



## WEA Legend

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Despite the large number of new employees and student interns in the field of outdoor recreation, there is little information to guide the mentorship process. With a lack of mentorship, many develop low career self-efficacy and then frequently change jobs or even look outside the field of outdoor recreation for employment in the beginning of their career. This article examines Bandura's self-efficacy theory to better understand how perceptions often become reality as new employees and student interns make decisions regarding their careers in the outdoors.

**Key words:** outdoor recreation, career self-efficacy, internship, new employees, mentorship

#### **WEA Mission Statement**

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..."



**The Journal of the Wilderness Education Association**, formerly **The WEA Legend**, is published to provide the latest organization news and wilderness education information for our membership. The Wilderness Education Association

is a nonprofit organization founded in 1978 to promote the professionalization of outdoor leadership and to thereby improve the safety of outdoor trips and enhance the conservation of the wild outdoors. Submissions should be sent to Briget Tyson Eastep via email at eastep@suu.edu. Articles must be in a Word document with 12 point Times New Roman font, single spaced. Articles should not exceed 1 page in length. Deadlines for publication are:

**September 1, December 1, and April 1.** The editor reserves the right to edit or reject material. Each article is the opinion of its author and does not necessarily represent the opinion or endorsement of the WEA or the editor.

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### **Guidelines for the Journal of the WEA**

- Article length: 750 words. This is about one page in Publisher
- Article must have a clear and concise title.
- Articles should be submitted in WORD, Times New Roman, 12 pt. Font.
- An abstract of no more than 25 words is to be included. This abstract will be included in the table of contents along with the article title.
- Please include a brief bio of the authors (where they work, where they attend school, relation to WEA, years in profession, etc.)
- Photos, drawings, and other illustrations are encouraged. These should be in either jpg or gif format.
- Deadlines for submission will be strictly adhered to. Articles to be submitted by email to eastep@suu.edu.

Please see page 21 for Peer Review Article Guidelines.



### **JWEA Photo Contest**

In order to spur inspiration for the 2009 field season in the middle of winter, JWEA is holding a photo contest. The winner will receive their photo on the first page of the Winter 2008 edition and a cool prize from the National Office. Judging the photos will be a completely subjective process determined by what inspires and looks pleasing to the eye. Please submit up to three photographs in JPEG format) by email to eastep@suu.edu. The deadline will be November 25th so that we can include the winner in the winter edition.

## President's Report

By Chris Pelchat

The board has been very busy since this summer and has made some tremendous strides in achieving our goals for this year. In June the Board of Trustees (BOT) endorsed a 3-year strategic plan for the membership to review. Upon completion of that review the BOT adopted the plan and has set it in to motion. If you have not seen the plan it can be located at [www.weainfo.org/membernews](http://www.weainfo.org/membernews).

The Executive Committee (EC) has been working on two projects in particular that are vital to the success of the organization. First, the EC has taken a look at all the financial statements over the past five years and put together a sustainable budget forecast for the 08-09 fiscal year. The EC has also made some recommendations to the BOT that will help the WEA to become more fiscally responsible which will be implemented in the months to come. Second, the EC has worked closely with the National Office (NO) to develop a staffing structure that will create more time for the staff to focus on member retention and initiatives that will help deliver our message to wider audiences. In order to do this we are bringing back the Executive Director position to the WEA. The restructuring of the NO will take place on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008. Mary Williams will serve as the interim Executive Director while the EC puts together a formal application and hiring process for this position. The BOT is very excited about this initiative and feel that it is going to help the WEA continue to move forward in the professionalization of the outdoor leadership industry.

The committees have also been conducting a lot of business centered on the strategic plan. The strategic plan calls for a more thorough analysis of our affiliates prior to being awarded accreditation. With an increased front door analysis of our affiliates the BOT feels the necessity for the amount of oversight from the NO in regards to course operations will diminish leaving more time for member retention initiatives. The BOT also feels that this will create more flexibility in the way in which an affiliate delivers its programs for Outdoor Leader certification. We are also enhancing the way in which an instructor can move

through the ranks to ensure that affiliates are more sustainable as professionals moving from job to job as well as making sure that the WEA remains an inclusive not exclusive organization.

I would encourage everyone to become involved with the committees as they move forward. Each initiative in the strategic plan has a direct impact on each and every affiliate. Make sure that your voice is heard!

I wish all a productive fall and make sure to enjoy sometime for yourself.

Chris Pelchat  
President, Wilderness Education Association

## National Office Report

By Mary Williams

Greetings from Indiana! Summer has been great here, a lot has been going on at the office and I went on a vacation to Alaska. My week off was spent in Homer and the outlying Fritz Creek obtaining first-hand experience dog-handling as I fed, poop scooped, watered and cared for 40 sled dogs. It was quite an experience and I loved every minute of it. The best part was just getting to spend some time with great friends that I hadn't see in a while. We made it over to the Kachemak Bay State Park by way of the (most wonderful) Smoke Wagon Water Taxi service for an overnight stay and a good long couple days of hiking. Needless to say it was a great way to finish off a fantastic summer.



