Backpack the Mt. Adams Wilderness

Due to the many variables of outdoor trips, it's impossible to describe exactly what the trip will be like but this will give you a sense of what to expect. Questions? Get in touch at: outdoors@lclark.edu

About the Location:
Mt. Adams is the second highest peak in the Pacific Northwest, shooting up to 12,276 feet. Native American legend says that Mt. Adams, called Pa-Toe by local tribes, battled with Mt. Hood, known then as Wy'East, for the love of a woman named Loowit, who is today known as Mt. St. Helens. Inhabited by Native Americans for at least 9000 years, European explorers didn't see it until 1805, when Lewis and Clark passed by. It received its current name in 1839, in honor of John Adams, as part of an eventually disregarded attempt to name all of the Cascade peaks after U.S. presidents. It is, however, an ancient and beautiful volcano, thankfully believed to be extinct. Mt. Adams is a spectacular mountain. You'll hear rocks and ice from glaciers tumble off the peak in the distance, and wildflowers will still be blooming in the high meadows. The sunrises and sunsets are simply amazing.

What to Expect:
The first night of your trip you'll drive to the trailhead and camp at a nearby campground. On the last day of your trip, we'll pack up and head back to Portland the evening before New Student Orientation begins. The Mt. Adams Wilderness is about a 4.5-hour drive from Portland. For five days you will backpack through lush forests, groves of ripe wild huckleberries, and alpine meadows. You will have views of Mt. Adams looming above you and get glimpses of some of the other great cascade mountains in the distance. You will be carrying a backpack that will weigh somewhere between 30 and 60 lbs., depending on your weight and your physical condition. The trails in the Mt. Adams Wilderness are often steep as you climb up above tree line. As you might expect, not everyone in the group will be able to hike at the same speed, so there are probably going to be some compromises made on routes, campsites, and day hikes. On average, expect to hike about 5 miles a day wearing backpacks, with a possible layover day in the middle.

August weather in the Pacific Northwest is usually beautiful, but in the mountains the weather can be beautiful and 80° F at noon, then be snowing by 4 p.m. It's not uncommon to have snow during August in the Mt. Adams Wilderness. Nights are generally cool to cold in the mountains, and the temperature can drop below freezing at night. While August is one of the driest months in the Northwest, participants should bring good rain gear. We practice minimum-impact camping techniques such as packing out all litter and food waste, not using soap in streams or lakes, or camping on fragile meadows. We'll go over these practices and Leave-No-Trace (LNT) principles before we head out. Due to wildfire danger, all trips are non-smoking.

New to backpacking?
No problem! This trip is designed for beginners. And we have ideas to help you get ready (read on).

How to Prepare:
- **Prep for the pack:** borrow a pack, fill it with 4-gallon (1 gal. = 8 lbs.) jugs and take a walk! It will feel heavy at first but don't worry - it gets easier!
- **Break in your boots:** new boots + long treks = painful blisters. It is *very important* to break in your boots by wearing them with a pack for extended periods prior to your trip.
- **Get moving**: it's a great idea to walk or run this summer to get yourself into shape.

What will we eat?
We eat well in the backcountry! Some examples of typical meals include: curry, pizza, mac & cheese.

We resupply water from streams and lakes. This water needs to be filtered or treated before you can drink it; this is done with pumps and tablets. Our treatment neutralizes Giardia, bacteria, and viruses.

What if I don't have outdoor clothing or equipment?
No problem! Check out our packing lists (located on your trip page) for a description of the essential and optional gear for your trip. If you don't have your own outdoor clothing or equipment, we provide what you'll need for free. You must request the equipment ahead of time using this form: http://tinyurl.com/c4d5g2r

What are the risks?
The most common injuries which could occur on this trip are blisters on feet (don't forget to break in your boots), and burns from not applying enough sunscreen. *These are all preventable with a little caution and common sense.* Yellow jackets (wasps) can be pests at this time of the year, and people with the potential for severe reactions to stings should plan to bring their own anaphylaxis kits. Learn more about possible risks here. All our trip leaders are trained as Wilderness First Responders.

Complete and return the online Health & Diet Questionnaire to inform our trip leaders of any conditions or illnesses that you have.

Have a great summer, and we'll see you in August!

Questions? Email us at: outdoors@lclark.edu Or by phone: 503-768-7116