

# UNL OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

## Backpacking Escalante National Monument

Dates: March 14-23, 2025

Pre-Trip Meetings: March 5<sup>th</sup> from 6:00-8:00pm, March 12<sup>th</sup> from 6:00-8:00pm



**DISCLAIMER:** *Please note that specific details about this trip are subject to change. This packet provides a broad overview of what you can expect, but specific locations, timelines, and details may shift. Any changes will be communicated at the required pre-trip meetings.*

**GRAND STAIRCASE-ESCALANTE NATIONAL MONUMENT:** Traveling to the Escalante region of southern Utah for Spring Break, we will enjoy canyon country at its finest. Escalante is a desert paradise of soaring sandstone mesas, buttes, slickrock canyons, natural arches, land bridges, and waterfalls. The area is remote, free of roads and crowds, and offers the hiker unlimited opportunities for solitude. This is a great trip to gain the skills and confidence to take on adventures of your own. On this trip we will head deep into the canyons of the Escalante on a multi-day expedition. We will carry all of our own gear, cook savory backcountry meals and rely on each other as a team. We will also take time to enjoy multiple day hikes, visiting some of the hidden gems of this vast, rugged, and remote region.

**PERSONAL PREPARATION:** UNL Outdoor Adventure trips are designed for both beginners as well as people who are more experienced. If you're new to backpacking, no problem. Be ready to learn. If you're an experienced backpacker - that's great too. Be ready to challenge yourself in new ways!

However, even though a beginner could go on this trip, we advise people to take their physical condition seriously. Backpacking is a physical sport and to get the most enjoyment out of the trip being physically fit is a crucial part of this experience. We will be hiking around 5 to 10 miles per day in a rugged and remote region. Expect steep grades and difficult, unmaintained trails. Each person will carry all their gear in a backpack weighing about 20-30 percent of their body weight. While this trip will be incredibly scenic, it will be difficult. Please do not hesitate to ask the trip leaders about proper conditioning and please inform the trip leaders of any concerns that you may have

## **TRANSPORTATION:**

All transportation is included in the price of the trip. University vehicles will be used as transportation to and from Utah. We will depart from UNL Outdoor Adventures in the afternoon on Friday, March 14<sup>th</sup>

## **WEATHER:**

*\*Weather is very variable and subject to change, but the following are averages for mid-March. Please refer to the personal gear checklist to make sure you are prepared - rain gear and warm layers are a must!\**

Average High Temperature: 70 °F

Average Low Temperature: 40 °F

Sunrise: 7:30 AM

Sunset: 7:30 PM

## **CAMPSITES:**

This trip will require two days of driving to and from the activity site. We will be camping for the entirety of this trip. During the backpacking portion of this trip, we will be camping at backcountry sites located within Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. When not in the backcountry, we will be camping at various State Parks, front country sites, or at large primitive campsites. Even front country sites in this area have limited, primitive, or no modern facilities.

## **COOKING AND GROUP TASK:**

As with all aspects of this expedition, cooking and camp chores will be a group effort. The group will be divided into teams and each team will be assigned a task for the day. Some of the tasks could include cooking, setting up camp or doing the dishes for the group. All meals while at the camping sites will be provided by Outdoor Adventures. You will just need to cover the meals as we are driving. Please see the trip itinerary for specific meals that are **not** provided by Outdoor Adventures. Please inform the trip leaders of any dietary concerns or needs during the pre-trip meeting.

## **MINIMUM IMPACT LIVING/LEAVE NO TRACE:**

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 soon be destroyed. The same goes for wilderness areas. If we all leave one little mark on the landscape, the wilderness would soon be far from its natural order and permanently ruined. To minimize our impact, we will be practicing the following Leave No Trace principles:

For more information about the 7 principles of leave no trace, go to <https://Int.org/why/7-principles/>

## **EXPEDITION BEHAVIOR:**

Expedition behavior means taking care of yourself and other group members. Everyone has signed up for the trip for their own reasons, but the experience itself will be a shared experience between all members of the trip. Your presence and behavior on the trip affects others' experience in all sorts of ways. On this trip, camp responsibilities are shared. Everyone will take their turn to do dishes, help cook, carry group gear etc. This also means taking care of yourself- if you are unhealthy, it will negatively impact the experience for others. For example, it is important to stay hydrated, to not necessarily endanger yourself, and communicate concerns to trip leaders. Characteristics such as respectfulness, flexibility, tolerance of others, courtesy, direct communication, self-awareness, and teamwork become critical when traveling in groups in remote areas. Proper expedition behavior can make the difference between an enjoyable experience and a great one!

