Holy Cross Wilderness, Colorado

Located within White River and San Isabel National Forests, Holy Cross Wilderness exemplifies an “archetypal” Colorado wilderness area with rolling alpine tundra, soaring peaks (25 are over 13,000 feet), clear lakes, and cascading streams. The wilderness area takes its name from the 14,003 foot Mount Holy Cross at the heart of the wilderness. This area is characterized by 1.7 billion year old schist and gneiss towers, dramatic glacial-carved valleys, and dozens of alpine lakes which encourages many to dub Holy Cross a “water wilderness.” Abundant wildlife takes refuge in this remote land. Deer, elk, black bear, bobcat, lynx, and marmot call this area home.

Our 3 day, 2 night visit to this pristine wilderness will take us on a 10-15 mile loop, visiting the Missouri Lakes, crossing over Fancy pass, camping at Fancy Lake, and finally returning to the trailhead. Our altitude will be between 10,000 and 12,000 feet during our adventure. Fall in the Rocky Mountains can be the best time of year for a backpacking trip. There will be a crisp air foretelling winter and yellow aspen groves will be highlighting the hillsides. Our days will be spent hiking, exploring, journaling, and learning and practicing skills. Evenings will be spent cooking delicious meals and relaxing under a canopy of stars.

Personal Preparation

UNL Outdoor Adventure trips are designed for both beginners as well as people that maybe more experienced. However, although a beginner could go on this trip, we do want all participants to take their physical condition and personal preparation seriously. In order to get the most enjoyment out of the trip, being physically fit is a crucial part of this experience. On this trip we will be hiking rough, remote trails in a high altitude environment. We will be hiking up to 6 miles per day carrying packs that are about 1/3 of your body weight. If you have any physical or health concerns about the trip please discuss them with your trip leaders prior to the trip.

Transportation

University of Nebraska vehicles will be used for all transportation on this trip. We will depart from UNL Outdoor Adventures located in the UNL Campus Recreation Center. Storage space in the vehicle will be extremely limited on this trip. Please limit your gear to your backpack and a small travel bag.

Weather & Environment

Temperatures will be cool in the mountains on this trip. The average highs in the Holy Cross Wilderness will be in the upper 50’s and the lows will be in the lower 40’s. Rains and thunderstorms are likely in the afternoons this time of year. Be prepared for a range of conditions and the potential for wet and windy weather. Snow is also a rare possibility this time of year. If you have questions regarding clothing needs, please consult the packing list and ask your trip leaders questions.

Altitude

During this field experience, we will be traveling at high altitude at a starting elevation of around 10,000 feet and will reach a maximum elevation of over 12,000 feet. We will discuss altitude and its effect on the human body in greater detail in class.
Campsites
Our campsite the first night will be dispersed camping near the Missouri Lakes Trailhead within White River National Forests. All other nights will be spent at backcountry sites within the Holy Cross Wilderness. There will be no access to facilities at any of our campsites.

Personal Care, Hydration, Sanitation & Hygiene
Because this is a backcountry trip without access to facilities, personal care, sanitation, and hygiene become critical issues. All water from backcountry sources on this trip will need to be purified before drinking. This can be done by boiling, using a water filter, or using a chemical such as iodine. Your instructors will demonstrate water purification early on this trip.

As there will be no restroom facilities in the backcountry we practice Leave No Trace principles when dealing with human waste. Please use the restroom 200 feet from the trail and water sources. Bury feces in small cat holes (6-8 inches deep). Pack out used toilet paper (do not bury or burn it) in a brown paper bag and zip lock bag (The Poopy Kit 😊). Always wash your hands or use hand sanitizer after using the restroom and before handling food.

A couple notes on female hygiene issues: Tampons and pads should be packed out with other trash. Used items maybe placed tin foil with crushed aspirin to minimize odor. Hang used tampons and pads in the bear hang at night.

Keeping yourself clean is also important in the backcountry. Wash hands often after using the restroom and before handling food. Deodorant on the trip is an unneeded and foreign smell in the backcountry. Using a small towel to keep key areas clean is recommended. A change of underwear and shirt is not necessary but may help you feel better after a long hike.

Staying hydrated will be essential to staying healthy and feeling fresh on this trip. At higher altitudes our bodies’ fluid loss increases. Combined with a dryer climate and increased physical activity, we need more water to stay properly hydrated. Drink a minimum of three liters per day on the trip.

Kitchen wear such as pots, dishes and utensils should be clean and sanitized before use. This can be done by boiling water and dipping in any dirty utensils. Food scraps should be placed in trash baggies and packed out. Dirty dish water (gray water) may be dispersed 200 feet from camp, trails, and water sources.

