

# Maine Wilderness Expedition

July 11 to August 2, 2011



## Orientation Day

**July 11** 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 near the trailhead.

## Mahoosuc Notch Backpack

**July 12 to July 15** 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 several 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 depart toward the coast of Maine. We plan our meals for our upcoming trip along the coast and begin packing for our upcoming sailing and kayaking expedition, spending the night at a state park near the coast.

## Sailing the Coast of Maine

**July 16 to July 19** We head to Rockport to board the schooner *Timberwind* later in the day. After loading up provisions and our group gear, we begin our exploration of the Maine coast. Our route will be determined by taking into account the weather forecast and tidal predictions. Undoubtedly, our plan will find us exploring uninhabited islands, remote fishing villages and secluded harbors of Penobscot Bay. Over the course of our trip, our skills as sailors and navigators will build as we take time to discuss sail theory, anchoring, coastal navigation and seamanship with help from the professional crew on-board the ship. We will anchor in a quiet harbor each evening and sleep on board the ship. After three nights aboard the ship, we transition to the sea kayaking part of our expedition.

## Sea Kayaking along the Maine Coast

**July 19 to July 23** Having already spent some time (before the sailing part of the trip) learning kayak safety and wet-exits in the relatively warm waters of a local lake, we quickly transition and set out in the afternoon to begin our exploration of Muscongus Bay in our sea kayaks. Paddling tandem and single kayaks, we learn paddling techniques, tide and current predictions and marine navigation. Putting in our kayaks near Friendship, Maine we make our way through the protected waters of coastal Maine. Based on weather and tides, we stay at a different island each night and explore remote islands and secluded coves. We meet our van on the final day and then stay at Camden Hills State Park that evening where we have an opportunity to take hot showers. The next day we begin making our way toward Baxter State Park and planning for our final expedition in the North Woods of Maine.

## Backpacking – Rafting – Mt. Katahdin Ascent

**July 24 to August 2** The next day, we make our way to the Appalachian Trail, south of Baxter State Park to begin our six-day backpacking trip along a portion of the 100 Mile Wilderness. 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. After we emerge from the wilderness, we trade in our boots and packs for paddles and rafts, meet our rafting guides and load up to begin our descent. After learning paddling and river reading techniques from our expert guides, we spend the day navigating our rafts down class III & IV whitewater on the Penobscot River, and spend the night on the river – enjoying a re-supply and some fresh food. The next day we continue along the trail toward the summit of Mount Katahdin – the highest peak in Maine and the northern terminus of the Appalachian Trail. One more night out on the trail, brings us to the base of the mountain – where we prepare for an early morning ascent. After descending from Katahdin, we make our way south to enjoy our last evening together with a final-farewell-feast and a stay at a campground in Freeport, Maine. In the afternoon we say farewell to each other where we began 23 days earlier, at Logan Airport in Boston, after an amazing experience.