

# Hike and Kayak Waldo Lake

## New Student Trip (NST)

### About the Location:

At 5,400 feet in elevation, Waldo Lake is the second largest natural lake in Oregon, covering 6,700 acres with 420 feet of depth in some places. The waters of Waldo Lake are so crystal clear that paddling looks like flying! Waldo Lake is the headwaters of the North Fork of the Middle Fork of the Willamette River, which is the river that flows right through the middle of Portland, Oregon. Formed by sheet glaciations during the Ice Age, the lake is nestled amongst geologically recent volcanoes in the midst of the Central Oregon Cascades. The 10,000-foot peaks of the Three Sisters mountains are visible in the distance. The eastern side of the lake has three Forest Service campgrounds, and the western side is the 39,200-acre Waldo Lake Wilderness. Most of the camping on this trip will occur on the western shore. Waldo Lake, located on the traditional lands of the Kalapuya, Molalla, Klamath, and Confederated Tribes of Grande Ronde, is a spectacular body of water, unlike any other in Oregon. While the sunrises and sunsets are amazing year-round, in August, huckleberries will still be ripening in the high meadows while fall colors make their appearance as frost hits this high-elevation basin.

### What to Expect:

On the first day of your trip, you will drive to a campground on the edge of Waldo Lake. During the trip, you will paddle to backcountry campsites around the western shore of the lake and take time for some great hikes. On the last day of your trip, you'll pack up and head back to Portland the evening before New Student Orientation begins. The Waldo Lake Wilderness is about a 5-hour drive from Portland, and well worth the trip to this unique clear lake surrounded by mountains. The kayaking is suitable for beginners, and the group will practice basic sea kayaking techniques and rescue methods at the start of the trip. This will involve getting wet! All the food, water, sleeping bags, clothing, gear, tents, and group equipment, such as stoves and tarps, is loaded into the kayaks and carried with the group throughout the trip. On some days, the group may paddle 6 miles or more, some days will be for hiking and exploring and on other days you will spend substantial time playing kayak games. Participants will need to wear wetsuits at times (which we can provide), depending on the weather and the route. While day-hiking, not everyone in the group will be able to hike at the same speed, so we'll do what is best for the group when it comes to routes. On average, the group expects to hike about 6-8 miles every other day with daypacks.

Weather factors (such as wind and rain) may influence the group's plans and route. Wind can be a factor at any time on the lake, although the water tends to be calmer in the early morning. August in the Cascades is generally beautiful, and this trip has had great weather most years. However, it's possible for weather at this elevation to be a warm 80°F at noon and then be sleeting by 4 p.m. While it does not snow in the Waldo Lake Wilderness in late August, nights are generally cool to cold, and the temperature can drop below freezing at night. Rain can blow in from the Pacific Ocean at any time, creating wet, foggy weather that requires good rain gear.

We practice minimum-impact camping techniques such as packing out all litter and food waste, not using soap directly in streams or lakes, and not camping on fragile meadows. We'll go over these practices during the trip.

### New to hiking or kayaking?

No problem! This trip is designed for beginners, and fun for every experience level.

New Student Trip Description

**Questions?** Email us at: [outdoors@clark.edu](mailto:outdoors@clark.edu) Or by phone: 503-768-7116

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### How to Prepare:

- **Break in your boots:** Since we'll be day-hiking remember that new boots can cause painful blisters. It is *very important* to break in your boots by wearing them for extended periods prior to your trip. If you borrow hiking boots from College Outdoors, our boots are synthetic leather, fairly lightweight, and tend not to cause many blisters.
- **Get moving:** It's a great idea to walk or run this summer to get yourself into shape, and any exercise that improves core strength will help your paddle strokes. If you have the chance to paddle, do it! It's great to start getting those muscles ready for the water.

### What will we eat?

We eat well on this trip! Some examples of typical meals include: curry, pizza, mac & cheese and much more. This trip can accommodate most 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 meal charge. *There is no extra cost for vegetarian diets or medical diet restrictions.*

We'll resupply water from streams and lakes and use filters and treatment to neutralize 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. To help prevent foot injuries, we do not allow open-toed sandals on our trips. 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 found on our website.

### What are the risks?

Common injuries which could occur on this trip include blisters on hands (from paddling) or feet and burns from UV reflection off the water (or just 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 (EpiPens).* [Learn 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 generally carry cellphones or satellite phones, but remember service is not always available in remote areas. Trip leaders are trained as Wilderness First Responders.

**More questions? Just ask! We LOVE to talk about trips!**