
SUMMARY

The Instructor Training is specifically designed for those interested in working as Field Instructors for Rites of passage NW. The I.T. is a demanding training experience that will prepare participants to lead, teach and model the core-curriculum areas of Personal Responsibility and Family Responsibility, Reflection, and Community in the Coastal Hiking on the Olympic Peninsula. Leadership skills such as effective communication, risk management, and curriculum teaching will be taught and practiced throughout the training. I.T.'s are designed for people with extensive outdoor experience and are not meant for the novice of outdoor education. The skills you will learn and the experience of the I.T. will enhance your abilities and prepare you to lead effective, life-changing courses.

THE EXPEDITION

The Instructor Training will be conducted in the Olympic National Park. The first section is the orientation which will cover risk management and specific policies and procedures. The second section will be a 3-day backpacking trip along the south or north coast route of the Olympic National Park. Both sections are to be completed on a 3-day weekend.

Curriculum Classes

I.T. participants will be expected to lead and teach many of the core-curriculum classes during the training. You should prepare as thoroughly as possible before the I.T. to help your classes be clear, concise, relevant and fun. Field Instructors are known for creative and effective uses of "wilderness" teaching aids and for unique and meaningful ways to make the curriculum topics fun and easy to learn. Use the books in the suggested reading list as resources to prepare for your classes. You will also have some time during the Orientation to consult with your I.T. Instructors. The following publications will be included in your Instructor Training:

- The Student Curriculum
- Field Instructor Notebook
- Field Instructor Policies and Procedures Manual

Orientation

The I.T. begins with a thorough review of the Policies and Procedures manual and Field Instructor Notebook. Both of these handbooks are vital to the safe and structured operation of field courses. This section of the training will also include presentations specific to wilderness therapy by Field Therapists, the Admissions Department and the Program Director. The following are must-bring items to the Orientation section of the I.T.

- Writing utensils / Journal or notebook
- Warm clothes and rain gear (we might be outside)
- Water bottle, hydration pack (we will be moving around)
- Field Instructor Notebook & Field Instructor Policies and Procedures Manual

Coastal Hiking

The Coastal Hiking section begins with gear orientation and packing in the storage facility. This is where Field Instructors will pack and prepare the technical gear for courses. The Logistics department will lead this part of the training as you pack and prepare for your coastal hiking trip as a group. Gear packing includes packing food, camping, navigation and communication equipment and making sure all your group gear is in working order. When you are packed up and have a thorough knowledge of the packing procedures, you will load up the van and drive to the coast. During the hiking section of the training, you will travel and camp as a group and the focus will be on risk management and the Student Curriculum. Teaching topics are outlined below and participants should have a working knowledge and application of these topics and be prepared to teach any of them on short notice during the I.T.

Passage Curriculum Topics

Personal Responsibility Goals
Leave No Trace

Defining Leadership
Personal Responsibilities
The Compass of Your Life
Knife Safety
Trust
Traps -
Wilderness Living Skills
Building a shelter
Building a Fire
Camp council

On any course, the classes and the curriculum support the structure of the program, but the way classes are taught are at the heart of each unique course. Instructors will need to adjust plans with changing weather and group dynamic conditions as "teachable moments" present themselves. This will make scheduling of the classes you teach tentative and it is possible that a few of the prepared classes will not be presented. You are encouraged to point out teachable moments as you see them and teach according to your strengths, knowledge and abilities.

Daily Schedule

The schedule each day will vary depending on weather conditions, tides, meeting course objectives and group dynamics. Generally, each day will begin between 6am - 7am. The mornings on the coast consist of taking down camp, eating breakfast, camp cleanup and loading backpacks and group gear for the days' hike. Hiking distances will be approximately 3 -7 miles per day over coastal terrain of rocks, sand and headland trails. Curriculum classes and lunch will usually take place during the hike and groups will get to camp in the mid to late afternoon. At camp, the focus will be on getting camp set up, organizing personal and group gear, dinner preparation and group process activities. Days on the coast will be long and there is always a good chance of rain, wind and stormy weather. Read and follow the suggested packing list carefully as it has been developed by Field Instructors over years of courses.

Final Day

You will arrive back in Bellingham on the final day of the training, and organize and clean expedition gear just like you would on a regular course. The group will complete final activities, review curriculum topics and have a group debrief session with the training Instructors.

EVALUATIONS & WRITTEN TEST

I.T. participants will receive feedback from peers and Instructors throughout the training. At the conclusion of the training, each participant will meet with the course Instructors and management to complete a formal performance evaluation. Participants will be evaluated in each course objective area. During the final day, I.T. participants will also be required to take a final written test. The test will include questions about each course objective and will include skill demonstration of curriculum topics. Those who complete the I.T. and pass the written test with a score of 80% or higher along with strong performance evaluations will be offered full and part-time positions as Field Instructors for Rites of passage. Schedules will vary according to full-time or part-time status, and it is common for Field Instructors to begin work shortly after completing the I.T.

