



S K I L S

## Brooks Peninsula Challenge

### Program Description



Explore one of the most wild and least visited areas of Vancouver island by sea kayak with other experienced paddlers. Enjoy stunning views, amazing wildlife, long sandy beaches, old growth rain forest and vast wilderness. This unique one way adventure takes you on a committing journey through some of the most exposed and remote coastline in Canada, with 2 highly experienced and certified guides, and enough time to chose good weather windows and discover the most beautiful and interesting spots along the way.

Highlights of the 2 week expedition will include the extensive mazes of islands like the Bunsbys, rafts of sea otters near Spring island, rugged coastal hikes and a rich coastal ecology that includes bears, wolves, whales, sea otters and sea birds. Imagine waking up to see wolf footprints outside your tent, watching a black bear turn over rocks looking for food and a grey whale emerging from the depths with a loud whoosh close to your kayak.

Kayaking around the imposing Brooks Peninsula is a dream for many paddlers. It's high mountains were unaffected by the last ice age, preserving many rare plant communities and a vast and ancient rainforest that may be among the oldest in the world. It juts out 20km into the wild Pacific Ocean, focusing wind and wave energy. We'll chose a good weather day to paddle around this beautiful and challenging headland.



This is an expedition style program that is designed for the intermediate to advanced paddler who wishes to explore very remote wild locations while receiving quality instruction and feedback. We expect to paddle between 15-40km (9-20 nautical miles) per day, depending on the weather, with days on land for treasure hunting on surf pounded beaches, and time to reflect and absorb the wilderness setting. SKILS provides all nutritious and delicious meals.

On day 1 of the expedition, we will meet in Port Hardy and take a shuttle to San Josef Bay. From there we'll pack the kayaks and paddle to our first campsite. We spend 14 days kayaking approximately 250km (130 nautical miles) to Zeballos. On the 14<sup>th</sup> day we'll take a shuttle back to our vehicles at Port Hardy.

With our committed instructors you will take full advantage of this wild place while also having the opportunity to hone your skills. Join us for an adventure that will be sure to build your surfing and dynamic paddling skills, and it will be one heck of a story! Whether you have received training through Paddle Canada or another organization, or are a motivated paddler with practical experience, this program will allow you to apply and polish your existing skills while deepening your understanding of their tactical applications.

## Paperwork Checklist

Please use the following checklist to ensure you have received and reviewed all the required documentation prior to the program start date:

- ✓ Brooks Challenge Information Package – please review
- ❑ SKILS Waiver – please sign with your instructor at the beginning of the program
- ❑ SKILS Medical Form – please bring a completed copy to your program
- ❑ Policy and Procedures Document – please review
- ❑ SKILS Training Manuals – please review

## Program Overview

### Prerequisites

Interested candidates should have extensive (over 50 days) previous sea kayaking experience and have experience in dynamic waters. Some expedition experience is required. You must be able to paddle at a speed of 3 knots for up to 6 hours per day. If you can not maintain this speed for up to 6 hours this program is not for you. If you do not meet these prerequisites, and are still interested in this challenging program, we may be able to provide you with some training beforehand. We will be camping for an