## **SMOKING, ALCOHOL, AND CELL PHONE POLICIES:**

In the spirit of expedition behavior, please do not bring alcohol or illegal substances on the trip. Cigarettes are acceptable in established areas but are not allowed to be used in vehicles. We encourage you not to smoke on this trip as a wellness challenge! If you must smoke, please respect other participants, be aware of fire danger, and of course pack out all related trash. Please be respectful with cell phone use by stepping away from the group if you decide to use your cell phone during transportation to and from our destination. Please, no cell phone use while in the vehicle or during the backpacking portion of the trip. Thanks!

## **WHAT'S PROVIDED BY OAC:**

All transportation, meals while at the activity site, all 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 meals outside of the activity site. Be sure to bring cash and a debit/credit card for meals and souvenirs.

## **CONTACTS:**

UNL Outdoor Adventures Center: (402) 472-4777, <http://crec.unl.edu/>



## PERSONAL GEAR CHECKLIST

*The specifics of this list will be covered during the pre-trip meeting. Please come with specific questions so you are properly prepared for this trip.*

### Personal Backpacking and Camping Clothes:

- Mid-weight, waterproof hiking boots (purchased in advance and broken in)
- Camp shoes (old running shoes or sport sandals)
- Synthetic midweight hiking socks
- Synthetic underwear
- Synthetic long underwear
- Gaiters (optional)
- Hiking shorts and/or pants (light & quick drying)
- Synthetic short-sleeve top (1-2)
- Synthetic long-sleeve sun shirt (1-2)
- Rain/wind jacket (waterproof)
- Rain/wind pants (waterproof)
- Fleece or down insulating jacket
- Extra insulation (vest or sweater)
- Bandanna (optional)
- Midweight gloves
- Midweight stocking cap
- Sunglasses
- Sun hat

### Personal Items:

- Sunscreen
- Lip balm with sunscreen
- DEET bug spray
- Toothbrush & toothpaste
- Prescription glasses with straps and/or contacts & case
- Personal first aid kit & small lighter
- Personal medication (e.g., Ibuprofen)/prescriptions
- Pocket knife/multi-tool
- Camera - make sure you can waterproof it!
- Journal & pencil/pen
- Book, Sudoku, cards, etc.
- Tampons or pads
- Hand sanitizer
- Blister care (moleskin & duct tape)
- Insulated mug or small thermos
- 2 one-liter water bottles (e.g., 1 large Nalgene® = 1L) or more
- Watch (with alarm)
- Daypack (optional)

**Front Country Travel Clothes & Gear:**

- Small backpack with car items (books, wallet, etc.,)
- Medium-sized duffel for personal gear (we will back our gear into drybags at the trailhead)
- Travel clothes for current weather conditions
- Small towel and travel shampoo/soap
- Front Country needs: toiletries, prescriptions, etc.
- Cash and/or credit card

**Gear That Can Be Provided by OAC:**

- Backpacking Backpack (5000 cubic in/65 L)
- Tent
- Sleeping bag
- Sleeping pad
- Camp chair
- Backcountry kitchen & food
- Water purification & water jugs
- Maps, compass, & permits (where necessary)
- Bowl & spoon
- Group first aid kits
- Other group related gear

*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.*

**DAILY ITINERARY:** *Please note that this itinerary is just tentative and is subject to change based on the decisions of the trip leaders (Also note that meals marked with an asterisk (\*) are not provided by Outdoor Adventures!)*

**DAY 1 - 3/14/25, Friday**

12:00PM Meet at Outdoor Adventures, start drive West!

Dinner On the Road\*

Evening Eastern Colorado

**DAY 2 - 3/15/25, Saturday**

6:00AM Breakfast at campsite, Drive to Escalante Petrified Forest State Park (14 hours)

Lunch & Dinner On the Road\*

~10:00PM Arrive at Escalante Petrified Forest State Park and set up camp

**DAY 3 - 3/16/25, Sunday**

Breakfast At Camp, day hikes and prepping for backpacking at Escalante Petrified Forest State Park

Lunch On the Trail, start backpacking

Dinner At backpacking campsite

**DAY 4-7- 3/17-19/25, Monday-Wednesday**

Breakfast At Camp

Lunch On the Trail

Dinner At backpacking campsite

**DAY 8 3/20/25 Thursday**

Breakfast At backpacking campsite

Lunch On the Trail, finish backpacking and drive East

Dinner At Ken's Lake Campground

**(Tues-Wed)** Hike through the backcountry- all meals on backcountry trail!

**DAY 9 3/21/25 Friday**

Breakfast At Ken's Lake Campground, day hikes at Arches National Park

Lunch On the Trail, Arches National Park

Dinner At Ken's Lake Campground

**DAY 10 - 3/22/25, Saturday**

Breakfast At Ken's Lake Campground, start drive home

Lunch On the Road\*

Afternoon Camp along drive home (if needed)

**DAY 11 - 3/23/25, Sunday**

Breakfast On the Road\* (Finish drive home)

Afternoon Arrive at Outdoor Adventures, sort & clean gear (30-40 minutes)