FEEDBACK

Giving and receiving feedback is an essential component of the program. During the I.T. and throughout your work as a Field Instructor, you will learn the effective use of feedback and how it is used to create a safe course and program environment. The quote, "*there is no failure, only feedback*" illustrates the point that feedback is simply information which communicates the impact of someone's actions on you or a situation. Giving and receiving feedback is a learned skill - one that you will use often in your experience as a Field Instructor. The following information on feedback will give you a baseline of knowledge and prepare you for the various feedback sessions you will experience.

Effective Feedback

- Timely – close in time to the event.
- Specific – describes behavior in a clear way.
- Ownership – uses “I” statements.
- Direct – not softened as to lose the meaning.

Ineffective Feedback

- Focuses on the problem.
- Judges, blames, and uses sarcasm.
- Is indirect.
- Makes demands

COURSE OBJECTIVES

We expect I.T. graduates to be capable of leading a group of at-risk teenagers through the highly therapeutic process by creating a safe course environment and effectively teaching the core-curriculum. Each I.T. is unique and will present variables and challenges such as route, group dynamics, Instructor teaching styles and environmental conditions. Based on the performance evaluation criteria, the following training objectives will be worked toward during the training:

Risk Management and Course Safety

Rites of passage prepares Field Instructors to practice responsibility in assessing risk and creating a safe course environment. Each I.T. participant is expected to accomplish the following outcomes:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the course area hazards and describe and use techniques to reduce or avoid hazards.
- Describe emergency plans for groups in the Coastal environment.
- Be able to provide emergency medical care using available resources.
- Demonstrate how to set up and maintain the safe operation of a course.
- Have a working knowledge of “Risk Management Policies and Procedures.”

Wilderness Education

Field Instructors must be excellent educators and know how to effectively use the curriculum during the course. Each I.T. participant is expected to accomplish the following outcomes:

- Demonstrate the ability to teach basic and advanced wilderness skills from the curriculum
- Demonstrate effective teaching styles utilizing available resources
- Consistently show the effective use of time-management skills.
- Utilize learning opportunities and adapt to course variables.
- Model responsibility and demonstrate motivation and enthusiasm for curriculum topics.

Strengths and Areas of Growth

The I.T. will both test and bring to the surface your personal strengths and areas of growth. Each I.T. participant is expected to accomplish the following outcomes:

- Have the ability to self-evaluate your strengths and areas of growth.
- Give, receive and utilize feedback.
- Use your strengths to enhance the learning experience of the group.
- Be conscious of the areas you need to improve and show working toward goals related to improvement.

Communication Skills

Participants will discuss the theory and practical application of effective communication skills, teamwork, and group processes. Course behavior, positive attitude and excellent communication skills are vital to creating a successful experience. Each I.T. participant is expected to accomplish the following

outcomes:

- Work together with the members of your group to achieve I.T. group and personal goals.
- Communicate appropriate thoughts and ideas to individuals and to the group.
- Demonstrate effective problem-solving skills.
- Provide effective oral and written feedback.
- Demonstrate an awareness of others' strengths and areas of growth.

Wilderness Skills

Participants of the I.T. are expected to be experienced and have knowledge and understanding of how to live, travel and lead others in the wilderness. Participants must have experience in backpacking and wilderness living and are expected to accomplish the following outcomes:

- Live and travel comfortably in a coastal, rain-forest environment. Techniques such as camping, cooking and choosing what to wear are all skills that must be demonstrated effectively.
- Be able to access the skills, strengths and areas of growth in self and others and apply these components to decision-making.
- Display backcountry medical skills such as blister prevention, hydration, responding to emergencies, and effective rescue and evacuation techniques.
- Demonstrate adequate knowledge of the Community Phase curriculum topics.

READING LIST

You should become familiar with most of these books prior to the I.T. These books will enhance your I.T. experience and provide you with important information about the Rites of Passage course area, wilderness skills and wilderness therapy. Enjoy!

1. [Walking Softly in the Wilderness: The Sierra Club Guide to Backpacking](#) by John Hart
2. [Exploring Washington's Wild Olympic Coast](#) by David Hooper (Paperback - Mar 1993)
3. [Field Guide To Wilderness Medicine](#) by Paul S. Auerbach
4. [Shouting at the Sky: Troubled Teens and the Promise of the Wild](#) by Gary Ferguson