



IWLS

International Wilderness Leadership School

24 -Day Alaska Kite Skiing/Snowboarding Leadership & Guide Training Course Information



Course Location

The International Wilderness Leadership School is based in Haines, Alaska; a small community located ninety miles north of Juneau, (the state capital) at the top of the Inside Passage. Haines borders Glacier Bay National Park. The Park and the adjacent 27 million acres, including Wrangell-St Elias National Park, comprise the largest protected wilderness area on the planet. It is an extremely jagged, glaciated, mountain landscape that includes the world's largest non-polar ice caps, pristine fjords, and wilderness rivers. These mountains receive the greatest annual snowfall on the planet; neighboring Mt. Fairweather receives over 500 feet of snow annually.

The amazing and ample amounts of snow fall in combination with the stunning mountainous terrain of southeast Alaska make for the perfect location to develop advanced snowkiting skill sets. While low angled terrain traditionally held little attention for skiers and snowboarders alike it has become an exciting and challenging playground for snowkiters. Learning to harness the powers of the wind to propel your skiing and snowboarding creates a new exhilarating experience among the rough alpine terrain of southeast Alaska.

Our expedition center in Haines is an outstanding gateway for accessing this unrivaled wilderness area.

Course Goals

- Students will gain a strong technical snowkiting skill set and appropriate traveling techniques.
- Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to professionally deal with emergency scenarios while in the field.
- Students will be able to use and teach state-of-the art minimum-impact camping and travel techniques to move a group through various types of terrain without harming the environment.



- They will learn to exercise good quality judgment and decision-making skills within a leadership position to help avoid potential accident and survival situations, and develop a comprehensive understanding of safety considerations in the mountain environment.
 - They will be able to recognize their own leadership abilities and limitations within the context of a group. Students will learn to make decisions pertinent to leading small groups in the mountain environment.
 - Students will learn to recognize terrain, snowpack, and weather that contribute to the formation of avalanches and apply appropriate decision making skills regarding avalanche safety.
 - Students will be able to accurately assess snowpack stability, weather trends, and avalanche potential. (A Level 1 avalanche certification may accompany successful completion of this material).*
- *depending on weather and time of season

Course Itinerary

This is a flexible trip itinerary that shows the general progression of the trip. Our exact schedule will depend highly on the weather, strength of the group, and time of year.

Day 1: We'll spend the first day preparing, planning, having a pre-trip meeting, and packing food and equipment for our expedition into the mountains. We talk about expectations for the course from the students and from the instructors.

Day 2: Head into the mountains.

Day 3 – 5: The first portion of the trip focuses on snow camping, and general travel techniques on skis, snowshoes, and snowboard. We'll introduce the fundamentals of kiting in a controlled environment.

Skills including but not limited to: kite management, avalanche awareness, safe winter travel techniques, pit analysis, skinning, beacon use, probe use, rescue scenarios. You'll start out using a trainer kite, between 2.5 and 4m to learn the basics. As you progress, there are a variety of kite sizes available to find the perfect balance depending on your weight and wind velocities.

Day 6 – 12: Skill intensive snowkiting instruction

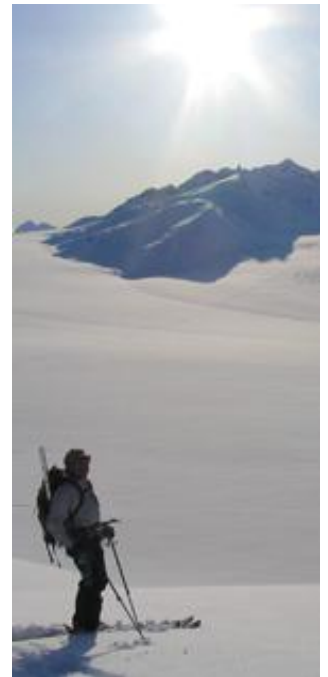
This portion of the course focuses on the technical skills associated with snowkiting in a glaciated environment.

Skills including but not limited to: Kite set up, wind window discovery, Safety systems, Basic piloting, Going upwind, downwind, and crosswind, Launching-landing & relaunching, Body positioning, Weather Awareness, Turning & Jumping, Ascents & Descents, Kite repair and daily maintenance.

