



Backpacking

ALASKA

14-DAY

HIGHLIGHTS:

- ▶ NCOAE core curriculum
- ▶ Leave No Trace training
- ▶ Gain experience in expedition planning, wilderness risk management, environmental studies, backcountry navigation, leadership in the wilderness, outdoor technology skills, and more
- ▶ Fly-in backpacking and remote Alaska trekking

WHY TAKE THIS COURSE?

- ▶ Develop essential wilderness knowledge and skills — while living and learning in Alaska's wild, beautiful places
- ▶ Immerse yourself in a boreal forest wonderland, cool mountain streams, cascading glaciers, and stunning rock formations
- ▶ Acquire the career skills needed to travel in pristine destinations around the world!

WHERE YOU'LL BE:

- ▶ Wilderness of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve — America's largest National Park Anchorage, Alaska



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For complete itinerary details, see reverse side ▶

ALASKA — BACKPACKING COURSE, 14-DAY ITINERARY

(Subject to change)

- ▶ **Day 1: Orientation, gear check, last minute preparations.** This day will be busy, filled with reviewing the gear you brought and making sure you have what you need.
- ▶ **Days 2: Travel to McCarthy, Alaska.** Introduction to basic camp craft, expedition planning, NCOAE Curriculum, and Leave No Trace (LNT) wilderness ethics.
- ▶ **Days 3 – 4: Travel to a remote base camp by bush plane.** Your course gets underway when we land at our remote base camp outside of McCarthy, Alaska, where you will begin preparing to become a successful backcountry traveler. Begin learning about bears, safety procedures and risk management, menu planning, gear selection, trip planning, and packing for group expeditions in remote wilderness areas.

We will use these days to introduce you to the NCOAE Curriculum, ‘the First 48’ and our ‘Ed Groups’ — the most important technical skills and interpersonal skills you will need to know to for expeditions in wilderness. You will also learn more about site selection, shelters, backcountry cooking, river crossings, and glacier travel.

- ▶ **Days 5 – 9: Backpacking.** Trek across the Alaskan outback to reach your rendezvous point — another remote airstrip where a bush plane will eventually pick up your team and gear.

You won’t need trails where you’re going. Instead, you will need to use a map, compass, and handheld GPS system. You will rely on travel plan design and advanced navigation techniques, all of which we’ll teach you. Your next seven days may be spent fording icy rivers, hiking on glacial stones, snow, ice, or tundra, as well as learning to manage the risks in these environments. Weather can vary drastically and become treacherously dangerous in the Alaskan backcountry, which is why you will learn to be prepared to teach others those same

skills. Whatever Alaska throws at you, you will learn to endure it and enjoy it with grace and style. All the while, you’ll be practicing the principles of LNT, map and compass navigation, plant and animal identification and backcountry cooking — eating wonderful food you’ll prepare.

It’s during these days that you’ll be able to hone your outdoor skills and develop your newfound outdoor leadership style. The landscape and wildlife will provide a dramatic canvas for your learning experience. You may see moose, lynx, bears, ground squirrels, Dall sheep and other wildlife during your trek. Learn to use NCOAE’s Curriculum to teach others the skills they need to communicate, become leaders in their community, identify their values, and make positive life choices. In short, you will learn to be an exceptional outdoor leader! Much too soon, we’ll arrive at a remote airstrip in the wilderness. Tomorrow, you will begin a solo wilderness experience, giving you time gather your thoughts and reflect on what you have accomplished throughout the course.

- ▶ **Day 10 – 11: Solo experience.** Any outdoor course would be incomplete without a solo experience to allow time for processing. During your solo, you’ll have time to reflect and enjoy a solitude only found in wilderness. An NCOAE solo experience is a rite of passage that sets you up for success as you contemplate re-entering the ‘real world’.
- ▶ **Day 12: Travel to McCarthy.** After a hearty breakfast, our bush pilot will pick us up. Explore historic Kennecott and base-camp in McCarthy.
- ▶ **Day 13 – 14: Travel to Anchorage, AK & Closing Circle.** Once in Anchorage, we’ll de-issue and check our gear in, clean-up, debrief the course and depart. Finally, we will come together one more time and share a one-of-kind closing circle — a fitting transition to begin your journey as an outdoor leader.