Food & Group Cooking
As with all aspects of this expedition, cooking will be a group effort. While at the activity site, we will be divided into small cook groups of 3 to 4 people. Each cook group will cook together, clean their own dishes, and be responsible for carrying their group’s food, cook set, stove, and fuel. All meals on the trip will be provided by Outdoor Adventures. You will just need to cover the meals on the way to and from the destination. Please see the trip itinerary for specific meals that are not provided by Outdoor Adventures.

Please inform the trip leaders of any dietary concerns, food allergies, preferences or special needs during the pre-trip meeting and indicate them on the Health Statement form.

Minimum Impact Living
Going into the wild lands that we will be visiting on this trip is like going to a museum. You obviously do not want to leave your mark on an art treasure in a museum. If everyone left a mark going through the museum, it would be soon destroyed. The same goes for wilderness areas. If we all leave one little mark on the landscape, the wilderness would soon be despoiled. Our hope in practicing Leave No Trace principles in the backcountry is to preserve the wilderness areas in which we travel as well as to promote conscious living in our everyday front country lives. In order to minimize our impact, we will be practicing the following Leave No Trace principles:

Plan Ahead and Prepare | Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces | Dispose of Waste Properly | Leave What You Find | Minimize Campfire Impacts | Respect Wildlife | Be Considerate of Other Visitors
Expedition Behavior
Expedition behavior means taking care of yourself and other group members. It means being the first one to help put up the tent or to make hot drinks in the morning. It means staying hydrated, not unnecessarily endangering yourself, and communicating personal concerns to trip leaders. Characteristics such as respectfulness, flexibility, tolerance of others, courtesy, direct communication, self-awareness, and teamwork become critical when traveling in small groups in remote areas. Proper expedition behavior can be the difference between an average experience and a great one!

Smoking & Alcohol
In the spirit of expedition behavior, please do not bring alcohol or illegal substances on the trip. Cigarettes are acceptable at established areas but are not allowed to be used in vehicles. We would encourage you not to smoke on this trip and to be respectful of other participants.

What is provided by Outdoor Adventures?
On OA academic field experiences, all transportation, activity-related gear and camping equipment, camping fees, leadership, and instruction are provided by Outdoor Adventures. The trip cost does not include personal clothing and equipment, or activity and non-activity meals. Be sure to bring cash and a debit/credit card for meals during transportation and souvenirs.

Personal Gear Checklist

Backpacking Clothes
- Mid-weight hiking boots or trail shoes (broken-in)
- Synthetic mid-weight hiking socks
- Synthetic long underwear
- Synthetic underwear
- Hiking shorts and/or pants (lightweight)
- Rain pants
- Rain jacket
- Synthetic t-shirt (1-2)
- Synthetic long sleeve t-shirt
- Fleece or down insulating jacket
- Extra insulation such as a vest?
- Lightweight gloves
- Lightweight stocking hat
- Sunglasses and sun hat
- Camp shoes or sandals

Personal Items
- Sunscreen
- Lip balm with sunscreen
- Toiletries (toothbrush/toothpaste)
- Prescription glasses, contacts, and case
- Personal first aid kit/medications/prescriptions
- Pocket knife
- Camera
- Journal and pencil/pen
- Poopy Kit: toilet paper, brown paper bag, and zip-lock bag
- Tampons, pads, towelettes
- Blister care (moleskin)

Travel Bag
- Small sport/gym bag or backpack
- Casual clothes for car ride and being in town
- Toiletries/Towel
- Cash and/or credit card

Backpacking Gear provided by Outdoor Adventures
- Backpack (5,000in³)
- Tent
- Sleeping bag (20°F)
- Sleeping pad
- Backpacking Stove
- Cookset
- 2 Nalgene water bottles
- Bowl and spoon
- Headlamp
### Packing Considerations

When packing for this field experience, please consider that there will be limited space available in the vehicles. Please keep your personal luggage to a minimum and bring only a small personal backpack or gym bag. When packing your backpacking pack, remember that you will have to carry everything that you pack. Please only bring what you need and make sure that your pack weight is no more than 1/3 of your body weight.

### Cotton Clothing

What’s the deal with cotton clothing? While super comfortable, cotton is not a good choice for active clothing or for enduring a rain shower. When wet from perspiration, rain, or falling in a creek, cotton does not dry quickly or maintain its thermal properties like synthetic clothing. Wearing wet cotton clothing can easily lead to hypothermia which is a dangerous condition in the backcountry. While synthetic clothing can be expensive, there are affordable options. Having a synthetic base layer on this trip is mandatory.

