science investigations in the national park. • Explore the longest U.S. wilderness coastline outside of Alaska. • Sleep, with the trail group, in tents each night.
Friday afternoon	<p><i>Complete 4-day backpacking expedition</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End hike at a campground. • Clean up your gear. • Shower and relax. • Celebrate your accomplishments!
Saturday, August 8	<p><i>Depart</i></p> <p>Thanks for participating in the Olympic Science Adventure: Middle School!</p>

*Note: Schedule subject to change due to conditions in the park or other external factors. Students will be updated of any changes as they occur.

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Equipment List

In addition to the following packing lists, we believe it is important to provide specific information on choosing the proper gear. Packing too light could leave you cold and miserable, while carrying too much would be an unwelcome burden. Please read each item carefully.

How to Select Equipment

Selecting appropriate gear is a process that can be overwhelming and expensive. Review your current collection of clothing and gear, and only buy or rent what you really need. If possible, borrow from friends or relatives. Many participants will come with a combination of purchased and borrowed gear. Keep in mind that you will be in the rugged backcountry and therefore function is far more important than fashion. We suggest that you rely on the expertise of knowledgeable salespeople or contact us if you have a gear question. There is no substitute for actually trying on boots, gear, and clothing. One retail chain with a comprehensive selection is Recreational Equipment Inc. (REI). REI also rents high quality backpacking gear at reasonable rates and sometimes sells used gear that is in good condition. If you purchase gear, consider leaving the sales tag on until you get to campus; our educators may suggest that you borrow gear instead if they think our gear will be more appropriate for backpacking.

If you cannot find something on the packing lists, we may be able to loan it to you during the program. Please let us know well in advance what you need. NatureBridge has a supply of gear for participants to borrow, including backpacking backpacks, fleece jackets, rain gear, and some sleeping bags. Look over the gear list and start putting together your gear for the trip. There will be no opportunity to purchase gear once you have arrived to the program. Please contact us with questions about specific gear needs, and let us know if you need to borrow equipment and what size you will need.

Bring Two Bags to the Program

- Your backpacking backpack, containing all items on the equipment checklist. For more information on the type of backpack, see below.
- A small daypack (such as a school backpack) that you will use to carry items such as extra warm layers and your water bottle while at the NatureBridge campus and that will remain in a locked building while you are backpacking.

What You DO NOT Need to Bring (NatureBridge Will Provide These Items)

- Food or snacks (unless you have highly specialized dietary needs that you have discussed with our staff ahead of time). We have limited storage for extra food and so we ask that you do not bring any food, except for snacks for your transit to and from our Olympic campus.
- First aid equipment
- Map and compass
- Stoves, fuel, group cooking equipment
- Tents
- Bear canisters
- Toilet paper, soap, hand sanitizer
- Water purification
- Permits or radios

Part I: Required Backpacking Packing List

Backpacking Clothing

Weather in Olympic is variable during the summer. Temperatures can reach the 70s and 80s during the day, and fall to the 30s and 40s at night. Afternoon thunderstorms are possible. A good layering system is necessary to accommodate the varying conditions. With the exception of one T-shirt, you should not bring cotton clothing; cotton dries slowly and does not provide any insulation when wet.

*** Items with blue asterisks may be able to be provided by NatureBridge. It is essential that you reach out to Katie (kdraude@naturebridge) before the program to ensure that the item is available.*

Footwear

- ❑ **Broken-in hiking boots or sturdy athletic shoes** - This may be the most important piece of equipment you wear. It is not necessary to purchase a pair of expensive, heavy, all-leather hiking boots. Lightweight boots or athletic shoes with good ankle support are just as comfortable and more affordable. No skate shoes (e.g. Vans). The perfect boot is waterproof, lightweight, has a leather or nylon/leather exterior, and a rugged sole. A brand new boot (even well-fitted) can cause serious blisters and ruin your trip. If you buy new boots, please wear them for at least a month before you arrive.
- ❑ **2 pairs of wool or synthetic socks** - No cotton socks – they hold onto moisture and can cause blisters.
- ❑ **Extra pair of lightweight shoes or sandals** - To wear in camp, potentially for stream crossings. No flip flops.

