



IWLS

International Wilderness Leadership School

24 -Day Alaska Mountaineering

Leadership & Guide Training Course Information



Course Location

IWLS is based in Haines, Alaska, a small town located near 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 in the world. It is an extremely jagged and glaciated mountain landscape that includes the world's largest non-polar ice caps, pristine fjords, and wilderness rivers. Peak elevations in this region range up to 20,000 feet.

At 59 degrees latitude, summer days in Haines have over 20 hours of daylight. The long days make for great alpine starts, late night wildlife viewings, and account for the remarkable vegetative growth that is the basis for Alaska's thriving ecosystem. Haines is situated at the northern end of the Tongass National Forest, the largest temperate rainforest in the world.

The terrain surrounding Haines, Alaska is unique in North America, and offers world class climbing. Our expedition center in Haines is an outstanding gateway for accessing this unparalleled wilderness area.

Course Goals

- Students will gain a strong technical mountaineering 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 with minimum impact.
- They will be able 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 be able to demonstrate the ability to make decisions and lead small groups in the mountain environment.
- Students will be able to recognize terrain, snowpack, and weather that contribute to the formation of avalanches and apply appropriate decision making skills regarding avalanche safety. (A Level 1 avalanche certification may accompany successful completion of this material.)

Course Itinerary

This is a flexible trip itinerary that shows the general progression of the trip.

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 3-12: Skill intensive mountaineering instruction

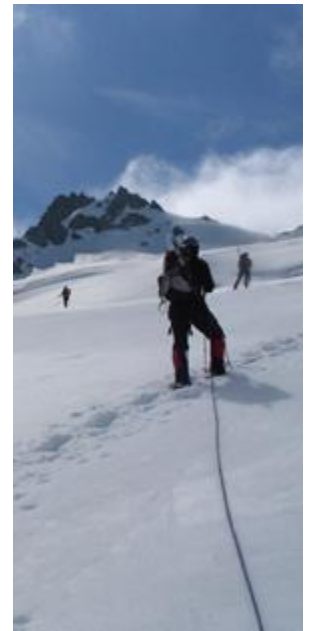
This portion of the trip focuses on expedition camping, and general travel techniques in the mountains. Skills including but not limited to: general mountaineering, avalanche awareness, safe winter travel techniques, pit analysis, beacon use, probe use, rescue scenarios. Additionally, this portion of the course focuses on the technical skills associated with mountaineering and expedition climbing. Skills including but not limited to: rope team travel, self-arrest, cramponing, high angle rescue, rappelling, navigation, routefinding, emergency protocols, anchors, and belaying.

Day 13: Mid-course evaluations.

Lead instructors will assess participants' level of involvement in accordance with the assessment rubrics of the WEA 18 point 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 climbing. 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.





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Day 24: Return to town. 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 and WEA curriculums.

A Typical Day

A typical day starts around 7am with breakfast and hot drinks. If a summit attempt is planned, 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 skills set, learn about different leadership styles, or get an alpine start and climb a large peak in the area. 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.

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 mountains are an exciting and potentially dangerous environment. 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.

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.

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

Rappelling & Lowering: 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.

Objective Hazards: Rock fall, river crossings, and avalanches are examples of objective hazards. Learn to assess these dangers and make appropriate decisions.

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: The lofty granite ridges of the High Sierra are perfect for honing technical 4th class and moderate 5th class technique.

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.

Altitude Considerations: The High Sierras reach above 14,000ft. Learn how to recognize signs and symptoms of acute mountain sickness, and steps to take to avoid it.

Managing Emergencies: Learn how to effectively manage safe, efficient, and timely backcountry rescues.

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 climbing and skiing in the mountains.

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



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 to terms such as stauchwall, alpha angles, 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.

The Wilderness Education Association

The WEA has been training and certifying outdoor leaders around the world for nearly 25 years, and teaching students to safely and effectively lead groups in the outdoors without harming the environment.

Legendary mountaineer Paul K. Petzoldt, Chuck Gregory, Robert Christie, and Dr. Frank Lupton, founded the WEA in 1977. The organization's mission includes "...promoting the professionalism of outdoor leadership and to thereby improve the safety of outdoor trips and to enhance the conservation of the wild outdoors..."

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

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 WEA and IWLS assessment rubrics.





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Certifications

Upon completion of the 24-day mountaineering leadership and guide training course, student may be eligible for the following certifications.

- Level 1 Avalanche Certification*
 - WEA certificate of completion
 - WEA certified outdoor leader
 - IWLS certificate of completion
- *Depending on weather and season

Experts in **Technical Instruction**
and **Outdoor Leadership Training**

1-800-985-4957

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