



IWLS

International Wilderness Leadership School

12 -Day Alaska Rock and Ice Climbing 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 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. The elevation of the peaks in this region ranges up to 20,000 feet. This terrain is amongst the best in North America for learning climbing skills, and the sea kayaking, rafting, trekking, and skiing here are world class.

The rock climbing portion of this course takes place in the historic town of Skagway, Alaska. The glacier carved valleys are home to extensive amounts of granite. From short top roping crags, to long multi-pitch routes, Skagway is an ideal place to hone rock skills.

The ice climbing portion of this course takes place on the Davidson Glacier just outside of Haines Alaska. Summertime ice climbing is limited to climbing glacier ice rather than waterfall ice. The Davidson glacier offers lots of ice climbing amongst jumbled mass of ice. It's a great spot to hone technical ice climbing skills and learn about guiding considerations on the ablation zone of a glacier.

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

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Course Goals:

- Students will gain a technical ice and rock climbing skill set and appropriate decision making skills.
- Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to professionally deal with emergency scenarios while in the field and the considerations therein.
- Students will be able to use and teach state-of-the art minimum-impact camping and travel techniques to move a group through a glaciated 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 vertical world.
- 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 top-rope ice climbing and rock climbing.

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 0: Pre-trip meeting at 6:00 PM (unless otherwise noted) at the IWLS office in Haines. After a brief meet and greet with your instructors and fellow students, we will discuss the course and students' goals and expectations. Bring your personal gear and clothing with you for a gear check this evening.

Day 1: We will travel to Skagway, Alaska organize all of our group and personal gear, and head to the cliffs for an introduction to rock climbing skills.

Days 2–6: Rock climbing. We will cover a wide spectrum of rock climbing skills including but not limited to rock climbing technique (face/crack/etc...), rock anchors, belaying, top-roping, mock leading, emergency protocols, rappelling, and more. We'll finish off this portion with some multi-pitch climbing.



Day 7: Transition day: we'll finish off the rock climbing portion, and then head to the Davidson Glacier.

Days 8–12: We will cover a wide spectrum of ice climbing skills including but not limited to: crampon technique, ice tool use, ice anchors, rappelling, top-roping, ice assessment, belaying, emergency protocols, mock leading, and more.

Day 12: Return to Haines. In the last few days of the course we will have final evaluations. Students will be evaluated, by their instructors, on their understanding and completion of the IWLS curriculum in addition to a self-assessment.

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A Typical Day

A typical day starts around 7am with breakfast and hot drinks. If a long climb 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 day's 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.

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IWLS Rock & Ice Climbing Curriculum

- **Knots:** Learn the appropriate applications for the figure 8, water knot, double fishermen, bowline, and other essential climbing knots.
- **Climbing Technique:** Whether stemming an inside corner, jamming an off-width, or friction climbing on a blank slab, you'll learn the techniques to climb on a variety of different features.
- **Ice Climbing Technique:** You'll hone your technique on vertical ice and learn the importance of keeping your heels low, getting full extension on each swing of the ice axe, and keeping your head down.
- **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 fixed belay, running belay, hip belay or munter hitch.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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 site selection, rope management and group management.
- **Ascending & Descending:** Fixed lines are an important tool for large groups and guiding applications. We'll learn how to efficiently build, use and maintain them.
- **Route Selection:** Where to set up the fixed belay? How to avoid objective hazards? How to select the most appropriate route from far below? You'll learn the answer to these questions and more as we climb a variety of established routes in addition to possible first ascents.
- **Rock Protection:** Pitons, nuts, cams, hexes... learn the nuances of quality placements. You'll have the opportunity to place protection in a variety of settings and rock quality.
- **Anchors:** Anchor building is a fun, yet intricate subject. We'll examine single double, triple and complex anchors, and their different applications.
- **Objective Hazards:** Loose rock and lightning storms are some of the objective hazards that exist for rock climbers. Learn to manage these hazards and climb safely when conditions don't cooperate.
- **High Angle Rescue:** What happens when things go bad? We'll practice escaping the belay and getting to the aid of an injured climber.
- **Multi-pitch Climbing:** Towards the end of the course, you'll put your technical skills to the test on multi-pitch climbs, refining skills such as belay site selection, rope management and route finding.
- **Ice Protection:** Ice screws, ice pitons, Abalakov threads... learn how to assess ice quality and placements. You'll have the opportunity to place protection in a variety of settings.



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IWLS General Curriculum

- **Leader of the Day:** Opportunities to lead the group will be abundant and you'll have the time to learn and practice multiple styles of leadership.
- **Logistics:** Develop the ability to efficiently plan and pack for an extended expedition in the backcountry.
- **Communication Skills:** Learn to communicate to a wide variety of audiences and provide constructive and appropriate feedback during daily group debriefs.
- **Teaching and Lesson Plans:** 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.
- **Expedition Behavior and Group Dynamics:** As this course is a true wilderness expedition, interactions between group members need to be supportive and contribute to the efficacy of the group. Learn the finer points of teaching these facilitation skills.
- **Camp Set-up and Maintenance:** Mastering these essential skills will prove valuable whether you are pitching a tent in gale force winds or melting snow for drinking water.
- **Nutrition and Cooking:** A healthy diet is vital for maintaining energy throughout an expedition. Learn to appropriately prepare nutritional and tasty backcountry meals.
- **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.
- **Leave No Trace® Ethics:** As adventurers in some of the most pristine environments on the planet it is our duty to respect the natural world.
- **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 this remarkable area.



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

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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.

Certifications

Upon completion of the 12-day rock and ice leadership and guide training course, student may be eligible for the following certifications:



12 Day Guide Training Certificate of Completion

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