

# Hikes & History of the NW Oregon Coast

## New Student Trip (NST)

### About the Location:

In the northwest corner of Oregon lies a dramatic landscape rich with history where the great Columbia River meets the Pacific Ocean. This region is the traditional lands of the Chinook, Willapa, Lower Chinook, Clatsop, Kathlamet, and Nahalem Tribes, as well as where the Lewis & Clark “Corps of Discovery” Expedition first reached the Pacific in 1805. The nearby town of Astoria was the first non-indigenous U.S. settlement west of the Rocky Mountains, and has a fascinating history of logging and fishing – both of which have declined, as the natural resources on which these industries relied were depleted. Historically and still today, ships traversing the Pacific Ocean head inland towards Portland at Astoria, but the treacherous Columbia River Bar is a chaotic environment of moving sandbars and unpredictable weather, responsible for hundreds of shipwrecks – giving it the sinister nickname, “Graveyard of the Pacific.”

The natural landscape features rocky headlands (often with lighthouses) that jut out into the powerful waves of the Pacific Ocean, as well as miles of sandy beaches to beckon hikers. Groves of ancient forests, surviving the loggers who arrived from Europe, still command a cathedral-like presence and offer every possible color of green. Keep an eye out for colorful starfish, tufted puffin, dinosaur-like cormorants, elusive seals, enormous sea lions, curious otters, and enormous Roosevelt elk.

About 2 hours west of Portland, situated on a freshwater lake, is our rustic summer camp, set in acres of forest. The camp is separated from the Pacific Ocean by sand dunes and trails, but is so close that you can hear the thundering breakers as waves crash on the nearby shore.

### What to Expect:

We'll drive from Portland to a camp near Warrenton, Oregon late in the afternoon on the day you arrive for your trip. Each day we'll visit interesting historic areas and hike along the Pacific coast in ancient forests, on beaches, and out to headlands – as well as other great adventures. The trails we'll be hiking are rated easy to moderate, with more strenuous trails and longer mileage as options for people who'd like the challenge. The group expects to hike about 2 to 6 miles a day wearing daypacks. We plan to visit historic sites such as Fort Clatsop, where the Corps of Discovery overwintered in 1805-1806, see a shipwreck, and explore the Cape Disappointment lighthouse.

The camp we stay at features bathrooms with hot showers and flush toilets, and rustic cabins with bunk beds, or you can camp outdoors under a large open-air picnic pavilion structure. Gender-neutral bathroom facilities are available. The main lodge and dining room of the camp was built in the 1950s from huge local timbers, with a commercial kitchen where we will work together to prepare meals. The main lodge also has a large fireplace to gather around in the evenings, as well as a bigger outdoor fire ring. During the day you will have the chance to connect with other new students in your small group, and when you're back at camp you can meet other new students, since the Hike & Kayak Northwest Oregon NST and the Hike & Stand-Up Paddleboard the Oregon Coast NST also stay at this facility. After a day exploring, we'll have plenty of time in the evenings to hang out and get to know each other.

### New to Hiking?

No problem! This trip is designed for beginners and fun for anyone who wants to explore. For accessibility accommodations, email [outdoors@lclark.edu](mailto:outdoors@lclark.edu).

### How to Prepare:

- **Break in your hiking boots:** Since we'll be day hiking, remember that new boots can cause painful blisters. If you buy new boots, rather than borrow ones from College Outdoors, it's *very important* to break in your hiking boots by wearing them with appropriate socks for extended periods prior to your trip.
- **Get moving:** Although this trip is designed for beginners and rated as *low to moderate* physical rigor, it's a great idea to walk or run this summer to get yourself into shape.

### What will we eat?

We eat well on this trip! Some examples of typical meals include: pizza, burritos, and mac & cheese, lots of different salads, and delicious snacks while out hiking during the day! This trip can accommodate any dietary restrictions and allergies, as long as you let us know about them ahead of time. For vegan and other non-medical specialty diets, there is an additional \$5/day charge. There is no extra cost for vegetarian diets or medically required diets.

### 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 personal equipment, we provide what you'll need for free, as long as you *request the equipment ahead of time* using the online form.

### What are the policies?

Participants on College Outdoors trips are expected to follow all [Lewis & Clark College conduct policies](#). All trips are tobacco, drug, and alcohol free, including vaping, medical cannabis, and tobacco products. Nicotine patches and nicotine gum are permitted.

College Outdoors has specific policies and procedures to mitigate risks on trips, which are outlined in the [policy brochure](#) and will be explained by your trip leaders. These policies include: Respecting others, sanitation practices, requiring the use of Personal Floation Devices (PFDs, sometimes referred to as lifejackets) in some situations, requiring close-toed shoes, staying 6 ft. away from cliff edges, practicing "leave no trace" in the outdoors, and not engaging in exclusive or sexual relationships during trips. Policy violations may result in disciplinary action and/or removal from trips.

### What are the risks?

Common injuries which could occur on this trip include: blisters on feet (don't forget to break in your boots), cuts resulting from walking barefoot or use of pocket knives, injuries resulting from tripping on trails and burns from handling pots on a stove without hot pads or gloves, spilling boiling water, and 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.* [Find out more about possible risks here.](#)

Please note that our hikes will sometimes go to remote areas and medical help could be hours away. Our trip leaders plan to carry cellphones, but remember cellular service is not always available in rural or remote areas. All our trip leaders are trained as Wilderness First Responders.

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