

# PACIFIC COAST EXPEDITION

July 1 to July 18, 2010



## ORIENTATION DAY

**July 1** Arrive at Sea-Tac Airport near Seattle, Washington in morning. Your instructors will be waiting for you at your gate or baggage claim if arriving by plane or at a central meeting location if arriving otherwise. Once our group is assembled we will load up our van and begin the few hour drive west to Washington's Olympic Peninsula and Olympic National Park. Today is our orientation day and this day will be spent getting to know each other and figuring out our daily routines and responsibilities. We spend the night at a campground near Olympic National Park.

## OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK

**July 2 to July 5** After breakfast, we divide up group gear and provisions, learn to pack our backpacks and make our way north from Mora Beach to explore the coast. This is the longest undeveloped stretch of coastline on the west coast and truly is a remarkable place. For the next few days, we take time to develop our wilderness skills, discuss backcountry safety, land navigation and low-impact camping techniques. We move at a pace that is comfortable for all while getting to know the rest of our group. Our travel is dictated by the tides, that we soon learn to predict, and we take time to investigate the fascinating tidal pools and diverse coastal forest. After returning from our first backpack, we depart for the San Juan Islands to begin our sea kayaking component.

## SEA KAYAKING THE SAN JUAN ISLANDS

**July 6 to July 9** We travel to the San Juan Islands in northern Puget Sound. After spending some time, learning kayak safety and wet-exits, we set out in the afternoon to begin our exploration of the islands in our sea kayaks. Paddling tandem and single kayaks, we learn paddling techniques, tide and current predictions and marine navigation. Putting in our kayaks on Lopez Island, we make our way through the protected waters of this amazing archipelago. Based on weather and tides, we stay at a different island each night as we make our way toward our take out. Undoubtedly, our plan will find us exploring uninhabited islands and secluded harbors of the San Juan Islands – James Island, Obstruction Pass, Blind Island and others. We return to Bellingham at the end of the week, and set out toward the Cascades for a day of Rafting.

## CASCADE MOUNTAINS – WHITewater RAFTING

**July 9 to July 10** From the San Juan Islands, we make our way south to the Cascades to spend a day whitewater rafting. We provision, check our mail and make our way to the river to begin our rafting adventure. We learn paddling techniques and whitewater navigation from our expert guides, as we spend the day making our way down one of the area's premier whitewater rivers. While not blasting through whitewater sections, we relax over the calm stretches of the river and enjoy a relaxing day on the river. From here, we head south toward the eastern boundary of Olympic National Park.

## OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK - BACKPACKING

**July 11 to July 16** On our way we stop to provision and do our laundry, and begin to pack for our upcoming trip through the Olympic Mountains. Moving at a pace that is comfortable for all, we make our way through this vast wilderness past glacier fed lakes and cascading rivers, alpine meadows and craggy peaks. While out on the trail, we take time to build on our wilderness skills – discussing expedition planning, backcountry navigation and wilderness safety. We marvel at the scenery and take time to relax on high mountain passes or go for a swim in an alpine lake. This is the most rigorous section of our trip, but always a highlight for the group. This part of Olympic National Park is in contrast to the coastal region we explored earlier in the trip, but equally as beautiful.

## SURFING – OLYMPIC PENINSULA

**July 16 to July 18** From Olympic National Park, we spend a half-day transitioning from the mountains to the beach. The final few days we spend on to the coast of the Olympic Peninsula, and set up camp at a campsite near the beach. After donning wetsuits and grabbing our surfboards, we learn the basics of surfing from our instructors and have lots of time to play on our boards in the gentle surf. From here, we head back toward the Seattle area to enjoy our last evening together with a final-farewell-feast. We stay at a campground south of the city that evening. In the morning we say farewell to each other where we began 18 days earlier, at Sea-Tac Airport, after an amazing experience in the Northwest.