



## COURSE DESCRIPTION

### SOUTHWEST RAFTING— 14-16 YEAR OLDS

**In General** – You hear “ALL FORWARD!” shouted above the roar of the rapids by the captain of your raft (that could be you). Next thing you know, you’re digging your paddle blade in deep to meet some of the best whitewater of the West. You’re in for an experience of a lifetime! You don’t need to have previous rafting experience to fully embrace this extraordinary expedition which combines beautiful environments and exciting activities with an emphasis on developing leadership, community, and personal strength (not just physical). On the river, you will learn both the basics and the fine points of managing a paddle raft through some of the most scenic whitewater in the West, as well as camping underneath the pristine night skies of Southern Utah while caring for the landscape you’re moving through. You will paddle a raft, descending through a deeply carved gorge filled with both calm and wild water, taking in the exquisite natural beauty, 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 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 dry bags and cook breakfast, to paddling a raft for miles in 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 course, ultimately allowing you to take full advantage of your 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 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 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

## COURSE AREA

**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 depths, 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.



## COURSE ACTIVITIES

Each course is as unique as the individuals who form the community. Your course itinerary may vary depending on weather and the skill levels of your group.

**Whitewater 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 form boat pride, laughing your way downriver as you relax into the graceful simplicity of river life.



In places, the canyon rims rise thousands of feet above, 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.

**Day Hiking** – As you travel down the river, you will stop along the way to 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 from the river. You may witness blazing sunrises or find yourself leaping into crystal clear creeks. The hikes are always well worth the effort to see ancient artifacts as well as stunning natural beauty.



**Solo** – A solo of up to 24 hours 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 primarily alone for the duration of your solo. Many students are initially nervous about solo, but many later recall solo as one of the highlights of their entire course. This activity may be abbreviated or eliminated depending on weather or other factors.

**Final Challenge Event** – Outward Bound believes that an appropriate amount of independence is a powerful educational tool. In order to deliver that benefit, Outward Bound purposefully and gradually transfers certain leadership responsibilities to the students culminating with our “Final Challenge Event”. Near the end of course, if you and your group have demonstrated the necessary leadership, team problem solving, and wilderness living skills, you may participate in such an event. There are no “set in stone” final 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 10 days and how far you can go.



## SAMPLE ITINERARY

The following is an example of what your 10-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, Transportation to River
<b>Day 2-9</b>	Whitewater Rafting, Day Hikes, possible Solo
<b>Day 10</b>	Possible Final Challenge Event, Course End, and Transportation Home

