Winterfest
Kayaking:
Suwannee River, FL

January 9-16, 2016
$350

Price includes: round trip transportation, group equipment fees and permits, two nights in hotels, camping fees, all backcountry meals and two road dinners.

Trip Overview
Activity: Kayaking
Difficulty Level: ★½ ★★

This trip takes place along a forty mile section of the Suwannee River, located in northern Florida. The group will camp at a few established river camps and along the banks of the Suwannee. The water is placid and slow moving, so we are able to use our sea kayaks to paddle and float down the meandering river. This experience will illuminate the history of northern Florida, and highlight the importance of how water and environment plays a significant role in the region’s economic, social and cultural infrastructure.

Though the group will be using 17 ft. sea kayaks, we will not be paddling in the ocean. Instead this trip will focus on kayaking the placid river that eventually feeds into the Gulf of Mexico. Shallow water, large oak trees with Spanish moss, and indigenous wildlife all await your arrival. This is a great opportunity to meet new people, explore a different part of the country, and immerse yourself in the beauty of this unique location.

General Schedule of Trip

January 9, Saturday: Independently return to campus before noon. Meet as a group to review gear and pack.

January 10: Depart from Gettysburg for a hotel in Kingsland, GA.

January 11: Finish the drive to the Suwanee River and start paddling!

January 12-14: Paddle the Suwanee River.

January 15: Leave the river behind and drive to showers, beds, and a hotel in Florence, SC.

January 16, Saturday: Complete the drive from Florence, SC back to campus.
The Paddle: Paddling distance will range from 5-10 miles a day. Average time paddling daily will range from 3-5 hours, which includes stops for lunch, breaks and enjoying our surroundings.

Group Size: The trip consists of 3 GRAB staff members from the Office of Experiential Education and 6-8 participants.

Accommodations: On campus housing can be provided on Friday and Saturday (1/9-10), but may not be in your normal room. The group will stay in hotels the first and last nights of the trip (Kingsland, GA and Florence, SC), and every other night will be spent camping in tents on the trail. Fees, permits, and gear are provided by GRAB and are included in the program's cost.

Meals: We will provide breakfast, lunch, and dinner each day we are in the field, and you will learn how to cook delicious backcountry meals on a backpacking stove. Travel dinners on the first and last night are also included, but you will be responsible for breakfast, lunch, and any additional food while traveling to and from Florida. You will also provide your own meals prior to the beginning of the trip.

Weather: The weather can be variable in Florida at this time of year, but expect to see nightly lows in the mid-30s to 40s and daily highs in the mid-50s to low 70s. You can expect rain on at least a few days.

Physical Preparations: Moderate terrain and temperatures make this a great trip for participants of all levels of experience, and the best way to prepare for this trip is to stay active. You must be able to paddle for 3-5 hours a day so jogging, walking, or exercising in advance are great ways to make your experience more enjoyable.

Communication & Emergencies: Our trip locations often have cell service, but some sections may be spotty. The staff will carry a cell phone in the event of an emergency; however, we will not be able to completely rely on the service, and the group needs to know they may be without communication at times. We have specific emergency information and take time to develop contingency plans, but we are also aware that based on location and access it may take time to contact or reach definitive medical care, should the need arise. Although participants are permitted to carry phones, most choose to leave technology behind to more fully immerse themselves in the group experience.

Health and Medical & Release of Liability: Each participant is asked to fill out a Health and Medical form for this trip. We request that you are truthful with your medical information and speak with your GRAB staff facilitator about any concerns or pre-existing conditions. In addition, we want to inform you that you will be asked to sign our indemnity form, and that you are aware that all Gettysburg College policies and procedures apply to this trip.

Medical Kit and Medicine: It is our top priority to mitigate risk on these experiences. As such, we rely on medical forms so we can properly prepare together for this trip and ensure everyone’s safety. All GRAB staff members are certified Wilderness First Responders, and while in the field, we carry a medical and trauma kit. The medical kit has basic bandaging and wound care items, whereas our trauma kit has basic splinting and medicines such as aspirin, anti-diarrheal, epinephrine, and Benadryl. We ask that you have with you your prescription medicine that you need on a daily/weekly basis, and that you transport it in its original container/bottle with your name and dosage. It is your responsibility to manage your own medication. For those with strong allergies that require medication, it is very important that you bring extra epinephrine or necessary medication in the event that yours becomes lost or broken.