

Planning Guide 2021

NORTHERN LIGHTS



HIGH ADVENTURE



Planning Your Trip

“To the lover of wilderness, Alaska is one of the most wonderful countries in the world.” — John Muir, *Travels in Alaska*

About Us

Northern Lights High Adventure (NLHA) is a program dedicated to the development of young leaders, set within the great Alaskan backcountry. With the pillars of Scouting as the foundation, we offer unparalleled outdoor experiences that will challenge and build the leaders of tomorrow, while promoting teamwork and creating memories that last a lifetime.



Getting Started

Each trek is customized to the goals and skills of the Crew and can include additional options not listed here.

In order to experience the best opportunities possible for your Crew, it is recommended to contact NLHA Backcountry Trek Manager, Stephanie Kelly, to discuss options: northernlightshighadventure@gmail.com.

When planning your Northern Lights High Adventure trek consider the following:

- What are the goals for your adventure? (Examples: teamwork, individual leadership development, physical challenge, etc.)
- What activities or locations unique to Alaska are you most interested in? (Canoeing, sightseeing, glaciers, wildlife, mileage or hiking goals, history, merit badge(s), etc.)
- What are the desired dates and time period you wish to spend in Alaska?
- What is the necessary preparation, personal gear, and training your Crew will need prior to coming to Alaska?

All locations and trek details are subject to change due to weather and land use permitting.

What to Know



Crew

All participants belong to a crew consisting of at least two adult leaders, a Senior Patrol Leader, and youth participants. A Northern Lights High Adventure Guide accompanies all Crews. Crew maximum is 12 participants including adult leaders, and all youth must be 13 years old or have completed the 7th grade by January 1, 2020.

NLHA Guide

The Guide is a highly trained, adult NLHA staff member who serves as a teacher and resource for your Crew. The Guide reinforces the principles of Scouting, and is trained in outdoor education, orienteering, and Wilderness First Aid. Guides will

consult and communicate through the SPL/President during the trek, but in order to ensure the highest level of safety they have the right to make all final decisions.

Crew Leadership

Scouting and Venturing is specifically designed to develop youth leadership. A well-qualified Scout or Venturer should be selected as the SPL (Senior Patrol Leader) or President early in the planning of your trek. The SPL or President is responsible for leading the pace of travel during the day and establishing the Crew duty roster for camp chores.

Adult Leadership

A minimum of two adult leaders are asked to accompany each Crew. Each Crew must present proof that one adult leader is currently certified in CPR and one adult leader is currently certified in Wilderness First Aid, BSA Weather Hazards, and all adults must have proof of current YPT certification.

All Participants

All participants youth and adult must pass the BSA Swim Check, given upon arrival at NLHA Base, as well as submit a complete and current (within 1 year) BSA Medical Form and allergy form, and meet all age, weight, and health requirements. NLHA reserves the right to decline participation or modify the trek as needed if participants do not meet health and safety guidelines.

It is strongly encouraged that Crews train physically together in anticipation for their Alaskan adventure, including overnight hikes, canoe floats, and gear shakedowns.



Choosing Your Adventure

All treks are welcomed from the Fairbanks airport by NLHA Trek Guides, and typically spend the first day visiting local educational and historical attractions to set the stage for the experiences to come. Trek Guides will go over required gear, and Crews will have time to pick up anything they have forgotten at one of the local sporting goods stores. Crews will also have a few opportunities to shop for local souvenirs, as well as time in the Scout Shop during their visit.

Popular Trek Destinations

Yukon River (Northeastern Alaska)

The 6-day, 158-mile canoe trek offers a total remote experience while floating through the Yukon-Charley Preserve. While on the river you will visit areas of the early gold rush. Crews stop at actual homesteads to learn about the subsistence lifestyle of Interior Alaska. Other stops include a visit to Slaven's Roadhouse, a gold dredge, and an old miners camp. This river, though not technically difficult, is very remote.

Birch Creek (Northeast Interior)

Birch Creek is part of the National Wild Scenic River System. From its headwaters north of the Steese National Conservation Area, this river flows swiftly through upland plateaus, forested valleys, and rolling hills. The creek offers ample time for fishing arctic grayling. This 117-mile canoe trip is rated predominately Class I-III. Advanced canoeing skills are required.

Prindle Mountain (Northeast Interior)

This 1-2 day, 18-mile round-trip hike follows the ancient and weathered ridges of the magnificent Steese Mountains. Expansive alpine tundra meadows and near endless sunlight make this the ideal spot to begin a trip into the high country of Alaska. While shorter in duration, this trek includes rocky terrain and elevation challenges as well as sudden weather changes. This hike is often paired with the Pinnell Mountain trek.