Day 13: mid-course evaluation

Lead instructors will assess participants' level of involvement and assessment rubrics associated with the IWLS and IKO curriculum. These, in conjunction with peer evaluations, allow participants to receive positive feedback and develop awareness in regards to fulfilling the requirements to receive certification as an outdoor leader.

Day 14 – 23: leadership, judgment, and decision-making development.



During this segment of the trip, the group will continue to tackle technical snowkiting and skiing objectives as a group. We'll explore varying terrain, steepness, wind conditions, and group management techniques.

Participants will have the opportunity to be in leadership roles, develop teaching styles, and be active participants in group decision-making and safety management. Significant emphasis is placed on avalanche forecasting and snow stability analysis.

Day 24: Return to Haines. In the last few days of the course we will have final peer and instructor evaluations. Students will be evaluated on their understanding and completion of the IWLS curriculum.

A Typical Day

A typical day starts around 7am with breakfast and hot drinks. Depending on the winds, and the objective for the day, you may find yourself awake just before sunrise. While water is heating you will most likely be preparing for the days' adventures.

You will play an integral part of the expedition team by setting up camp, cooking meals, or carrying a portion of the group gear. You may be leader of the day, responsible for planning the day, accomplishing objectives, or facilitating a lesson plan.

The day's activities will vary depending on weather, location, and progression of the course. We may work on developing your technical kiting skills set, learn about different leadership styles, or move camp across a wide expanse of glacier under wind power. Regardless of the day's activities, it will be full of learning and adventure.

Dinner could be anything from thanksgiving to pasta, to backcountry pizza. Students often walk away from our courses with a newfound love for cooking good and original food.

The day will finish with a debrief session where we'll discuss the days events, what you learned, and how you'll be able to use your newfound skills in the near future. With small group sizes and a small student to instructor ratio, you'll have personal attention throughout the course to maximize your learning opportunities.

Course Curriculum

The International Wilderness Leadership Schools' educational model nurtures leadership development and creates an awareness of the guiding mentality that is essential for leading safe, fun adventures in the mountains. The combination of technical skills training, practical leadership experience and a true wilderness expedition make the IWLS curriculum world class.

We believe that experiences drive our learning and therefore we use formal and informal classes taught by both instructors and students. Instructors are eager to help facilitate the learning process but ultimately, how much you learn will be dependent on the amount of effort you put into the course.

A detailed curriculum will be provided at the beginning of the course. Below is a partial list of curriculum points that will be covered throughout your course.



IWLS General Curriculum outlines essential components for effective outdoor leadership. Below are a few points that will be covered in this course.

Decision Making and Problem Solving: Over the course of 12 or 24 days, we'll discover ways to assess problems, explore solutions and evaluate options in order to make effective and safe decisions in the field.

Leadership: Opportunities to lead the group will be abundant, and you'll have the time to learn and practice multiple styles of leadership in varied situations.

Expedition Behavior and Group Dynamics: Because this course is a true wilderness expedition, interactions between group members need to be supportive and contribute to the efficacy of the group. The daily dynamics of the group, combined with instruction, will teach participants not only how to be a member of a team, but how to influence and lead an expedition.

Environmental Ethics: As adventurers in some of the most pristine environments on the planet, it is our duty to respect the natural world. All of our courses practice and teach Leave No Trace® principles.

Basic Camping Skills: Mastering these essential skills will prove valuable whether you are pitching a tent in gale force winds or melting snow for drinking water.

Equipment/Clothing Selection and Use: You'll learn to choose the right gear for the correct application, whether enjoying a sunny afternoon on a snow slope or trekking through a tropical rainforest.

Weather: Will the storm arrive in the next 12 hours or the next 48? Understanding weather patterns and trends will help you plan successful trips in a wilderness setting.

Health and Sanitation: You'll learn water treatment techniques and waste management skills for healthy backcountry living.

Travel Techniques: Course instruction will help you discover ways to safely maximize your efficiency, whether hiking down a well-beaten path or traversing an exposed ridge.

