



Monday, April 17, 2017

Dear Parents of Grade Nine Students,

From Monday, May 8 to Sunday, May 14, students in Grade Nine will travel to southern Utah to hike and camp in the canyons of Grand Gulch, Utah. The hike will take students through one of the most spectacular areas in the vast wilderness of the Colorado Plateau. Andy Johnson, Robyn Olnes, Jeff Cole and Summer Henson-Conger will lead the trip.

The trip will consist of two travel days and a five-day, twenty-mile hike that will take students through Grand Gulch itself as well as several main forks of the canyon including Kane Gulch, Bullet Canyon and Sheik's Canyon. While there are several steep and over-grown sections, the gradual slope of the canyon bottoms makes for generally easy walking, and students will have plenty of time to hike from camp to camp and to explore side canyons and discover abundant Anasazi ruins and pictograph panels along the way. Because wilderness area stipulations limit group sizes, the Grade Nine class will be divided into two groups of students with two leaders per group.

A primary purpose of this trip is to expose students to a significantly different ecosystem than what we have here in Idaho. In addition to drawing on skills that are becoming familiar to many of the 9th grade students (setting up low-impact camps, helping in the kitchen, setting and breaking camp) they will have to reinterpret what they know about Leave No Trace practices, water filtration, self-care and map reading skills, all of which have their own unique twists down in the desert Southwest. As always, students will also be responsible for carrying various group gear including tents, stoves, and food.

While the trip is indeed in the "desert," the rim of the Colorado Plateau is close to 7,000 ft above sea level; past students have found themselves watching with apprehension as they approach the trailhead with snow flying. While this isn't the norm, close attention to the weather forecast will help students refine their gear pack (shorts and t-shirts or extra fleece). Riverstone has packs for those students who do not own one. We will go over specific packing instructions and group gear needs in trip meetings during the weeks prior to the trip. Permission slips and health-update forms will also be distributed during those meetings.

I have included an Equipment List with this letter; it can also be found on the school's resource page. You should start inventorying your gear now. If you need new boots, they will need a little break-in time. Riverstone has packs available for those students who do not own one; let me know if you will need to borrow a pack. A gear check will take place during the week prior to the trip, so start thinking about acquiring equipment.

If you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to contact me. It should be a great trip!



Ben Brock

Itinerary for the week of May 8:

Monday, May 8 - Drive to Moab, Utah. Car camp.

Tuesday - Drive to trailheads and begin hiking through the spectacular Grand Gulch.

Tuesday - Saturday

Finish hiking on Saturday afternoon and begin the drive back to Riverstone.

Sunday, May 14 - Return to Riverstone, midday.

Please Note: This trip is longer than other Spring Trips! After a few years of feeling rushed through the canyon, we eventually added a day to this trip to allow for more time in the canyon. The extension means that we return from the trip on a Sunday, but the extra day in the canyon has proven to be worth it! It is a truly amazing place.