



30 Day Pathfinder Expedition

Course Description

In General – Congratulations! This course travels through an intimate landscape full of expansive canyon country views and paddles through a canyon-enshrouded river filled with exhilarating rapids. You don't need to have previous backpacking or rafting experience to enjoy this extraordinary expedition which combines beautiful, challenging environments and activities with an emphasis on leadership, personal strength (not just physical), and community. In the canyons and rivers of beautiful Southern Utah, you will learn the basics and the fine points of expedition travel. You will descend deep canyons, learn to navigate with a map and compass, and captain a raft through some of the West's best rapids.

The Pathfinder course is specifically designed for young adults searching for a direction in life. This course offers a more purposeful approach to using the time and activities in the wilderness to build leadership, character and a service ethic. The focus is on learning leadership skills (such as communication, collaboration, decision making and conflict resolution) and extracting self-awareness – values, priorities and goals – from expedition activities.



Your instructors are highly-qualified backpackers, canyoneers, river runners, and dedicated educators. They will serve as teachers, trainers, and mentors as you learn the skills required for wilderness travel. Through daily discussions, they will also help you and your group to discover the larger lessons to be found in these activities. You will discover much about yourself: how you adapt to change and deal with stress or challenge, how you work with others, and your potential as a leader.

Wilderness travel is demanding. This course may be the hardest thing you have ever done; you should be aware of what you're getting into and excited about tackling the challenges. It can literally take every waking moment to get from point A to point B. From getting up early to pack your bags and cook breakfast, to paddling a raft for miles on flat water under windy conditions or through turbulent rapids, traveling in the wilderness can be hard. Past students agree that arriving physically fit and mentally prepared to take on challenges will enhance your experience and ability to do well on your course, ultimately allowing you to take full advantage of your expedition.



COLORADO OUTWARD BOUND SCHOOL

The Colorado Outward Bound School (COBS) is indeed a school, though it will likely look radically different from schools you have attended in the past. Our “classrooms” are beautifully inspiring and rather than memorization for tests, our curriculum focuses on skills for the wilderness and most importantly for our students’ everyday lives when they return home. Through challenge and adventure in a supportive environment your instructors will use teachable moments, experiential learning, and time for reflection to create progressions of skills and responsibilities. Many traditional schools may teach specific mathematical or linguistic hard skills, but in addition to teaching whitewater rafting, backpacking, climbing, and canyoneering, COBS aims to develop the character of each student; building resilient, optimistic, compassionate, and resourceful leaders. We explore, role model, highlight the merits of, and encourage examples of our values:

- Tenacity in Pursuit
- Readiness for Sensible Self Denial
- Indefatigable Spirit
- Enterprising Curiosity
- Compassion





Itinerary and Course Activities

Canyon Country, Utah – The most spectacular aspects of the Utah landscape are the hidden treasures found within its vast canyon networks, formed by millennia of wind and water erosion. The canyonlands of Southern Utah are still as stunning, mysterious, and wild as they were for the Ancestral Puebloans and Fremont Indians who roamed these lands over 800 years ago. The sandstone canyons are a geological playground and are composed of a spell-binding labyrinth of alcoves, fins, pinnacles, buttes, towering walls, ledges, cliff dwellings, and arches just waiting to be explored.



While in the canyons, each day is spent learning to live and travel comfortably in this beautiful but demanding environment. During the initial Training phase, you and your companions will work to become a team, learning navigational skills and group decision-making as well as movement on steep terrain. Each day your Instructors will explain more to you, allowing you to develop the tools you need to adapt to the increasing challenges throughout course. Breaks throughout the day for lunch, snack or just to rest provide unparalleled views and allow you time to take pictures and soak in the views around you. Time on the trail is a great way to make friends and provide stories and laughter throughout the day, often starting right when you wake up!

During this initial phase of your course, your Instructors will introduce you to the most important elements of expedition life: environmental stewardship, outdoor cooking, first aid, communicating as a team, taking care of yourself and, of course, exploring the steep terrain of the canyons.

Wilderness First Aid Course – You will spend three days in the Moab, UT area, learning about wilderness medicine. You will have the opportunity to gain a Wilderness First Aid (WFA) certification during this course, which is considered a standard for many entry level jobs in the Outdoor Industry.

Rafting – While on the river, each day is spent learning to recognize and navigate various obstacles and hazards in the river, and how to anticipate the forces of the current from far enough upstream. You and your companions will work to become a team, coordinating



your spacing, and paddle strokes. You will have an opportunity to be the captain of your crew and put to use what you've learned as you maneuver your raft through Class II – III rapids.

Interspersed between the rapids are flat-water sections where there is a current, but no whitewater. At times, you will take advantage of this calm water to hone your skills and enjoy the view. Time in a raft is ideal for getting to know each other and forming boat pride, laughing your way downriver as you relax into the simplicity of river life.



In places, the canyon rims rise thousands of feet, enclosing you in a remote world of rushing water, delicate ecosystems, and unbelievable beauty. During your course, your instructors will introduce you to the most important elements of the river life: reading whitewater currents, paddling, whitewater captaining, geology of the canyon, environmental stewardship, outdoor cooking, first aid, natural history of the river canyons, and of course, those beautiful star-studded night skies.



Solo – Solo provides an important break from the rigors of both the expedition and the distractions from everyday life. This is a truly once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. With sufficient food and equipment, you'll spend time alone at your campsite to journal, rest, reflect on the past and look ahead to future goals. Your solo site will be close enough to the sites of others that you can get help quickly in case of emergency, but far enough removed to assure your solitude. You will not travel during this time and your Instructors will check on you occasionally, but you will be alone. Many students are initially nervous about solo, but many also later recall solo as one of the highlights of their entire course.

Service – You and your team will perform service for at least two days in Southeastern Utah. While helping local groups with needed projects, you will learn more about this community and space you have been travelling in and around. Past projects have included working on a community garden, trail building, habitat restoration, helping senior citizens, and naturalizing open space by cleaning trash and debris.

Final Expedition - Toward the end of course, you and your team will have the opportunity to take more responsibility for your day to day decisions. Stepping up to the challenges of fully managing a time schedule, navigating on your own and dealing with communication issues that arise as the group tries to work together can all be intimidating, but you've been given the experience and the tools to handle the challenges your Instructors set before you. When you emerge from this final phase of course you will understand a truth: For the rest of your life you and your team will understand that there is more in you than you ever thought possible.

Challenge Event – This final event may take the form of a run or a team challenge although there is no set-in-stone challenge, each event is tailored to each patrol. This is your chance to finish with style, by drawing on the lessons you have learned and the reserves you have discovered during your course.





Sample Itinerary



The following is an example of what your itinerary may look like. Your actual course plan will vary according to weather, your group's skills and abilities, and your Instructors' preferences.

Day 1 Course Start

Days 2-10 Rafting Expedition

- River Safety
- Paddling techniques
- Paddle boat captaining
- Rapid Scouting/Hydrology
- Advanced Decision Making
- Time Management
- Conflict Resolution
- Leadership Workshops

**Days 11-15 Service in Moab Area and Wilderness
First Aid Course**

Days 16-25 Canyon Backpacking Expedition

Curriculum includes:

- Self awareness
- Awareness of others
- Basic navigation
- Backcountry living
- Basic leadership
- Basic team decision making
- Outward Bound philosophy and history
- Risk Identification
- Solo



Days 26-29 Canyon Backpacking Final Expedition

- Mastery of Desert Navigation
- Peer Leadership
- Self-Initiative
- Time Management
- Goal Setting
- Applying Previous Skills

Day 30 Course End Challenge Event and Departure to Home