Navigation: Learn how to take a bearing, read a topographical map, triangulate your position, or navigate in a whiteout.

Safety and Risk Management: Safety is always the #1 consideration. As the course progresses, you'll develop an awareness to appropriately assess risk and make safe decisions.

Wilderness Emergency Procedures and Treatment: Learn how to effectively manage safe, efficient and timely backcountry rescues.

Natural and Cultural History: Having a strong understanding of cultural history, flora, and fauna is an integral part of leading people in an outdoor environment. You'll learn some of the botany, ecology, and geology that apply to these remarkable areas.

Communication Skills: Speaking in public, managing a personal conflict, or leading a group in the wilderness, all of these situations require effective communication. You'll gain confidence in your communication abilities as you develop your personal leadership style over the length of this course.

Trip Planning: **The first day of the 24-day course is devoted to planning, packing, and organizing the logistics, food, and equipment for the expedition.**

Teaching: You'll have the opportunity to develop lesson plans, teach in front of the group, and learn the importance of progressions for teaching technical skills and leadership.





IWLS Mountaineering Curriculum

Pre-trip Activities: Learn how to plan and prepare for an extended wilderness expedition. We'll cover everything from technical climbing equipment to group and personal expectations.

Camping Skills: Basic expedition skills such as tent set up, site selection, and leaving camp are essential to a successful trip into the mountains. We'll learn these skills through practical experience.

General Mountaineering Skills: The mountain environment is an exciting and potentially dangerous place. You'll discover how to travel on the steep mountain slopes using equipment such as an ice axe and crampons as well as how to teach these skills to your fellow students.

Anchors: Anchor building is a fun yet complex subject. We'll examine single, double, triple and complex anchors, and their different applications. Learn how to place anchors in snow, rock, and ice.

Ropes: 50 meters or 70 meters? 8.0mm or 10.5mm? Single, double or twin? These are all questions you'll be able to effectively answer. We'll also learn how to care for and maintain these important pieces of equipment.

Knots: Learn the appropriate applications for the figure 8, water knot, double fisherman, bowline, and other essential climbing knots.

Belaying: Should we use a fixed belay or a running belay? Our team will learn and practice the finer points of different belay techniques such as the hip belay, running belay, boot axe belay, fixed belay, and more!

Ascending: Fixed lines are an important tool for large groups and guiding applications. We'll learn how to efficiently use, build and maintain them.

Rappelling: Rappelling down a steep rock face is a thrilling moment and our team will learn how to do it safely. We'll also look at different methods for teaching rappelling and dealing with incapacitated climbers.

Rope Teams: Rope team travel is a complicated endeavor that requires skill, technique and teamwork. We'll cover everything from prussic arrangement to team management.

Crevasse Rescue: Traveling in glaciated terrain requires that every member of the team be proficient in crevasse rescue. We'll learn how to get a teammate out of a crevasse quickly and efficiently.

Objective Hazards: Rock fall, river crossings, and avalanches are examples of objective hazards. Learn how to identify such hazards and minimize group exposure.

Subjective Hazards: Among other things, dehydration, fatigue and personal pride can be detrimental to group safety. Learn how to implement measures to mitigate these potential hazards.

Technical Climbing: Rock climbing, ice climbing and steep snow climbing are all included in the IWLS curriculum.

Top Rope Setup: Top ropes allow people to push their limits and learn solid climbing technique in a fun and safe environment. We'll cover in-depth sight selection, rope management and group management.

Escaping the Belay: What happens when things go bad? We'll practice escaping the belay and getting to the aid of an injured climber.

Short Roping: Learn different applications of short roping technique and times and places to utilize it.





Sleds: Key for long expeditions in the mountains. Learn how to maneuver, pack, and construct expedition sleds.

Timing: In the mountains, timing is everything: when to leave camp, when to turn around, and when to push for the summit. Time management is a critical component of safe travel and plays into many aspects of mountaineering.

IWLS Skiing & Snowboarding Curriculum

Equipment: Learn the basics of skiing and snowboarding equipment, avalanche safety gear, and how to use and repair your gear efficiently.

Skiing & Snowboarding Ability Assessment: Learn how to assess the abilities of others so you can lead people into the appropriate types of terrain.