Pinnell Mountain (Northeast Interior)

The Pinnell Mountain trek is both rugged and remote as it leads crews entirely above tree line and offers sweeping views of the White Mountains and some of the oldest exposed rock tors in Alaska. This 27-mile, 3-4-day backpacking trek is beautiful as it is challenging, tackling numerous mountain summits. Caribou from the Fortymile Herd, as well as Dall's sheep, are often seen throughout the area.

Gates of the Arctic and the Brooks Range (North Slope Alaska)

North of the Arctic Circle lies the Brooks Range and Gates of the Arctic National Preserve. These are untrailed lands of pristine beauty and extremely remote. This trek is ideal for advanced hikers looking for a long, challenging through-hike, where crews can traverse the continental divide, cross rivers, and summit peaks. Experience direct and full sunlight during late June and all of July. Hikes are 30 miles+. The drive to the Brooks Range from Fairbanks is beautiful, but takes a full day along dirt roads, and a full day upon return. Hiking is strenuous and all Crews must be over 16.

Kesugi Ridge and the Alaskan Range (Southwest Interior)

This hike skirts the southern flanks of the magnificent mountains and high glaciers of Denali, the highest peak on the continent. Crews will hike across the arctic tundra and down into the temperate rainforests of the climate-diverse Alaskan Range. Hikes can be arranged between 17 and 38 miles. Terrain varies from easy to strenuous. This trek is often partnered with a Denali National Park visit and/or bus tour.

Isabelle Pass and the Alaskan Range (Southern Interior)

Travel along the beautiful Old Valdez Trail, which cuts through the Alaska Range, and provides access to numerous glaciers, diverse landscapes and stunning views. This area is often a favorite in terms of scenery and variety of glacier viewing.

Amphitheater Mountains (Southern Interior)

This sub-range of the Alaskan Range boasts young and jagged glacier-carved peaks that surround your hike out through gaps in the mountains. Head out to Sevenmile Lake and explore the hanging valleys leftover from glaciers long ago. There is ample fishing for grayling and rainbow trout. The drive to this location on the iconic Denali Highway has beautiful scenery and history. Hikes are for moderate skill levels.

Sea Kayaking (Coastal Alaska)

Paddle amongst spectacular glaciers and pristine coastal ecosystems, with common wildlife sightings that may include sea otters, seals, eagles, puffins, and many other Alaskan species. This option includes a drive to Valdez (roughly 7 hours by car) and is open to all skill levels.

Donoho Basin and the Wrangell Mountains (Southeastern Alaska)

For crews looking for significant wilderness challenges, there are a variety of choices within the Wrangell Mountain Range. Mount Wrangell is an active volcano, and the range boasts some of the youngest mountains in Alaska. Transportation from Fairbanks (roughly 5 hours by car) affords fabulous views of the mountains. Advanced, strenuous hikes in very remote backcountry include opportunities to cross glaciers (with crampons!), and summit high peaks covered in ice. Here crews are very likely to see bears in their natural habitat. Advanced hiking levels are required, and mileage varies. Crews must be 16 and up, with a high level of maturity and focus due to the trail conditions.

Klutina River Salmon Fishing (Southeastern Alaska)

The Klutina River flows east from Klutina Lake to the Copper River at Copper Center. The river is a glacial fed system with Class III – IV whitewater and has excellent fishing for Sockeye and King Salmon, Dolly Varden and Arctic Grayling as well as some Rainbow Trout. King Salmon are available in July and early August, Sockeye Salmon from June through August, and all other fish are available from June through October.

Lost Lake Scout Reservation

The NLHA Base is located at Lost Lake Scout Reservation, offering gun and archery sports, high and low COPE courses, hiking, fishing, canoeing, and other waterfront activities. Lost Lake Scout Reservation is on over 600 acres between the Tanana River and Birch Lake on the beautiful 90-acre Lost Lake. Treks are invited to spend a few days during their visit or attend Scout Camp in addition to their backcountry experience. For more information on attending camp, visit midnightsunbsa.org/lost-lake-scout-camp.

Looking for something else?

NLHA is happy to facilitate adventures of all kinds: hot springs, sled dog demonstrations, horseback riding, hunting, deep sea fishing, rafting, climbing, and much more, including Winter treks! We take great pride in the customized tours we are able to provide for your Crew. Limited Summer 2021 and 2022 dates are still available.

Contact us today to start planning your Alaskan adventure!

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