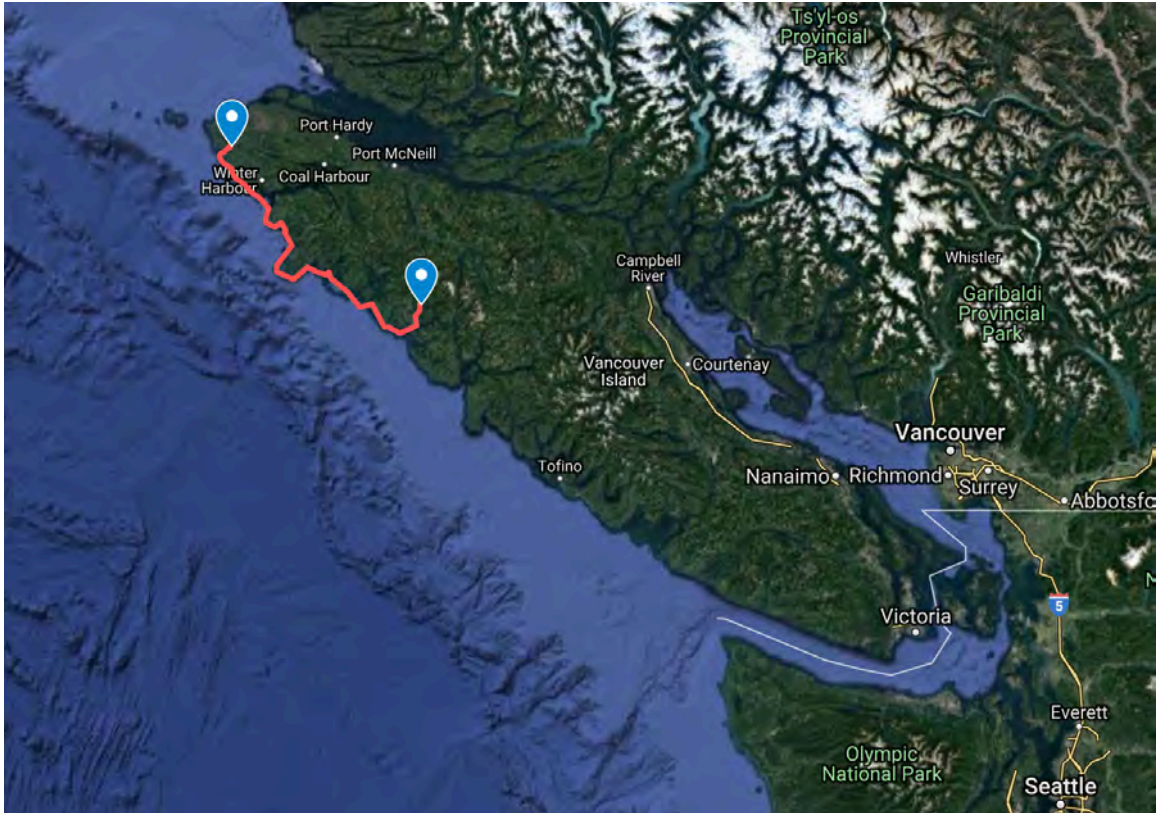
extended period of time which means this course is very intense as well as mentally and physically demanding.

## Program Outline

Following is a general outline for the Brooks Peninsula Challenge Expedition. Depending on weather, group needs, and conditions, the schedule will change. This advanced expedition has an open itinerary to ensure flexibility

We will incorporate workshops, food harvesting sessions, travel and exploration as the location and conditions dictate.

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
<b>Day 1</b>	Transportation logistic	Paddle to first night's campsite, likely 10 nautical miles to Raft Cove	Camp setup
<b>Day 1-Day 13</b>	Travel along the stunning west coast of Vancouver island, around Brooks Peninsula to Zeballos. Weather permitting, we hope to achieve this in 9 or 10 paddling days, lingering in the most beautiful and special places. If the weather is bad, we have 4 or 5 days to wait for better conditions. We will have 1 food resupply which we will collect from Spring Island.		
<b>Day 14</b>		Arrive in Zeballos around noon	



Maps illustrating the proposed route for the Brooks Challenge. Campsites will depend on weather conditions or human factors. Click on this link or copy and paste this link in your browser for an interactive map:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1usSGL1mFwylX1zi1swM1Gx4VViyzG9Rb&usp=sharing>

## Participation

Packing and unpacking the boats, carrying them to and from the beach, and setting up and breaking camp will be a group effort. The old adage ‘many hands make light work’ holds true as always. There will also be lots of rest and relaxation time. If you’re handy around the kitchen, if you want to catch fish, harvest berries or plants to eat, or would like to learn about cooking on trip, help chopping vegetables and other such preparation for our meals will always be welcome. As well, pitching in to help with cleanup after meals is greatly appreciated. We find that if everyone chips in a little with some of the chores, the tour is more enjoyable and eventful for all, as the guides have more time to do what they do best—guide. That means more time to explore and more time to take in the scenery.

