



June 2021

Dear Rising 11th Graders and Parents,

We are excited to share with you the details of the much anticipated 2021 11th Grade Backpacking Trip, scheduled for Wednesday, September 1 through Saturday, September 4, 2021. We will spend Tuesday, August 31 on campus from 12:00 to 4:00pm to learn about the basics of backpacking and meet the members of your backpack group. This backpacking experience will be a great way to start the new school year and all 11th graders are **expected** to attend.

***This packet contains the following information:***

**Goals of the 11th Grade Backpack Trip**

**Specifics on the Program**

**Leadership and Managing Risk**

**Medical Information & Weather**

**Helpful Hints & Frequently Asked Questions**

**Important Meeting Times**

**Clothing and Equipment Checklist (separate link)**

Please read and re-read this information carefully and make note of some important dates. **On Wednesday, August 25 at 5:30 - 6:30pm there will be a mandatory pack check for all 11th Graders on the second floor of the Drinkward Center.** Please bring **all** of your gear (except what you are renting) with you to this meeting so that we can be sure that you will be properly prepared for the trip. There will also be an 11th Grade Backpack Trip information meeting for parents at OES in the Great Hall at the same time as the student pack check.

**Prior to this there will be another 11th Grade Class Backpack information meeting (same information) for parents, international students (required) offered on August 2 at 7pm over Zoom ([here is the link](#)).** Attending one of these two meetings has proven to give students a greater chance at a positive and successful backpacking experience.

For dorm students who will not be arriving until after August 25, we will have a dorm student specific pack check on Monday, August 30 at 3:00pm on the second floor of the Drinkward Center. Day students who cannot make it to the August 25 pack

check may bring their gear to a make up pack check at 4pm on Monday August 30, but please let Tom Handel know of your plans ahead of time via email ([handelt@oes.edu](mailto:handelt@oes.edu)) . **ALL STUDENTS MUST HAVE THEIR EQUIPMENT CHECKED AT ONE OF THESE TWO TIMES IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN THE TRIP.**

**OES has a limited supply of clothing and equipment to lend.** If you would like to borrow some items please call or email Tom Handel at 503-416-9359 or [handelt@oes.edu](mailto:handelt@oes.edu) **on or after August 1st.** Students who have called (or emailed) to reserve gear from OES will pick it up at their pack check or may make arrangements to pick it up prior. Additional equipment will be available at each pack check on a first-come basis. All students will leave their equipment at OES (where it will be stored securely) after their pack check. Packs will be stored in a locked classroom until Wednesday morning, September 1, when students arrive. This is to ensure that the proper clothing that is checked by OES faculty and our professional instructors all comes with us into the field. If students fail to bring something on the equipment list to the pack check, they will leave the pack check with a “shopping list” of items to bring with them Tuesday afternoon. They must bring these items on Tuesday, August 31 or they cannot go on the trip. We attempt to carry the essentials for all kinds of weather; please do not bring extra clothing, food or gear, but do not bring less either. If you have any questions about clothing, equipment, or the trip in general, please do not hesitate to call or email me at (503) 416-9359 or [handelt@oes.edu](mailto:handelt@oes.edu).

I hope that you enjoy your summer and that you are looking forward to a great trip!

Sincerely,

Tom Handel  
OES Experiential Education Coordinator  
Oregon Episcopal School

# **Oregon Episcopal School**

## **11th Grade Backpacking Trip**

### **Student/Parent Information Packet**

#### **Goals of the 11th Grade Backpacking Trip**

The goals for this four-day backpacking trip are as follows:

- to improve decision-making, problem-solving, and leadership skills through involvement with the day to day challenges of group backpacking
- to teach how to properly use all the equipment needed for a backpack trip
- to build cooperation, self-confidence and self-awareness
- to have a fun time meeting new classmates and renewing old friendships
- to teach minimum impact outdoor living and backpacking skills
- to broaden students' understanding and appreciation of the glorious Oregon backcountry

#### **Specifics on the Program**

This four-day (plus one day on campus) experience will have classmates divided into groups of 8-10 students along with one or two OES teachers and one hired outdoor instructor. All of the groups will hike in the Mt. Jefferson, Indian Heaven, Mt. Adams, Three Sisters Wilderness or Goat Rocks Wilderness Areas.

