Welcome to POLARIS!

To best prepare for your trip, please read the Essential Information Packet carefully and completely. It contains important details and knowledge that we have gleaned from nearly 25 years of operation. After you’ve finished reading, complete the checklist below to ensure your preparation!

- Review Gear List and acquire all items
- Submit your Travel Info at least 1 month prior
- Visit findAURORA.psu.edu for more info and FAQs
- Follow AURORA on social media for updates
  - @pennstateAURORA
  - fb.com/pennstateAURORA
- Pack all your gear and embark on your expedition!

Arrival Information

Where: Manchester-Boston Regional Airport (MHT)
You are responsible for getting yourself to the airport for the start of POLARIS, no matter your means of transportation. Our staff will meet you at baggage claim.

When: Sunday, August 16, 2020, between 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. ET.
You must arrive within this window.

Bring: Personal gear and clothing from Gear List, lunch for the first day

After Booking Your Transportation

Please follow the link below to enter your itinerary information. Add this information no later than 1 month prior to your program!

Travel Itinerary Link (http://goo.gl/forms/ksJIi76GjL)

Backpacking

Participants should expect to spend several days and nights backpacking with their group. Each participant can expect to carry a 30- to 40-pound pack containing food, gear, and personal items 4-10 miles a day on variable terrain at a pace decided by the group. (Participants are strongly encouraged to physically prepare before arriving.) During this time you will learn about yourself and others as you hike, camp, keep a journal, and explore. Together with your peers and instructors, you will learn the proper methods of environmentally conscious camping, including group cooking, tarp placement, water purification, and backcountry hygiene.

Contact Us

We’d love to answer your questions.

.EMAIL AURORA@psu.edu
.EMAIL program questions: (814) 865-3890
.EMAIL registration questions: (814) 865-3880
Additional Info

Conclusion and Departure
Students will be transported to Manchester-Boston Regional Airport (MHT) on Friday morning, August 21. **Flights must be scheduled to leave no earlier than 10:00am ET.**

Cell Phone Policy
We strongly encourage all participants to have fully charged cell phones for use during travel. **However, phones are not permitted during your expedition.** You may bring them on opening day, but they will be left in a secure location with any bags or extra items for the duration of your experience. Cell phones distract from the experience that your AURORA trip aims to provide in the backcountry. Your trip leaders will have cell phones for use only in case of an emergency.

Physical Preparation
The best way to prepare for POLARIS is to spend some time undertaking physical conditioning—if you are used to sitting in a classroom all day, start walking and then increase to running, hiking, swimming, and any other cardiovascular activity that will help get you in shape. Physical preparation, specifically walking, is a good way to break in your boots.

Hiking Boots
The most important piece of equipment that you will bring. Be sure the boots you have are truly made for hiking. They should fit you well with some wiggle room, be well broken-in, and sturdy. If you are buying new boots, be sure to work with your local outdoor retailer to ensure that you have the proper fit and correct boot for your feet. Blisters are a common complaint with POLARIS participants. If your feet are sore on the trail, you will not enjoy the program as much as you could.

Clothing and Layering
Excerpted from Rick Curtis’ The Backpacker’s Field Manual

The clothing layers should consist of several different types of fabrics. Cotton is comfortable and breathable, but it absorbs and retains water, and therefore it will NOT keep you warm if it gets wet. Also, it can be difficult to dry. For this reason you should NOT bring cotton clothes such as sweatshirts, sweatpants, socks, or jeans. We strongly encourage you to wear nylon, polyester or synthetic clothing. Wool, synthetic fleece, and polyester fabrics don’t absorb water so they keep you warm even if they get wet. Fleece also dries very quickly. A wool sweater or fleece jacket provides warmth on a cold evening. These are essential to your comfort on the trip!

Group Gear
POLARIS will provide all necessary group gear and equipment. This includes backpacks, sleeping bags, sleeping pads, tarps, stoves, first aid kits, maps, and other items. You are welcome to bring your own personal backpacks, sleeping bags, and sleeping pads if you desire, but they will be assessed by our staff before departing on the trip.

Early Move-in
A special window of time for early move-in is offered to AURORA students. Visit arrival.psu.edu and check the “Special Programs” section for information about early move-in.

To make early move-in arrangements, or to ask any questions, please contact the assignment office by writing to: assignmentoffice@psu.edu or by calling: (814) 865-7501
POLARIS Gear List

To best prepare for POLARIS, please obtain the items listed below. Our expert staff has meticulously assembled this list throughout POLARIS’s history to ensure that all essentials are covered. Visit your local outdoor retailer for your shopping, or visit Appalachian Outdoors (appoutdoors.com) in State College. Through our partnership, you will receive a 10% discount on your entire purchase at Appalachian Outdoors with the code: 20AURORA.

Pack all gear in a soft-sided dufflebag. We will store your bag, and anything else, in a secure location during the trip.

CLOTHING & FOOTWEAR

☐ T-shirts (2)
   Should be synthetic material or wool. No COTTON. No thin strap tank tops, they don’t protect your shoulders from your backpack straps.

