



Expeditionary Mariner (“Pacific”) Sea Kayaking

Features of the Expeditionary Mariner Sea Kayaking Trip

- Participants entering 12th. Minimum age: 17
- Group size: 4-6 participants and 2 leader
- 45 days sea kayaking in the Inside Passage of Southeast Alaska
- Remote undeveloped campsites
- Ocean travel including tidal conditions and extraordinary wildlife
- Weather dependant challenges; high winds, waves, temperatures, etc.

The Expeditionary Mariner, or Pacific, is 45 day kayaking trip that takes place throughout the Inside Passage of Alaska. The Pacific involves paddling through icy waters, below snow capped peaks in a beautiful temperate rain forest. Trip groups may see orcas, humpback whales, tide water glaciers, grizzly bears, jelly fish, and many salmon as the group is immersed in ocean life. This expedition starts at Manito-wish where trip groups will review kayaking techniques, team build and pack gear and food. The group will then fly to Juneau, AK where they will start and their adventure!

The Pacific presents very different challenges than past kayaking trips for most participants. Like all the expeditionary trips, there is a large physical challenge on the Pacific and participants should weigh this risk. Issues, such as back or shoulder problems that often come up on this trip cannot be treated in the field. Participants should have prior kayaking experience and feel comfortable paddling in challenging weather conditions. The Inside Passage is very rainy, and can often be very cold especially near glaciers. Participants should feel comfortable in a backcountry environment. While on the Pacific, groups will learn how to navigate the currents of tides, assess on water risks, hone their paddling skills and improve other technical and interpersonal skills.

Paddling among whales and waves is an incredible capstone kayaking experience. The wildlife and colorful forest of the Pacific are unlike any other Manito-wish trip and the challenging environment provides a canvas for immense challenge and growth.

What you will take away from the trip

The purpose of the trip is to develop group collaboration skills and leadership abilities including but not limited to humility, empathy, awareness, resourcefulness, resiliency, optimism, adaptability, and respect. Participants also gain exposure to wilderness skills including camping, hiking, and risk management, and explore the ecology of the area.

Each participant will practice giving and receiving feedback, reflecting on their leadership, camping skills, backpacking techniques, and working as a group to overcome challenges. Leaders will teach these skills before gradually turning the leadership of the trip over to the participants. Each day participants will take over more of the daily responsibility of the trip.

Wilderness Skills

Wilderness skills involve camping, sea kayaking and Leave No Trace. These skills allow the participant to gain confidence and a level of comfort that make all of the above possible.

Participants can expect to learn the following wilderness skills:

- Leave No Trace techniques
- Safe launching and landings in rough conditions
- Paddling strokes; forward, reverse, sweep, draw, low and high braces
- Self and assisted rescues
- Coastal paddling; wind, waves, weather and open water crossings
- Tides and current navigation
- Safe group travel and use of safety equipment
- Organization and care of group and personal gear
- Map and compass reading including route selection
- Campsite selection and set up including tents and tarps
- Cooking meals independently including stove use and trail baking

Challenges of the trip

The Pacific ocean a frigid environment. Trips can expect rain, wind and waves coupled with cold weather. Wind and weather can create large waves the have the power to adjust itineraries.

As the grizzly bear population is large in this part of Alaska, it is vital to practice safe bear camping principles. Groups will keep a meticulously clean campsite and store food away from sleeping areas at night, often hanging their food high in trees.

Kayaking is a unique way to experience on-water travel. When paddling, the kayak rides low in the water and moves with each wave. This exhilarating experience can be hard on people who get motion or sea sick. Kayaking can also be strenuous on one's back muscles and shoulders. These health risks are difficult to manage in the field and should be assessed before signing up for a kayaking adventure. With this in mind your pre trip fitness goals should focus on being able to sustain a moderate level of exertion for hours on end.

Depending on the weather, bugs have the potential to be particularly fearsome on this trip. It is recommended that you bring lightweight long sleeve shirts and pants and be comfortable buggy conditions.

Camp Manito-wish YMCA works hard to ensure that each trip leader has extensive experience in wilderness travel, youth development and risk management. For the success of the group however, it is imperative that each participant has a positive attitude, makes conservative risk management decisions, works well with others who they do not get along with, and has a willingness to challenge themselves.

Time at Camp Manito-wish YMCA

The time spent at Camp allows the group to begin to form and prepare for the time spent on trail. They will have three full days of structured time in preparation of departure on the fourth full day. While at Camp, participants will be staying as groups in Smith Leadership Cabins. These cabins are furnished with bunkrooms, bathrooms and a common area with a kitchen.

The first day is spent introducing community standards and getting to know groupmates. During the next three days, the group will cover basic first aid and emergency procedures, pack their food and equipment, spend time on the low challenge course and learn paddle strokes and rescues on Boulder Lake. After these first days, groups will fly to Juneau and embark on their adventure!

Participant Expectations

We expect each participant to best support their group and their own growth by maintaining the following:

- Embraces challenges
- Make conservative risk management decisions
- Work productively with everyone in the community
- Sets personal goals leading to personal growth as relates to self-awareness
- Develops communication skills by identifying what appropriate communication in relation to needs, effectively communicating their own needs to the entire group and listening and understanding each individual's needs
- Accepts feedback by applying and discussing suggestions from others and gives feedback to others
- Create a safe and inclusive atmosphere
- Take initiative in group tasks and self care

Risk Management

Our participants are active players in risk management. Actively teaching and relying on participants for risk management minimizes injury and illness and we hope these skills translate to healthy decisions in areas outside of Camp. Objectives include:

- Recognize what group dynamics and how behavior within the group affects safety
- Understand the multitude of risks faced in the wilderness, be able to identify them and distinguish between healthy and unhealthy/unsafe risks
- Practice good personal hygiene, proper waste disposal and proper food handling situation
- Understand First Aid Kit contents and other safety equipment and be able to use basic supplies if necessary.