Upper Body

- ❑ **WaterPROOF rain jacket**** - Gore-Tex or seam-sealed coated nylon. No insulated snow parkas. No rain ponchos or plastic rain gear – they will rip easily and not protect you very well in Olympic’s rainstorms.
- ❑ **1-2 fleece jackets, wool sweaters, or down jackets**** – Not too bulky. No cotton!
- ❑ **1 long underwear top**** - Lightweight silk, wool, or synthetic. No cotton!
- ❑ **2 T-shirts** - One for hiking and one for in camp. Cotton or synthetic. No tank tops - heavy backpacks chafe bare shoulders.
- ❑ **Sports bras** (as needed)

Personal Gear

Lower Body

- ❑ **WaterPROOF rain pants**** - Gore-Tex or seam-sealed coated nylon.
- ❑ **1 pair of long underwear bottoms**** - Lightweight silk, polyester, or wool. No cotton.
- ❑ **1 pair of pants** - Quick-drying hiking pants. No cotton, no jeans.
- ❑ **1 pair of shorts** - Lightweight, quick-dry. No cotton. For hiking or wading in water.
- ❑ **Underwear**

Head and Hands

- ❑ **Sun hat**** or baseball cap
- ❑ **Warm hat**** (“beanie”)
- ❑ **Lightweight mittens or gloves** - No bulky ski gloves.

Personal Maintenance Kit

- ❑ **Personal medications** - 2 sets of each that you take (in case one gets misplaced or damaged), for a duration of 7 days. This includes inhalers and epinephrine pens. An educator will distribute personal medications (prescription and over-the-counter) during the trip.
- ❑ **Prescription glasses, including a backup pair, in a hard case** - You must bring two pairs in case one breaks. Contact lenses and contact solution (small bottle) can be brought on the trip, but you must also bring prescription glasses as a backup.
- ❑ **Sunglasses**
- ❑ **Toiletries** - Toothbrush, small toothpaste, lip balm (at least SPF 15), bug repellent (optional), and small tube of sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher)
- ❑ **Menstruation/Period products** (see note on next page)

- ❑ **1 backpacking backpack**** - Capacity of at least 60 liters, internal frame packs preferred. Your backpack must have sufficient space to carry your clothing, food, and some group gear, including a bear canister. Your pack must have well-padded shoulder straps and a thick padded waist belt. Your pack will weigh 30-40 lbs.
- ❑ **1 sleeping bag with stuff sack**** - Should be rated to at least 30°F or colder. A mummy style bag with drawstring hood is preferable. We prefer bags with synthetic fill because, unlike down and flannel, it insulates even when wet. A bulky, flannel sleeping bag is not adequate. Be sure your sleeping bag can be compressed into its own small stuff sack.
- ❑ **1 sleeping pad**** - Thin, lightweight mattress that insulates you from the cold ground. A closed-cell foam or inflatable backpacking pad (like Thermarest) is acceptable.
- ❑ **3 large-sized plastic garbage bags** - For waterproofing gear.
- ❑ **Flashlight or headlamp**** with spare batteries - Small and lightweight
- ❑ **2 water bottles** — Quart- or liter-sized with leak-proof screw-top lids.
- ❑ **1-2 bandanas** - To serve as your “plate” for trail lunches and other personal needs.
- ❑ **Small mug****
- ❑ **Bowl**** (Tupperware bowl with lid works well)
- ❑ **Spoon****
- ❑ **Knee/ankle brace** - Required for students who normally use them for physical activity. Consider also bringing trekking poles if you have knee problems.

Optional Items

- ❑ **Trekking poles** - Strongly recommended for students with knee or ankle issues.
- ❑ **Camera** - Students will not be able to bring cell phones on the backpacking portion of the course.
- ❑ **Warm pants for cold nights** - Fleece pants, pajamas, or sweatpants are fine. No jeans.
- ❑ **Small brush** or comb
- ❑ **Small paperback book** or field guide
- ❑ **Personal travel journal and pen/pencil**

A Note about Periods in the Backcountry

Menstruation is a concern for many young people when they go backpacking. A change or increase in physical activity can alter your menstrual cycle. Even if you do not expect to get your period, we recommend that you bring supplies as if you were expecting it. If you are prone to yeast infections, bring Monistat (or another yeast infection treatment) as a precaution.

At NatureBridge, we practice a “Leave No Trace” camping ethic. Therefore, we hike out everything that we hike in. Each student will receive double-bags to dispose of used period products. These bags will be carried out and disposed of in a dumpster. Used products stored in this manner do not typically attract animals. Another option is to avoid carrying waste by using a reusable menstruation device, such as the “Diva Cup” or “Mooncup.” If you want to bring this, please try it at home before coming to Olympic.

