

Whitney Ward

Position Statement

The Wilderness Education Association's mission,

strives to promote the professionalism of outdoor leadership, improve the safety of outdoor trips, and enhance the conservation of the wild outdoors. The WEA promotes professionalism through the following strategies: certification, accreditation, affiliation, membership, program consulting, and research and development.

As a member of the WEA Board of Trustees, it is important to provide the leadership that will enable the association to accomplish its mission. In the 30 years since it was founded, the WEA has done an excellent job of providing the necessary curriculum and opportunities to develop professional outdoor leaders. The problem is that in those 30 years the WEA has been "lurking in the shadows". There has been a lot of positive change within the WEA in the last few years, but there is always room for improvement. With the right leadership, the WEA has the potential to become a more recognized and accessible organization. There are a number of ways that will accomplish this; the most important fulfill WEA's mission:

- Strengthen the membership (both in quality and quantity)
- Reach out to the Affiliates and promote future, non-traditional Affiliations.
- Improve the general understanding and use of underutilized WEA programs, such as the WEW.
- Work in conjunction and collaboration within the organization and with other entities and organizations to advance the mission of the WEA.

The WEA provides a great service with its certification and 18 point curriculum, but outside the WEA, very few understand what the WEA has to offer. There are several non-profit organizations that the WEA could emulate. The WEA could learn from the Leave No Trace success story. Word of mouth marketing is great, but the WEA needs to broaden its marketing campaign. Part of the marketing would be to enter into partnerships/collaborations to provide a value added service to existing programs like the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, or outdoor industry. Sponsorships and grant writing are also essential. As a board member, I will utilize my strengths in leadership and management to work with the board to further the WEA and make it better for you!

Biographical Information

Whitney Ward is currently an instructor (hopefully very soon, that status will be changed to Assistant Professor) in the Department of Health Education and Recreation at Southern Illinois University - Carbondale. He is coordinator for the Outdoor Recreation courses and curriculum for the department, which includes WEA Steward, NSP, and PSC

offerings. He is finishing up his Ph.D. (oh, that dissertation!) in Adventure Leadership from Indiana University. He received a M.Ed. in Outdoor Education Administration from Georgia College and State University, a B.S. in forestry from Utah State University, and an A.A.S. in recreation education from Brigham Young University - Idaho. More importantly his extracurricular education includes being a SOLO wilderness medicine instructor, Leave No Trace Master Educator instructor, and WEA NSP certifying instructor. He has been involved with the WEA since 2004, but has been pursuing wilderness recreation/education for many years prior to that. His interests include just about anything outside, but his true love are the desert and mountains (not to many of those in Southern Illinois).