Students will receive instruction in minimum impact camping and hiking, map and compass use, first aid, and outdoor cooking. As skills are taught, students will be guided through the application of what they have learned. Students will sleep in tents. They will erect these tents, cook meals together on lightweight backpacking stoves, and follow a designated route using a map and compass. The main activity on this trip will be hiking.

The trip will emphasize working together, problem solving, personal challenge, and developing self-confidence. Individuals will be challenged by different elements of the trip; for one person it may be hiking with a heavy pack, for another it may be reaching group consensus. We anticipate that all students will discover new qualities within themselves and their classmates. Our goal is to provide a safe, exhilarating wilderness experience that will set a positive tone for the new school year. What we ask of the students is to be open to new experiences, to strive to work together, to help each other and to embrace a spirit of adventure.

## **Leadership and Risk Management**

While backpacking can be a very challenging experience, it is possible to manage and overcome these challenges with proper planning. This trip has been specifically designed to meet the needs of the sophomore class. Activities will be conducted with the utmost care to ensure high quality educational experiences for the students.

Each group will have 2-3 adult leaders; one or two OES faculty members, and one skilled wilderness instructor. All leaders will have first aid and CPR training, and at least one adult will be certified as a Wilderness First Responder or EMT. A thorough emergency plan has been put together for the area, and each group will carry a satellite phone for use in the event of an extreme emergency.

## **Medical Information**

**Please go out of your way to inform us of any allergies** your child may have, especially to **bee stings**. Previous sophomore backpacking trips have generated a fair number of bee stings. While we carry injectable epinephrine (for severe allergic reactions) and are trained to use it, we need to know if any student has had a past allergic reaction to bee stings.

Also remember, **if your child is taking prescription medication**, he or she must bring the medication needed for the trip to one of the pack checks. Medication must be in original containers and sealed in a Ziploc bag with the student's name on it.

## **The Weather**

Early September in the Northwest Wilderness areas can be the most glorious time of the year. It can also rain, sleet, hail and blow! We have experienced all kinds of weather on this trip. **Having the proper clothing and equipment is the key to having a safe and enjoyable experience. Please follow the attached Clothing and Equipment list carefully;** the items on this list will allow us to cope with any weather conditions.

## **Personal Clothing and Equipment List and Other Helpful Hints**

Please remember that you will have to carry everything you bring. In addition to your personal clothing, you will also need to carry a share of the group gear (tarps, fuel bottles, stoves, pots and pans, first aid kit, and food for 4 days which will be an extra 5-10 lbs. approximately). **Bring only those items that are on the list, and be sure**

**that your pack is large enough to accommodate your share of group gear as well as your personal gear.**

**If you don't have some of the equipment on the list, be resourceful. Please do not rush out and buy a lot of new things.** Call friends or other Upper School students and see what you can borrow. OES also has an ample supply of clothing and equipment to lend; what we have will be given to the first people who inquire starting August 1st . Please refer to the clothing/equipment list for specific places to buy or rent clothing and equipment. If backpacking is something new to you, we strongly recommend renting or borrowing as much clothing and equipment as possible. If you have any questions or wish to borrow something, please call or email Tom Handel at (503) 416-9359 or [handelt@oes.edu](mailto:handelt@oes.edu).

If you have any extra gear that you are willing to loan out, or gear that you would like to donate, please call Tom Handel at (503) 416-9359. Any gear loaned out will be returned to you after it has been washed, and gear donated will be used by the outdoor program year round. We can use: sleeping bags, backpacking sleeping pads, backpacks, fleece clothing, rain jackets and rain pants.

### **Some frequently asked questions about the 11th Grade Backpacking Trip:**

***What is the sleeping arrangement on this trip?*** Our tents are made by Big Agnes, a respected outdoor gear manufacturer. The specific model is the Copper Spur UL 3 and UL 4. They are designed to provide relief from rain, cold temperatures and mosquitos. They are lightweight backpacking tents, and they are large enough that they can sleep 3-4 students per tent.

***Can we use a down sleeping bag?*** Yes, however if the sleeping bag gets wet this can be a serious problem. Some of the newer down sleeping bags are designed with a water resistant material. If this is not the case, then we ask that a bivy sack is used in conjunction with the down sleeping bag. Otherwise synthetic sleeping bags are recommended. Stuffing the sleeping bag into a stuff sack that is lined with a garbage bag will further prevent moisture from getting the bag wet.

