



## COURSE DESCRIPTION

### SOUTHWEST RAFTING & CANOEING – 16 DAYS

**In General** - Welcome, you're in for an experience of a lifetime! Imagine paddling through towering canyon walls, passing by bighorn rams, taking a quick dip in the refreshing waters, and at the end of the day pulling over to a riverfront beach to cook a big dinner and lie under a blanket of shimmering stars each night. Each day you will be getting to know your newfound community better, learning about the area and yourself, playing games, and exploring some of America's most scenic river stretches. You don't need to have previous rafting or canoeing experience to fully embrace this extraordinary expedition which combines beautiful environments and exciting activities with an emphasis on individual growth and community. On the river, you will learn both the basics and the fine points of managing a paddle raft through some of the best whitewater in the West, as well as minimum-impact camping underneath the dark night skies of Southern Utah. You will paddle a canoe and raft, descend through deep canyons filled with both calm and wild water, and often stop to explore many awe-inspiring viewpoints.



Your instructors are highly-qualified 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 meaning 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 dry bags and cook breakfast, to paddling a canoe for miles in windy conditions or through turbulent rapids, traveling in the wilderness can be hard. Past students and instructors agree that arriving physically fit and mentally prepared to take on challenges will enhance your experience and ability to do well on the course, ultimately allowing you to take full advantage of your river expedition.

**Youth Courses** – We know that younger teens represent a diverse group. For some students, Outward Bound is their first time away from home; others are veteran travelers who have attended Outward Bound before. We plan our youth courses to set students up for success no matter where they are starting on the spectrum of wilderness experience. The mental, social, and physical challenges you will encounter at the Colorado Outward Bound School are very real and facing them is a very real accomplishment. These courses provide a structured environment with clear expectations and a daily routine that give you direction so that you can learn and exercise personal responsibility and group leadership skills.

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 which, most importantly, transfer to 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 to 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

**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, preparing for the whitewater in Desolation Canyon. The canoes provide you with great freedom and maneuverability. While many of the skills you learn canoeing are transferable to rafts, 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.



**Whitewater Rafting in Desolation/Gray Canyons on the Green River, Utah** – When legendary outlaw



Butch Cassidy and his Wild Bunch gang needed to escape from the eyes of pursuing posses, they would head to the vast and beautiful wilderness of Desolation Canyon. Midway through its journey through Utah, the Green River flows through Desolation Canyon, a truly wild location where spectacular rock formations, impressive ancient rock art, and abandoned 19<sup>th</sup> century ranches await explorers. You will travel this section of river in rafts as the 60+ rapids continue to grow in size. At its greatest depth, Desolation Canyon plunges to carve a gorge deeper than the Grand Canyon. The towering rock walls of Desolation give way to the earthy bluffs of Gray Canyon,

creating a sudden contrast of scenery for the last 25-miles of the canyon. Desolation and Gray Canyons offer a perfect blend of fun and challenging rapids with off river hikes to jaw-dropping destinations. This section of the course is primarily about responsibility—your instructors will hand you increasing responsibility for getting downriver as you demonstrate your ability to implement the skills you're learning.



**Day Hiking** – As you travel down the river, you will stop along the way to stretch your legs, explore side trails, canyons, and historic or geologic points of interest. These hikes will take you through rough terrain to incredible, remote places that are only accessible by river travelers. The hikes are always well worth the effort to see both ancient and turn of the century artifacts as well as stunning natural beauty.



**Solo** – A one- to two-night solo provides an important break from the rigors of the expedition. This is often a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to truly get away from all of life’s distractions. With sufficient food and equipment, you’ll spend time alone at an assigned campsite to rest, reflect, journal, and set future goals. Your solo site, assigned to you by your instructors, will be close enough to the sites of the others that you can get help quickly in case of emergency, but far enough removed to assure your sense of solitude. You will not travel



during this time and your instructors will check on you occasionally, but you will be primarily alone for the duration of your solo. Many students are initially nervous about solo, but most are ready for a rest and a chance to process their experiences when the time for solo arrives. Afterwards, the increasingly unique opportunities that solo offers makes it a highlight of course for many students. This activity may be abbreviated or eliminated depending on weather or other factors.

**Group Challenge Event** – The Colorado Outward Bound School believes that an appropriate amount of independence is a powerful educational tool. In order to deliver that benefit, Outward Bound purposefully and gradually transfers leadership responsibilities to the students culminating with our “Group Challenge Event.” There are no “set in stone” group challenges, as each challenge throughout course has been tailor-fitted to the current conditions and participants, but it may take the form of a run or team challenge amongst many options. This event is your personal challenge to finish successfully and with style, by embodying all the lessons you have learned during your Outward Bound course. You may be surprised by how far you have come in 16 days and how far you can go.

## SAMPLE ITINERARY

The following is an example of what your 16-day itinerary may look like. Your actual course plan will vary according to weather, student skills and abilities, and instructor preferences.

<b>Day 1</b>	Course Start
<b>Day 2-6</b>	Canoeing Labyrinth Canyon
<b>Day 7</b>	Potential service project, re-supply, & transfer
<b>Day 8-15</b>	Rafting Desolation & Gray Canyons, solo
<b>Day 16</b>	Group Challenge, Course end, and transportation home