Skiing & Boarding Instruction: Modeling and good communication is essential for helping guests develop their skiing and snowboarding skills.

Site Selection: Learn how to choose the appropriate terrain and identify hazards to facilitate a safe, fun time in the mountains.

Group Management: Effective group management for a group of skiers and riders can be difficult. Learn communication tools and techniques for keeping a group safe.

Snow Conditions: Whether skiing deep powder, spring corn, or breakable crust, learn how to identify variable conditions and employ different techniques to enjoy them safely.

Routefinding: Both descents and ascents demand good routefinding skills. You'll develop your hazard assessment and navigation skills to be able to find the safest, most efficient route.

Skinning: Develop your kick turns, edging, and other skinning techniques to climb snow slopes efficiently.

Steep skiing: Jump turns, belayed skiing, and self-arrest are some topics that we'll cover concerning steep skiing.



IWLS Snowkiting Curriculum

IWLS follows IKO (International Kiteboarding Organization) standards for instruction. This structure ensures every student the ability to work towards becoming a safe and independent snowkiter.

Kite set up: We'll start by learning the basics, how to rig the kite. IWLS snowkiting courses use a variety of different kites including: Ozone, Slingshot, and Best kites.

Wind window discovery & Weather awareness: learn to read the wind and weather pattern to maximize efficiency while kiting.



Safety systems: You'll develop proficiency in managing personal safety systems including kite depowering and quick release mechanisms.

Going upwind, downwind, and crosswind: learn to manage your kite in a variety of different conditions.

Launching, landing & re-launching: as you progress, you'll become more efficient in starting, stopping and overall kite management.

Ascents & descents: utilize newfound knowledge to access a variety of terrain.

Expedition Kiting: Learn techniques for hauling/rigging and using sleds to move camp and cover long distances.

Turning & jumping: develop dynamic moves in a dynamic environment.

IWLS Avalanche Curriculum

Avalanche Statistics: Can you trigger an avalanche on a 10 degree slope? You'll learn the answer to these and many more questions throughout the avalanche curriculum.

Avalanche Characteristics: We'll examine loose snow, wet snow, soft slab, and hard slab avalanches along with some potential triggers. You'll learn the definition of terms such as stauchwall, alpha angle, and bed surface.

Avalanche Pyramid: Terrain, weather, snow pack, and human factors all play into the creation of an avalanche. Develop your decision making skills by breaking down avalanche danger assessment into these components.

Snow Stability Evaluation: Is this snow capable of avalanching? Learn tests such as compression test and rutschblock test that will help you evaluate layers within the snowpack. Develop your documentation skills for accurate recording and analysis of information.

Safe Winter Travel: As a group, we will travel safely through avalanche terrain. Considerations will include cornices, equipment selection, route finding, campsite selection, and effective communication.

Avalanche Rescue: Someone buried in an avalanche has an 87% chance of survival if found within the first fifteen minutes. We'll practice using probes, beacons, and effective search patterns in order to quickly and efficiently find a buried person.



Journal Writing

Keeping a wilderness journal can help students to record, reflect, and gain from experiences throughout the expedition. The following are examples of topics that may be assigned throughout the course: First-Aid SOAP notes, incident management forms, leadership analyses, trip reports, lesson plans and decision making analyses.

Evaluation and Grading





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Students who take this course for credit will receive a letter grade. Grading is a measurement of one's knowledge of material, participation, written and oral communication, and one's judgment and awareness. Students will be evaluated on their skills, level of participation, their knowledge and awareness of their own abilities as outdoor leaders, their level of judgment as applied to decisions, and written projects assigned during the trip. Students that don't take the course for credit will receive an evaluation in place of a grade.

Additionally, the grading will be a reflection of student's peer and instructor evaluations as per the IWLS assessment rubrics.

Certifications

Upon completion of the 12 or 24 day snowkiting leadership and guide training course, students may be eligible for the following certifications.

- Level 1 Avalanche Certification*
- Certified IKO Snowkiter Card
- Snowkite Certification
The International Wilderness Leadership School
- IWLS certificate of completion
*Dependant on time of season and weather

