



## *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. You don't need to have previous backpacking or canoeing 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 mountains and rivers of beautiful Southern Utah, you will learn the basics and the fine points of expedition travel. You will canoe through a winding canyon, learn to navigate in the mountains with a map and compass, and work as a team to take on the challenges of an expedition.

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 canoeing and backpacking 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.



**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.

**Canoeing in Labyrinth Canyon, Green River, Utah** – You will launch on the Green River in two-person canoes for 63 miles through Labyrinth Canyon. The river enters Labyrinth Canyon slowly, named for the serpentine path it carves as it dives deep into the redrock sandstone that characterizes southeastern Utah and the Canyonlands area. Narrow and winding side canyons, towering cliffs rising vertically out of the river, pinnacles and ledges all await you as you fine tune your paddling strokes. The canoes provide you with great freedom and maneuverability. The small craft will demand a high level of coordination and cooperation with your canoeing partner. During this initial phase of your course, your instructors will introduce you to the most important elements of the river life: environmental stewardship, outdoor cooking, first aid, natural history of the river canyons, the night sky, and of course, paddling skills.



**La Sal Mountains, Utah** – This mountain range rises dramatically out of the desert, towering 9000' feet above the surrounding canyon country and the sporting mecca of Moab. The current name of this range originates from the Spanish explorers who came through the area in the 1500s who mistook the snow on the peaks for salt. La Sals are known for their groves of aspens, rich amount of wildlife, high summits, and incredible views overlooking Canyonlands and Arches National Parks and the Four Corners area. Hidden lakes dot the landscape. Peaks in this mountain range vary between ten thousand and just under thirteen thousand feet in elevation and include some of the highest mountains in Southern Utah.

**Alpine Backpacking** – In the mountains, you will shoulder your backpack filled with all the items necessary for mountain travel and camping. With your crew, you will climb over high passes, attempt to reach summits, descend into lush, vegetated valleys with alpine streams, and work your way over rugged, rocky terrain, learning to rely on and help each other. The days can be long and difficult, and often require an early start to allow ample time to ascend and descend the summit or pass before afternoon rain and thunderstorms appear. In this section, you will generally travel four to six miles each day, carrying all of your food and equipment in backpacks, as you learn and practice the basics of mountain navigation. The altitude and exertion present a challenge, but the magnificent views, sense of accomplishment, and increase in fitness are a few of many of your rewards.





# COLORADO OUTWARD BOUND SCHOOL

**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** – Service is an integral part of Outward Bound values and curriculum. We encourage an ethic of service to our own close-knit community of expedition mates, our surrounding cities, and to the environment. These find action on a daily basis through acts of compassion, formal service projects, and by leaving campsites cleaner than we find them and practicing Leave No Trace® ethics throughout the course. The formal service project days take this service ethic beyond our course and into the greater community. When these service projects are possible they are either community-based – helping people who live in the area – or environmentally-based; working with land managers (US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, local land trusts, etc.) to restore or improve our wild and wonderful public lands. We hope you'll bring this ethic home to help in your local communities!

**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 2-5 Team Building and Wilderness First Aid Course**

### **Days 6-12 Canoeing Expedition**

- River Safety
- Paddling techniques
- River Hydrology
- Backcountry living
- Basic leadership
- Outward Bound philosophy and history
- Basic Decision Making
- Time Management

### **Days 13-25 Alpine Backpacking Expedition**

- Self awareness
- Awareness of others
- Basic navigation
- Conflict Resolution
- Goal Setting
- Leadership Workshops
- Risk Identification
- Solo

### **Days 26-28 Alpine Backpacking Final Expedition**

- Mastery of Alpine Navigation
- Peer Leadership
- Self-Initiative
- Time Management
- Applying Previous Skills

### **Day 29 Course End Challenge Event**

### **Day 30 Departure for Home**