## Program Safety

Ocean kayaking and camping are not without risk. Certain sea kayaking rules and camping techniques must be agreed to and observed by all members of the tour to

maximize the safety and enjoyment of all participants and minimize our impact on the ecosystem. We will discuss these rules, why they are necessary, and what contingency plans we will use in the event of an emergency, at the beginning of our time together.



## The Elements

The weather is variable at all times on the West coast; during the expedition we can expect sun, rain and wind in varying amounts. Please come prepared. The water temperature varies from 9 degrees to 17 degrees Celsius. Bring warm clothing and immersion gear. Rubber boots and a good rain jacket and pants are highly recommended.

## Your Instructors

SKILS staff members are industry leaders and professionals with extensive guiding and instructional experience and certification. For profiles on each of our staff members, please visit our website at [www.skils.ca](http://www.skils.ca).

## Ratios and Group Size

Our minimum group size is 3 participants and 1 instructor; our maximum group size is 8 participants and 2 instructors. For your safety and enjoyment, we ensure that 2 experienced instructors lead any group with more than 4 participants.

# Program Logistics

## Accommodation

You will need to make your own accommodation arrangements in Port Hardy for the night before the course starts and optionally after the course finishes. Port Hardy is a popular tourist destination, so make certain you reserve your accommodation well in advance. There is camping south of Port Hardy at Quatse River Regional Park and Campground (<http://www.quatsecampground.com>), as well as a number of marina resorts and motels in Port Hardy.



## Transportation

You are responsible for transportation to and from Port Hardy or Comox, Logistics for this trip will depend on how many participants are driving and how many need transport. Ideally we will either leave our vehicles in Zeballos and get a shuttle for ourselves and our kayaks to San Josef on 9th June. We will then drive away from Zeballos after the trip. If there are not enough drivers to achieve this, we will arrange shuttles on both ends of the adventure. This will either be to/ from Zeballos, or to/from Port Hardy. We hope you understand the need for flexibility to try to accommodate all the individuals on the programme and reducing the overall travel time for all the participants. SKILS will pay for all shuttles. You will need to get to the starting point of the expedition which will be either Port Hardy or Comox at your own expense. We will provide a detailed and final logistic itinerary to the participants on January 20. SKILS will pay for parking spaces for your vehicles.

Vancouver Island is easily accessed by air, ferry, and bus. Air Canada WestJet, Pacific Coastal and other local airlines offer regularly scheduled flights. The nearest airport is Comox. BC Ferries offers ferry service from Canadian departure locations, while Washington State Ferries and the M.V. Coho offer ferry services from American departure locations. Once on Vancouver Island, Port Hardy can be accessed by car or the Tofino Bus. Following is a list of links to help you plan your transportation.

- **Air Canada**
  - 1.888.247.2262 (in North America)
  - [www.aircanada.com](http://www.aircanada.com)
- **WestJet**
  - 1.888.WESTJET (1.888.937.8538)
  - [www.westjet.com](http://www.westjet.com)
- **Pacific Coastal**
  - (604) 663-2872
  - [www.pacificcoastal.com](http://www.pacificcoastal.com)
- **Washington State Ferries**
  - 206.464.6400
  - [www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries)
- **BC Ferries**
  - 1.888.BCFERRY (1.888.223.3779) from anywhere in North America
  - 1.250.386.3431 from outside North America
  - [www.bcferrries.com](http://www.bcferrries.com)
- **M.V. Coho Ferry**
  - 360.457.4491
  - [www.cohoferry.com](http://www.cohoferry.com)
- **Tofino Bus**
  - 1.866.986.3466
  - [www.tofinobus.com](http://www.tofinobus.com)

## Meals

We are looking forward to surprise you with our gourmet food. SKILS will provide nutritious meals each day, beginning with lunch on the first day of your trip and finishing with lunch on the final day. Our meals are specially designed to be delicious, nutritious, and transported with us in our kayaks with minimal refrigeration. We will frequently harvest fresh fish, berries and plants on our trip for some tasty meals.

