

Wilderness Living Skills

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Course Description: The post-industrial world we live in has effectively stripped the profound connections our species has had in the past with ‘the natural elements’. In losing these connections we have effectively lost our way. Some remnants of our primitive selves still linger, I wish to enhance and develop these lost skills.

Removing students from the ‘traditional’ classroom environment and helping them focus on simple, achievable, hands-on skills in the out-of-doors is a great way to increase opportunities for success and achievement. My goal for this course is to allow these successes to strengthen our students mind, body, and spirit.

Sometimes the only way forward is to take a step back.

Texts:

Brown, Tom, and William Jon Watkins. *The tracker*. Berkley, 1986.

George, J. C. (1959). *My side of the mountain*. New York: E.P. Dutton.

Curriculum Outline: The following curriculum will need to be highly adaptable due to the nature of nature. Some experiences will not be possible with inclement weather, while others will be enhanced. I would also like the liberty to be flexible based upon student needs, interests, and abilities.

1. My survival kit and how to use it
 - a. What is necessary for a survival kit
 - b. Knife safety
 - i. How to sharpen a knife
 - c. How to waterproof a pair of shoes
 - d. Wilderness First Aid
 - e. How to dress for survival
 - f. How to use a map and compass
 1. Orienteering

*After this unit is over, each student will have a backpack with all of the gear they will need to go out and start “surviving”. Each class period after this first unit ends we will meet by the doors,

don our survival packs and head outside. The ideal location for most classes will be the sound garden and the maple forest near the school. On days that there is very severe weather we will use the outdoor classroom.

2. Shelter

- a. Basic solo shelters (up to a week)
- b. Intermediate Shelters (up to a month)
- c. Advanced Shelter (I could live here)

3. Sustenance

- a. How to find safe drinking water
- b. How to purify water
 - i. Solar stills
 - ii. Filtration
 - iii. Chemical treatment
- c. How to find food in the forest (Guest lecturer)
 - i. Foraging
 - 1. Wild edible plants
 - ii. Trapping
 - 1. Cordage from fibers
 - 2. Snares
 - 3. Figure fours
 - 4. Paiute Deadfalls
 - 5. Tanning fur
 - iii. Fishing (possible to field trip to the lake/river to test our equipment)

4. Fire

- a. How to build a fire in all conditions
- b. How to start a fire with flint and steel
- c. How to start a fire by friction
 - i. Hand drilling
 - ii. Bow drilling

* I am aware that there are many potential concerns regarding safety in this class. I do hope that you would trust me to train each student with each of the materials/tools we will be using during our class. We will certainly wear gloves while using knives. Also, fire can be a major safety concern and I would like to ensure that all fire building exercises are meant to teach them the safe way to contain and manage a fire. The plan is to utilize the sound garden patio to build multiple fire rings for practice. No axes or hatchets will be used during this class!