Our educators are experienced in helping participants manage their periods in the backcountry. There will always be at least one female educator on your course, and a female educator will lead a hygiene meeting before the backpacking portion of the trip begins to provide tips, answer questions, and address any concerns.

Part II: Equipment for Cabin Days (“Frontcountry”)

For this section, consider items that you will appreciate before or after a long expedition in the wilderness. These items will not go on the backpacking portion of your course. They will be stored in a locked building.

- ❑ **2 sets of extra clothes** for the first and last couple of days of traveling and hiking. Bring clothes that you might normally wear to school or extra hiking clothes – you will be out in the field and potentially getting dirty.
- ❑ **Towel**
- ❑ **Bedding** (pillow and twin-sized sheet to cover the cabin mattress)
- ❑ **Small backpack/day pack** (for day hikes)
- ❑ **Other toiletries (see Additional Notes, below)** - Shampoo, deodorant, soap, lotions, etc. Liquids should be in 3 oz. containers or less if you are bringing them in carry-on luggage.
- ❑ **Entertainment and snacks for travel days** - There is limited storage for electronic devices and food while on course, so please minimize these items.
- ❑ **Cell phone (see Additional Notes, below)**

Additional Notes

About toiletries

On your backpacking trip, every scented item will have to be stored in a bear-proof canister that you will carry with you. Scented items include all food, toiletries, toothpaste, lip balm, sunscreen, medications, etc. Space in these canisters is very limited, and animals will seek out scented items that are not properly stored. For this reason, you will be restricted to only bringing a toothbrush, toothpaste, sunscreen, and lip balm on the backpacking part of the course. Soap, shampoo, deodorant and lotions can be retrieved from storage upon your return to cabins.

About cell phones

One of the beautiful opportunities of the Olympic Science Adventure is the chance to “unplug” from electronics and social media. The rugged nature of the trip and potential for varying weather conditions is not a suitable environment for expensive electronic devices. Furthermore, cell phones often do not have reception in Olympic National Park (depending on your service provider), and therefore are not dependable emergency devices. Our Educators carry emergency radios with National Park Service frequencies.

As such, it is NatureBridge’s policy that students do not have cell phones during the program, and especially not on the backpacking portion of the course. However, we do encourage students to bring their cell phone for communication purposes on travel days at the start and end of the program. We will provide you with important NatureBridge phone numbers before your trip.

We recognize that many students also use their phone as their primary camera. We recommend that students bring a separate digital camera or disposable camera to take photos during the backpacking part of the trip. Each trail group will carry a NatureBridge digital camera for the group to use. At the end of the course, photos will be compiled and posted on a photo-sharing site.

What Not to Bring

- **Drugs and alcohol** - This is a federal offense in U.S. national parks. Tobacco products (including cigarettes and e-cigarettes) are not allowed, even if a student is 18 years old.
- **Knives and other weapons, bear spray**

Frequently Asked Questions

What will the sleeping and restroom facilities be like during the program?

These facilities vary throughout the trip. When students stay at the Olympic campus on Lake Crescent they will be in dorm-style cabins with restrooms and showers (showers may be in the cabin or in a larger bathhouse). During the backpacking portion of the trip, Scholars sleep in tents and go to the bathroom outside. Educators are experienced at teaching participants about going to the bathroom in the woods, so do not worry if that will be a new experience for you! Once the students return from the backpacking trip, they will stay at the Dungeness Recreation Area campground, which has access to showers and running water. Laundry is not possible during this program.

Who are the NatureBridge Educators?

Our environmental science educators have years of teaching experience in outdoor and environmental education programs and an enthusiasm for exploring the natural world. In addition to direct teaching experience, all of our educators have a Wilderness First Responder medical certification.

What communication will we have with our parents/family during the program?

There will be periodic, but infrequent email updates from Katie Draude, Summer Programs Manager, during the course. We will also post pictures of the students on the NatureBridge Facebook page throughout the program. Please do not expect updates during the time that students are backpacking - we will only post photo updates to Facebook on frontcountry days.

Conclusion

There is a lot of information in this document and we know that it can feel a little overwhelming to embark on an adventure like this. We want you to be prepared, not anxious, for the trip. If you have questions or concerns, please contact Katie Draude, the Summer Programs Manager, at 415-598-9832 or at kdraude@naturebridge.org and we will be happy to help. **See you soon!**