## What SKILS Will Provide

The cost of the program includes highly experienced and certified instructors, shuttle from Port Hardy to San Josef Bay, shuttle from Zeballos to Port Hardy, and camping and Park fees.

### Cooking Gear

- Large group tarps
- Stoves
- Fuel
- Lighters
- Pots and pans
- Cooking utensils
- Cutting boards
- Cups
- Bowls
- Plates
- Cutlery
- Washing basins
- Pot scrubbers
- Dishwashing soap

- VHF Marine Radio
  - Repair Kit
  - Signaling flares
- Interpretation books

### Food and Water

- Drinking water in portable containers
- Nutritious meals and snacks

### Drybags

We will provide each participant with one 20 liter and one 5 liter drybag in order to protect your gear and clothing.

### Safety Gear

- First aid equipment

## What You Need to Bring

Following is a list of gear that you will need on the course. Most items are required, however, an \* indicates the item is optional. We can rent you kayaks, kayaking equipment and camping gear if necessary.

### Paddling Gear

- Sea kayak (at least 16 feet long)
- Paddle
- Sprayskirt
- Canadian Coast Guard approved PFD (Personal Flotation Device)
- Whistle
- Hand pump
- Tow line or throw line (buoyant heaving line at least 15 meters in length)

- Paddle float
- \*Spare paddle
- \*Sponge for drying out hatches

If you are providing your own kayak and paddling gear for your program, your sea kayak must meet the following requirements: (1) it is suitable for open sea conditions; (2) it has positive buoyancy when capsized; (3) it is able to adequately carry gear as required for the program; (4) not made with wood; and (5) it has perimeter lines. Please note: recreational kayakers that do not meet the above requirements are not suitable for our program. If you have questions about the suitability of your kayak, please contact us. We have many suitable kayakers in our fleet and will be happy to match you up with an appropriate rental for this course if you are concerned about the suitability of your own craft. Our rental kayakers are at below market rate.



**Camping Gear** - If you are paddling with friends you may choose to share a tent

- Tent
- Sleeping bag – 3 season bag with synthetic insulation
- Sleeping mat
- \*Tarp with thin cord
- \*Pillow case

- Sunscreen and lip balm with high SPF protection (30 +)
- Toilet paper
- \*Biodegradable soap
- \*Camp towel
- \* Pads and/or Tampons

**Toiletries**

- Toothbrush and toothpaste

**Immersion Clothing**

- Wet suit and paddling jacket or dry suit. You will be paddling in this gear for extended periods of time, so make sure it fits well.
- Neoprene booties or other immersion footwear
- Paddling gloves or poggies

**Personal Clothing**

The following is a guideline to assist with your packing; feel free to bring more or less as you feel necessary. Please avoid cotton as it keeps you cold when it's wet. Please wear clothing designed for outdoor use and made from Merino wool, silk or synthetic materials such as Capilene, polyester, polypropylene, or nylon.

**Torso**

- Rain Jacket
- 1-2 fleece or wool sweaters/jackets
- 2 pair long jane/john tops
- 1-2 T-shirts

- 1 wind breaker

**Legs**

- Rain Pants
- 1-2 pair pants – At least one should be made of nylon



- 1 pair fleece or wool pants
- 1 pair long john/jane bottoms

### *Feet*

- 2-3 pair warm sock made with synthetics and/or wool
- 1 pair camp shoes – Sneakers work well
- 1 pair rubber boots
- 1 pair sport sandals or shoes that can get wet
- \*2 pair liner socks – Polypropylene or wool are common materials

- 1 pair shorts

### *Head*

- 2 wool or fleece caps
- 1 Brimmed hat or baseball cap

### *Hands*

- 1 pair of fleece or wool gloves
- \*cycling gloves for paddling to prevent blisters

