

MAINE PEAKS & PADDLES

June 27 to July 13, 2011



ORIENTATION DAY

June 27 Arrive at Logan Airport, Boston in the morning. Your instructors will be waiting for you at your gate or baggage claim if arriving by plane. If driving, we meet at the American Airlines baggage claim office. Once our group is assembled we will load up our van and begin the few hour drive north toward Grafton Notch State Park in the White Mountains of Maine. We will spend the day getting to know each other, discussing details of the expedition and figuring out our daily routines and responsibilities. We spend the night at a campground in the White Mountain National Forest.

MAHOOSUC NOTCH BACKPACK

June 28 to June 30 After breakfast, we divide up group gear and provisions, learn to pack our backpacks and start off on the trail to explore the Mahoosuc Notch area. 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 and spend time getting to know the rest of our group. Ascending above tree-line offers spectacular views of the Presidential Range and the hills sweeping down to the Maine coast. After returning from our first backpack, we make our way north toward the North Woods area of Maine. We plan our meals for the next phase of our expedition and begin packing for our upcoming backpacking, paddling and rafting expedition, spending the night at a state park along the way.

12-DAY BACKPACKING – FLOAT PLANE – PADDLING - RAFTING – MT. KATAHDIN ASCENT EXPEDITION

July 1 to July 5 Early the next morning we leave for the Appalachian Trail, south of Baxter State Park to begin our 5-day backpacking trip – this is the first phase of our 11-day expedition in the North Woods. Moving at a pace comfortable for all, we make our way through this vast wilderness past placid lakes and cascading rivers, and ascending above tree-line for magnificent views. This is one of the more rigorous parts of our trip, but always a highlight for students. On our last day, we are met by a float plane at a remote lake – where we travel a short distance to the Seboomook Lake to get ready for our next phase of our adventure and for a re-supply.

July 6 to July 10 We spend our first day paddling whitewater in inflatable kayaks along the Seboomook section of the Penobscot River. We learn paddling techniques, how to read whitewater, and even how to surf an inflatable kayak. The next day, we trade in our inflatable kayaks for lake/sea kayaks. After loading up our boats, and spending some time discussing paddling technique and how to read the river – we begin our descent of the West Branch of the Penobscot River. We learn to navigate our boats through small rapids, as we continue our journey through this remarkable wilderness area. On the second day the river flows into Lake Chesuncook, and we follow the thread of the river across the lake and down toward Ripogenus Dam. We set up camp each night along this beautiful stretch of wilderness waterway – swimming in clear water, watching for moose and listening for loons.

July 10 to July 12 From our take-out, we make our way to the whitewater rafting part of our journey. After expanding upon our knowledge of paddling and river reading techniques, we load our rafts to begin our descent. With the help of our guides, we navigate down class III-IV whitewater on this section of the Penobscot River. After a final night on the river, we rejoin the Appalachian Trail and begin our final push to the summit of Mount Katahdin. One more night out on the trail brings us to the base of the mountain – where we prepare for a morning ascent of the highest peak in Maine and the northern terminus to the Appalachian Trail

FINAL DAYS

July 12 to July 13 After returning from Katahdin in the early afternoon, we begin our trip back toward Boston and enjoy our last night together with a final-farewell-feast along the way. We stay at a campground in Freeport, Maine, and the next afternoon we say our goodbyes where we began 17 days earlier, at Logan Airport in Boston, after what promises to be an amazing experience.