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### Daily Itinerary

#### Gear Pick-Up: Tuesday – September, 11th, 2012

12:00-6:00p  Your backpacking gear will be available for pick-up at Outdoor Adventures. Please pack your pack with your personal gear and food and bring it back to Outdoor Adventures on Thursday.

#### Thursday – September 13th, 2012

- 7a  Arrive at Outdoor Adventures and pack vehicles
- 7:30a  Depart Lincoln
- Lunch  On the road
- Dinner  On the road
- 7:30p  Arrive at White River National Forest, Holy Cross Wilderness Area; set up camp

#### Friday – September 14th, 2012

- Breakfast  At camp
- 9a  Hike to Missouri Lakes (3mi)
- Lunch  On the trail
- Topic 2: Water Purification
- Topic 3: Traveling in Bear Country and Bear Hangs
- Topic 4: Stoves and Cooking
- Dinner  At Missouri Lakes campsite

#### Saturday – September 15th, 2012

- Breakfast  At camp
- 9a  Hike to Fancy Lake (4mi); possible day hike to Blodgett Lake
- Lunch  On the trail
- Dinner  At Fancy Lake campsite

#### Sunday – September 16th, 2012

- Breakfast  At camp
- 8a  Hike out to the trailhead (4mi); begin drive back to Lincoln
- Shower  Silverthorne Rec Center
- Lunch  On the road
- Dinner  On the road
- Evening  Arrive at Lincoln

***Note: All times are estimates and are subject to change***
Menu Planning Guide

As with all aspects of this expedition, cooking will be a group effort. Everyone will be responsible for washing their own dishes and helping with the group dishes after each meal. **As part of this academic field experience, your group will also be responsible for creating a healthy menu and shopping for your group’s food.** Each group will have a 1-burner backpacking stove on the trip. This can be used to make hot breakfasts and dinners. Plan on having cold lunches on the trail and be prepared with plenty of snacks such as trail mix and granola bars. You may want meals that are simple, healthy, tasty, and require little cleanup (not messy). All food and cooking materials will need to be put in bear hangs overnight to avoid being stolen by unwanted guests (bears, raccoons, etc). Further we will not be able to transport goods that require refrigeration to Colorado. Please choose lightweight and dehydrated foods and avoid heavy cans and fresh foods.

### Caloric Requirements

Good nutrition is as important in the backcountry as it is at home. Food is what gives your body energy and keeps you warm at night. Below are guidelines for caloric intake requirements and average backpacking food weights for a 3-season backpacking trip.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Caloric Requirements/Day</th>
<th>Food Weight/Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-season backpacking trip</td>
<td>2,500-3,000 calories</td>
<td>1.75-2 pounds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Food Sources

- **Carbohydrates** regularly make up about 50 percent of a person’s normal diet. On a backpacking trip, this may need to increase up to 70 percent to meet the increased energy requirements needed for backpacking. Slow releasing complex carbohydrates such as oatmeal and pasta are excellent choices for meals while quick releasing simple carbohydrates such as trail snack and chocolate are great for quick energy.

- **Fats** take on a more important role in backcountry meal planning and provide the body with a long term source of energy as they break down more slowly than carbohydrates. In the backcountry you want to have about 25 percent of your diet from fats (up to 40 percent in winter!). Adding a spoonful of margarine to your meal is an easy way to put more fat in your diet.

- **Proteins** are the next important food source in the backcountry. While it is difficult to carry traditional protein sources such as meat, fish, poultry, and eggs it is easy to carry items such as peanuts, legumes, dried milk, cheese, crackers, and sunflower seeds which combined provide the body with the 8 essential amino acids.

### Menu Planning

When making your meal plan for this trip you will want to consider a number of factors such as number of people in your group, the number of days and meals on the trip, weight, packaging space, dietary concerns (allergies, vegetarians, etc.), and spoilage. In general, you are looking for food that is lightweight, can easily be packed in zip lock bags, doesn’t take up much space and is not prone to spoiling.

#### Example Meal Plan Items

- **Breakfast** – Oatmeal, dried milk, dried fruit, hot chocolate
- **Snacks** – GORP (raisins, peanuts, sesame seeds, M&M’s, walnuts, etc.), granola bars, energy bars
- **Lunch** – Bagels, cheese, sausage, dried hummus, tortillas, peanut butter
- **Dinner** – Pasta, stir-fry, dried chicken noodle soup, mac and cheese, chili, etc.