### Miscellaneous Gear

- Headlamp or Flashlight with extra batteries
- Sunglasses with good UV protection with retriever strap
- Water bottle
- Insect repellent
- Small day pack or fanny pack for carrying camera, water bottle, etc. on short hikes.
- Spare garbage bags and zip locks
- Bathing suit
- \*Notebook with pencils &/or pens
- \*camera
- \*Pocket Knife
- \*Small personal first aid kit
- \*Moist towelettes for a quick cleanup
- \*Good Book
- \*Binoculars
- \*Earplugs for light sleepers
- \*Games such as Frisbee or cards

If you need to rent gear such as kayaks, kayaking gear, tents, sleeping bags, or sleeping pads, you can make arrangements with SKILS; please contact our office at [info@skils.ca](mailto:info@skils.ca).

### Packing your gear

You will need to waterproof at least your clothing and sleeping bag. Depending on how watertight your kayak is, you can pack the rest of your gear loose or in zip locks inside nylon stuff sacks. Here are two packing methods that work well. In fact, we usually use a combination of the two when we pack. Remember to leave room for group gear.



#### Dry Bag Method

Dry Bags are especially designed for paddle sports and are available at most sporting goods stores. Depending on the closure system they do not always keep all the water out. Test them in the shower before the trip. You will need two 20 litre bags for your sleeping bag and bulky clothing and 2 or 3 10 to 15 litre bags for your other clothing and gear. We will provide you one 5 and one 20 litre drybag on the first morning of your trip. Let us know if you need more dry bags.

#### Stuff Sack with Garbage Bag Liner Method

This is the tried and true method of years gone by. Line a stuff sack with a garbage bag. Pack as normal. Squeeze the air out before twisting the garbage bag top. Don't tie the garbage bag or use twist ties. Simply tuck the twisted end down into the stuff sack before drawing the top closed. This technique is reliable but not durable, so make sure you bring extra bags with you. You can improve the durability of this system by adding a 2<sup>nd</sup> stuff sack into the garbage bag creating a plastic sandwich. This method takes up less room than dry bags and makes the kayak easier to pack.

### A couple of final packing pointers....

- It is easier to pack your kayak with many smaller bags than a few larger ones,
- A large duffel bag or IKEA bag is useful for transporting all your small bags to and from your kayak,
- A large Tupperware/Rubbermaid is good for storing wet gear in your car.

## Medication

Please note that you will require a current tetanus shot (a tetanus shot is valid for 10 years). This is very important, as tetanus is a naturally occurring bacterium that lives in the soil. If you do not have up to date tetanus inoculation, you may contract tetanus through a scratch or cut, and require immediate evacuation. A simple tetanus shot, easily accessible at most medical facilities, removes the risk of contracting tetanus.

Please be sure to let us know of any medical conditions of which we should be aware. Please duplicate and separate the quantities of any medications you will need during your program, and give your duplicated medications to your instructor, who will carry them. This will provide an additional source of medications should the primary set become wet, damaged, or lost. If you are prone to any health disturbances, e.g., easily infected cuts or severe migraines, please remember to bring any preventive medications. If you have any questions about medications, contact your doctor. Swell or wind waves can be encountered on the ocean. If seasickness is of concern to you, your doctor or pharmacist may be able to recommend medication to help. Also, anti-nausea (drug-free) Gravol Ginger, candied ginger as well as wristbands work well for many people. Please note that seasickness occurs only rarely in sea kayaking. Be sure to let us know if you anticipate that seasickness will be a problem for you.

## Preparing for Your Program

Kayaking requires some upper body strength and endurance. We recommend that you get out kayaking several times prior to your program. If you feel you could use some upper body conditioning before your trip, exercising with light weights can be quite helpful. Concentrate mainly on shoulder strengthening exercises, focusing on endurance rather than strength.



Thank you for enrolling in our Brooks Peninsula Challenge. If you have additional questions or concerns, please contact us. We look forward to playing on the water with you!