***I see that students are supposed to bring their water bottles full. Is this the only water they will have throughout the trip?*** No. Each group will camp at a water source (lake, stream or spring) each night. There is no water at the trailheads, though, and that is why we ask students to begin the trip with full water bottles. Many of the routes do not pass much water during the day, which is why we ask that all students have a water bottle capacity of at least two quarts, in two separate bottles. We will make sure that everyone starts each day with full water bottles.

***Will the water you find be safe to drink?*** We will make the water safe to drink either by filtering it with a variety of water filters, or by using iodine tablets or Aquamira solution.

***What about bears?*** This is the wilderness and yes, there are bears, although we have never seen one on the sophomore trip. (Probably because we're too noisy!) We take precautions against unwanted encounters by hanging our food at night and making sure that no one goes to bed with snacks stuffed in their sleeping bag.

***Will my child get enough to eat? S/he eats a lot!*** We pack our food with teenage appetites in mind, and we have never had a group return without extra food.

## **Important Times and Dates for the 2021 11th Grade Backpacking Trip**

Please jot down the following meeting dates and times. Please be prompt to these meetings, as they are a critical part of being prepared for this experience.

### **Sunday August 1**

First day to email [handelt@oes.edu](mailto:handelt@oes.edu) for any equipment you wish to borrow from OES. A time will subsequently be emailed back to pick up the equipment well in advance of the trip.

### **Monday, August 2, 7 p.m.**

#### **Backpack Information Meeting, via Zoom**

Please join us and learn more about the 11th grade trip this year. All parents are encouraged to attend and all **dorm students** in the 11th grade are required to attend (please email [handelt@oes.edu](mailto:handelt@oes.edu) if you have a conflict). We will answer questions and explain the trip in greater detail.

### **Wednesday, August 25, 5:30 p.m.**

#### **Student Pack Check**, Second Floor Drinkward Center

Bring your backpack, sleeping bag and all clothing and equipment that you're planning to take on the trip (except rental gear.) Be prepared to leave your equipment at OES until the morning we leave.

**All day students are expected to attend this meeting. If you cannot attend, you must contact Tom Handel in advance ([handelt@oes.edu](mailto:handelt@oes.edu)).**

### **Wednesday, August 25, 5:30 p.m.**

#### **Backpack Information Meeting (Great Hall)**

Please join us and learn more about the 11th Grade Class trip. This meeting is not required, although all parents are encouraged to attend. We will answer questions and explain the trip in more detail. This is the same information presented at the August 2nd backpack information meeting.

### **Monday, August 30, 3:00 p.m.**

**Pack Check for Dorm Students**, Second Floor Drinkward Center Bring your backpack, sleeping bag and all clothing and equipment that you are planning to take on the trip. Be prepared to leave your equipment at OES until the morning we leave.

**Monday August 30, 4:00 p.m.**

Make up Pack Check for all day students who were not able to attend the August 25th pack check. Please email (handelt@oes.edu ) to confirm reservation to this pack check.

**Tuesday, August 31, 12:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

Backpack 101 with your backpack group (bring your rented equipment)  
Have lunch with the entire class in the cafeteria.

Learn how to pack a backpack

(Please arrive with the items on your "I still need to get" sheet).

Learn the basics of map and compass and look at your route.

Learn how to set up a tarp tent and how to use a backpacking stove.

Get used to walking with your pack loaded.

**Wednesday, September 1, 8:30 a.m.**

Meet at SPARC with your group ready to depart directly after the OES Opening Belltower Ceremony. Please arrive with the remaining items on your "I still need to get" sheet, full water bottles, and a small snack if you would like. Working in our small groups we will distribute group gear and food, make sure that everyone's packs are packed correctly, and generally get ready to hit the trail.

**Saturday, September 4, 2:00-4:30 p.m.** (varies on route drive times)

Trip returns to OES

Upon arrival at OES we will spend some time (45 minutes) cleaning group gear and debriefing the experience. **Parents should plan on picking up your student between 2-4:30pm. An email will be sent upon arrival letting you know that they should be ready for pick up 45 minutes later.**