

**KWG Packrafting**  
**Level 2: Wilderness Packrafting**

KWG's *Level 2: Wilderness Packrafting* course is designed for those looking to take their packrafts on more demanding rivers and longer wilderness trips. Level 2 focuses on group rescue, river running, whitewater paddling techniques and wilderness considerations for multi-day trips.

**\*Completion of KWG Packrafting Level 1 or Equivalent Experience Required**

**Course Duration:** 2 days (8 – 10 hour days)

**Course Location /Venues:**

- KWG Campus in Kennicott, AK
- Kennicott Glacier Lake & Training Ground Rapids CL II
- Kennicott River & McCarthy Creek CL III

**Class Ratio:** 1 Instructor to every 4 students, or 2:8 with an additional instructor or qualified assistant

**Level 2 Course Overview:**

This two-day course is designed for packrafters looking to paddle more demanding rivers and competently plan and execute longer trips in wilderness settings.

Each day will begin with a classroom session where we'll introduce new concepts or review concepts from previous sessions. The venues for this course are great examples of the most common Alaskan river types encountered on packraft trips. McCarthy Creek is a low volume continuous creek with forested banks and bouldery rapids. It's great for catching tight eddies, linking moves and strainer drills. The Kennicott River is the quintessential medium volume glacial river; fast, cold rocky, and continuous. Boating in the Kennicott is all about ferries, hitting wave trains and missing holes.

This course includes in-depth sessions on topics including: Outfitting & Rigging Your Packrafting, Reading Whitewater, Principles of River Safety and Self Rescue, Responsibilities and Techniques of River Running, and Multi-Day Trip Planning and Wilderness Considerations.

In addition to learning hard skills, we focus on the importance of good decision-making, personal judgment and group responsibility in all river situations.

**Prerequisites:** In addition to completion of **KWG Packrafting Level 1**, or equivalent experience, participants in **Level 2: Essentials of Packrafting** must:

- Be in physical condition to participate in all individual skills and activities listed in the course outline.
- Be able to actively swim in cold water while in a dry suit and PFD.
- Be accountable for keeping themselves properly outfitted, fed and hydrated during full days in the field.

## **Level 2: Wilderness Packrafting**

### **Course Content**

The course content, and sequence of instruction may be adjusted to best fit the group's needs and water levels at class locations, for this reason the following itinerary is subject to change.

#### **Day 1 Classroom Session**

##### **Course Introduction, Expectations, & Logistics:**

- Welcome, introductions, review waiver and complete paperwork
- Student & instructor course expectations and limitations
- Course itinerary & site logistics
- PFD policy (always wear on water)
- Leave No Trace ethics

##### **Equipment**

- Personal equipment: appropriate clothing and water, food, shoes, sun protection, sun glasses with straps, bug protection, whistle, knife
- Packraft Outfitting: comfort & safety, inside the cockpit
- Rescue Gear
- Rescue PFD's

##### **Rescue:**

- Exercising judgment, safety as a state of mind
- Rescue Priorities: First people, then boats, then other gear
- Responsibilities of the swimmer, rescuer and the group

##### **Paddle Strokes:**

- Catch, propulsion, recovery, control and correction
- Power, turning & bracing
- Effective body usage and bio-kinetics

#### **Day 1 Field Session**

##### **River Reading**

- Current speed, direction and changes caused by streambed features
- Current lines & Eddy Lines
- Waves/ Holes
- Inside and Outside Bends
- Effects of Obstacles
- Ledges/ Horizon Lines
- Strainers & Sieves
- Rocks/ Pillows
- Holes/ Hydraulics
- Other Hazards
- Power of the Current / River Level
- Undercut Rocks / Ice

##### **Rescue**

- Self-Rescue in moving current
- Boat-Assisted Rescue
- Towing
- Running

### **Paddle Strokes:**

- Sweeps (anticipatory and reactive techniques)
- Draws
- Forward
- Back
- Braces
- Bow Draw and Duffek
- Sculling Draw

### **Maneuvers**

- Spins (onside and offside): boat pivots in place
- Tilt & Lean
- Edging & Turning
- Sideslips

### **Sequences of Maneuvers**

- C-turns (Peel out of eddy and eddy on same side of current)
- S-turns (Peel out one side of current and eddy into opposite side)

## **Day 2 Classroom**

### **Multi-Day & Wilderness Considerations**

- Wilderness travel skills and decision making
- Packing a multi-day packrafting pack
- Rigging your packraft for longer trips
- Trip Planning
- Packraft repair techniques and materials
- Shelter & sleeping systems
- Extra paddle, maps, first aid, fire kit, rescue gear

### **Rescue:**

- Shoreline Rescue - Extension Rescues
- Use of Throw /Ropes/ Live Bait
- Pinned/stuck boats
- Emergency protocols for remote settings

## **Day 2 Field Session**

### **River Running**

- Strategies in running rivers
- Spacing/ Avoid "tunnel vision"
- Scouting and rapid analysis scenarios
  - From boat/ From shore
- How to establish the "best" route/ "Plan "B"
- Portaging hazards
- Group organization & cohesiveness on the river
- Emergency Procedures
- Judgment: In addition to learning hard skills, the importance of developing personal judgment and group responsibility increases on more difficult paddling venues.

## Self-Awareness

- Understanding your level of anxiety, personal style and risk tolerance
- Responsibility to the group
- River and group awareness

## Personal Rapid Analysis

- What moves are required to successfully run the rapid & can I perform the required moves?
- What are the consequences of missing the required moves & am I willing to accept these consequences?
- What if?
- Rescue considerations

## Group Evaluation/Skill level of the group

- Size of the group/ Group consequences
- Experience & Condition of the group
- Responsibility to support other paddlers (no peer pressure)
- Guidebooks / Local Knowledge
- Assessing Current Environmental Conditions (including: Water, Weather, Time of Day, and Temperature, Limited Access: Canyons, Cliffs, Remote Area)
- Assessing Personal and Group Dynamics (Skills, Equipment, Group Makeup, Mental Status, Logistics, group selection, leadership)

## Conclusion & Wrap Up:

- Group debrief / Individual feedback
- Course limitations
- Importance of First Aid & CPR
- Well-rounded wilderness skills and judgment
- Importance of additional instruction, practice and experience
- Importance of appropriate level of safety & rescue training
- Course evaluation