☐ Rain Jacket and Rain Pants
   Lightweight, waterproof, breathable. Expect rain!

☐ Base Layer (1 set, top & bottom)
   Should be synthetic material or wool. Can be lightweight. Also known as long Johns or thermals. NO COTTON.

☐ Midweight Fleece or Wool Sweater
   Insulating for cool nights.

☐ Shorts/Pants (1-2 pairs)
   Loose fit, synthetic. Hiking or athletic shorts, hiking or windproof pants. NO COTTON, NO JEANS.

☐ Socks (3 pairs)
   Should be hiking-specific and made of synthetic material or wool. NO COTTON.

☐ Underwear (2-3 pairs)
   Synthetic works best, compression shorts help prevent chafing. NO COTTON.

☐ Winter Hat & Gloves
   For chilly nights.

☐ Hiking Boots (1 pair)
   Your most important piece of equipment! BREAK IN.

☐ Camp Shoes (1 pair)
   Must be closed-toed. Old sneakers or Crocs work well.

OTHER ITEMS

☐ Water Bottle (1)
   Should be 1 liter, leakproof. Nalgenes work well. An additional bottle will be provided for you. CamelBak or similar bladders work fine as well.

☐ Headlamp/Flashlight (1)
   Small and light, bring extra batteries.

☐ Bowl (1)
   Eating vessel, should be lightweight and small. Tupperware works well.

☐ Eating Utensil (1)
   Sporks are ideal, but not necessary. Should be sturdy.

☐ Personal Items
   Toothbrush & toothpaste (travel size), personal medications (personal epi-pen, allergy medicine, inhaler, ibuprofen or acetaminophen), feminine products, bug spray, sunscreen.

☐ Clothes for Travel Home
   To wear following a shower (all towels, soap, shampoo provided by the Highland Center) and the end of the week. May be cotton.

OPTIONAL ITEMS

☐ Bandana
   For a variety of purposes.

☐ Baseball Cap
   Not your cell phone.

☐ Camera/GoPro
   Not your cell phone.

☐ Mug (For hot drinks)

DO NOT BRING on the trail Electronics* & Cotton Clothing! *This includes iPods, iPads, computers, cell phones, and other devices.

No Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco, and Weapons (this includes pocketknives)!
**POLARIS Food**

The POLARIS menu has been adapted and modified throughout the years. Our expert staff has assembled an array of trail-friendly foods that are packed with energy and nutrition to fuel you throughout your POLARIS experience. All food is provided by the program, though you are welcome to bring additional snacks.

Below is a typical menu for an POLARIS expedition:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TRAVEL DAY</th>
<th>TRAIL</th>
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<th>TRAIL</th>
<th>FINAL DAY</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>BREAKFAST</strong></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Provided by AMC Highland Center</td>
<td>Oatmeal Bagel Granola Peanut Butter Jelly</td>
<td>Oatmeal Bagel Granola Peanut Butter Jelly</td>
<td>Oatmeal Bagel Granola Peanut Butter Jelly</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SNACKS</strong></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Snack Pack GORP Granola Bars Apple Orange</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>LUNCH</strong></td>
<td>Buy or bring your own!</td>
<td>Flatbread/Tortilla PB &amp; J, Hummus, Tuna, Pepperoni, Cheese, Carrots</td>
<td>Flatbread/Tortilla PB &amp; J, Hummus, Tuna, Pepperoni, Cheese, Carrots</td>
<td>Flatbread/Tortilla PB &amp; J, Hummus, Tuna, Pepperoni, Cheese, Carrots</td>
<td>Flatbread/Tortilla PB &amp; J, Hummus, Tuna, Pepperoni, Cheese, Carrots</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DINNER</strong></td>
<td>Provided by AMC Highland Center</td>
<td>Tacos (Tortillas, Black Beans, Green Pepper, Onion, Rice, Fajita seasoning, Salsa, Cheese)</td>
<td>Hiker’s Mash (Mashed potatoes, Veggie soup mix, Summer sausage, Cheese)</td>
<td>Mac &amp; Cheese (Elbow Noodles, Cheddar Cheese, Cream Cheese, Tuna)</td>
<td>Provided by AMC Highland Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Pudding, No-Bake Cheesecake, Fig Newtons</td>
<td>Pudding, No-Bake Cheesecake, Fig Newtons</td>
<td>Pudding, No-Bake Cheesecake, Fig Newtons</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Allergies & Dietary Restrictions**

We can easily tweak our menus for vegetarians, various food allergies, and dietary restrictions. **PLEASE be sure to make note of your restrictions on your Health Form so that we may cater to you.**

Our programs are Gluten-Free Friendly. This means that all dinners are made with gluten-free ingredients, and our breakfasts and lunches have gluten-free options. Our bagels and sandwich thins are not gluten-free, and are only optional choices at certain meals.

If you have questions or concerns for food-related questions, please contact Drew Lehnerd at (814) 865-3927.