Inspiring Girls Expeditions Program Goals

1. Increase the participation and diversity of women in field science, art, and outdoor recreation.

2. Foster young women’s self-confidence in their physical, intellectual, and leadership abilities while creating lifelong advocates for science and wilderness stewardship.

3. Support a network for early-career scientists, artists, and guides through continuing development opportunities and collaboration.

2019 Expedition

Girls on Water started from the Kasitsna Bay lab, where participants developed their kayaking and team building skills in preparation for eight days in the backcountry. Participants engaged in instructor lead science, art and team building activities. The team gained in-depth knowledge about salmon life cycle and rearing through the visit to the Tutka Lagoon Hatchery. They also learned about ocean chemistry and art in the wilderness, thanks to our two guest instructors, Fairbanks artist Meg Waite and UAF Master’s student Steffi O’Daly. In total, the team camped at three backcountry locations: Jakalof Bay, Kayak Beach and Arch Beach. The team paddled 40 miles, went on numerous drinking water excursions and developed friendships that will last a lifetime.

Quotes from the Group Journal

“Our courage was tested after we all were asked to expertly flip our canoes. Although we were all a little wet afterwards and may have swallowed just a tiny bit of saltwater, each one of us emerged from the water with smiles on our faces.”

“Next, we had some me time! We had a great time. We wound up in the ocean. This is how it began…”

“...all these girls are already making the world a better place, and I am honored to be part of group. Needless to say, I can’t wait to see where they’re going in this big wide world. Signing off for now…”

Inspiring Girls Expeditions Program Format

Inspiring Girls Expeditions is a tuition-free wilderness education program led by female professional scientists, artists, and wilderness guides. The single-gender format enables girls to challenge their physical, intellectual, and emotional limits without the pressures of a mixed-gender group. Participants come away from these programs with the confidence to not only explore the backcountry under their own power, but to investigate, interact, and interpret the dynamic landscapes that they encounter.

Following this model, Girls on Water was designed to explore the interface between the terrestrial and marine environment of Kachemak Bay. In this region, human activities are tightly linked to the bountiful terrestrial and marine resources, providing an excellent opportunity to explore the interconnection between human development and nature.

Science Projects

During the expedition participants developed their own group science projects. These projects answered questions related to seastar wasting disease, the diurnal movement of tidepool sculpins and the influence of barnacles on intertidal community composition.