



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## **Summer 2020 Programming Cancellation - Hurricane Island Outward Bound School**

**Camden, ME – May 26, 2020** - Hurricane Island Outward Bound School (HIOBS), in a joint decision with regional Outward Bound schools across the country, has cancelled all Classic, open-enrollment, and custom summer programming with start dates through the end of August. For the first time in nearly 60 years, students will not be seen sailing in pulling boats in Penobscot Bay or paddling, climbing and hiking in the Northwoods of Maine in the summertime.

The SARS COVID-19 virus is unpredictable and lethal, and the medical community has been continuously challenged to make an assessment of its virulence. Outward Bound recognizes and honors the fact that the organization's reputation has been built around decades of industry-leading safety and risk management with students in the wilderness. While a great deal remains unknown about the virus itself and how communities across the country will continue to be impacted and respond, what is abundantly clear is that it has never been more important for Outward Bound to demonstrate leadership in assessing, mitigating and managing risk than at this time.

HIOBS plans to resume programming this fall and will offer a range of multiple-day adult courses through the winter, in both Maine and Florida. These courses include the usual range of Semester and Gap Year offerings and Outdoor Educator Courses, as well as 15-, 22- and 30-day programs for the many college-aged students who will be looking for experiential education programs to augment their college and work opportunities. In addition, HIOBS will offer programming for small intact groups and organizations through the Outward Bound Professional program. The organization will plan, and hope for, a changing COVID-19 testing and tracking landscape over the ensuing months. Before resuming programming, HIOBS will go through a review process which includes following Outward Bound USA's safety and risk management requirements as well as meet all regulatory guidelines at local, state and federal levels.

A full range of programs will be offered for the summer of 2021, and enrollment for those programs will begin in mid-August 2020. In the meantime, the organization plans to use resources wisely to ensure that the organization is stronger and better after this program suspension period. Innovation is happening with virtual programming for alumni and other custom program partners, and partnerships with like-minded organizations are developing in order to serve more students more powerfully. Service remains a strong institutional tenet and the organization is working with local communities to find ways to help and serve.

Eric Denny, Executive Director for HIOBS, reported "This decision has unique implications for our school and the communities that we are part of. We acknowledge and empathize with those shouldering the impacts and repercussions – our staff, our enrolled students, and the partners and organizations that we work with each year. We make this decision knowing it is the right thing to do and that it's made with the utmost regard for the safety and well-being of those affected."

Hurricane Island Outward Bound School is a non-profit experiential education organization whose mission is to inspire people to discover and develop their potential to care for themselves, others and the world around them through challenging experiences in unfamiliar settings. Hurricane Island Outward Bound School offers 4- to 85-day wilderness expeditions for youth and adults in the Mountains and Lakes of Maine and New Hampshire, the Maine coast and in the Florida Keys. Hurricane Island Outward Bound School also provides a wide range of wilderness and community-based programs for schools, community groups and businesses that are designed to meet specific educational or organizational goals and outcomes.

Hurricane Island Outward Bound School is part of Outward Bound USA, which in turn is part of an international non-profit educational network with schools and centers in 45 countries around the world. Celebrating over 55 years in experiential education, Outward Bound USA offers five core programs that change lives, build teams, and transform schools. In addition to its widely known wilderness expeditions, Outward Bound courses take place in classrooms, boardrooms, and urban environments and serve over 65,000 people each year.

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