## National Office Report Continued

Enough about me though, **let's talk National Office and WEA.** The fall has brought some exciting staffing additions. I am pleased to have Nora Kayden staying on with us after she finished her internship this summer. She will be handling much of the Membership management duties for the WEA so be on the lookout for communication from her! Many of you who have been to conferences will know Mallory Rickbeil as a staple member and coordinator of the Service Crew. She recently moved to

Bloomington and has started work as of September 1 as the Administrative Assistant here at the WEA. She has great energy and is an incredibly dedicated worker. She will be my right hand here at the office so be prepared to receive emails and calls from someone other than me! I couldn't be more pleased with the growth of the National Office and the staff that I get to work with each day. Additionally I have accepted the position of Interim Executive Director of the WEA as the Executive Committee works to formalize the position and complete the search and hiring. These changes are exciting steps in the sustainable growth of the WEA and will result in better services from the National Office. I personally have to say a huge "Thank You!" to members, Affiliates, instructors and the Board of Trustees for being so supportive of me in my work at the National Office and the support needed to continue moving it forward.

Another initiative that the National Office staff is undertaking is to improve communication with the WEA membership. We are formalizing the timing/frequency of our communications as well as providing a new delivery of important membership information via a once-a-month Member

Access newsletter that will have information on changes, improvements, surveys, committees and general reminders. We are working to make information more accessible to the membership.

**Conference planning for 2009 is well under way.** The Bloomington, IN site has been scouted and the Indiana Memorial Union will be a great place for the event. All space reservations made



and hotel room blocks completed. Evening Socials are being planned; Pre-conference workshops are being finalized as well as set up for online registration.

Please note these important deadlines:

\*The **Call for Presenters** is currently **available online** so be sure to get your presentation proposal submitted by **October 15, 2008**

\*The **Outdoor Leadership Research Symposium** is **accepting abstracts through October 15<sup>th</sup>** - submission details available online!

Don't forget to log onto the website ([www.weainfo.org](http://www.weainfo.org)) and check out the Member News page. There you will find links to Board of Trustees minutes, Committee updates including surveys and research initiatives, links to member benefits information and much more!

As always, feel free to contact the National Office with any questions or comments. We are here for you and enjoy hearing from WEA members.

Have a fantastic fall!

*Mary Williams*

**Interim Executive Director**



## Towards True Sustainability: Overcoming the Effects of Consumerism in the Outdoor Field

By Paul Van Horn

Although many outdoor education and recreation organizations are working hard to increase the sustainability of their operations (for a succinct definition of sustainability, see the Winter, 2007 issue of the JWEA), the need to reduce consumerism has not been widely addressed. During the course of the last several decades the act of spending time in nature has become heavily commodified. Nearly everything we do in the outdoors, from walking to defecating, can be “enhanced” by purchasing some gadget. These purchases exact a toll on the environment because *everything* comes from somewhere and there is currently no such thing as mass-produced gear that is entirely “earth-friendly” (*friendlier* perhaps, but not *friendly* (as in doing no harm, or even benefitting)).

Industry’s attempts to lessen the various impacts of their products must certainly be applauded, but even “green” technologies carry inevitable impacts: Companies who embrace recycled polyester fibers, for instance, find themselves confronting the toxic metal antimony, a necessary catalyst in the production process. Although many visionary thinkers see a future where consumer goods will be provided by truly sustainable systems, our technological systems are not at that stage of development (and indeed, may never be!). Most pressing is the fact that our current host of environmental crisis demand immediate and forceful action on our parts. It is time to give serious thought to the radical notion that *continuing to attempt to purchase our way out of our environmental problems will likely only lead to more complications and will ultimately prove to be a failed approach to finding balance on this earth*. I propose that we go to the heart of the problem and make a concerted effort to reduce our level of consumption. Here are four suggestions for breaking out of our current consumer-based paradigm of outdoor recreation.

First, we should all simplify our approach to the outdoors, which is often too complex and “requires” too much gear. We can choose to engage in fewer gear-intensive activities, or at least try simpler approaches to activities and reduce the amount of gear we use. Each new sport that comes along inevitably demands new purchases, sometimes if only to look the part and occasionally even flying in the face of the new activity’s underlying philosophies. The “ultra lightweight” backpacking movement provides a good example: Although many ultra light aficionados still take pride in crafting their own gear out of recycled materials or doing without an item altogether, the movement has also spawned a philosophy (and industry) devoted to the paradox of buying more in order to carry less! Our need for equipment can also be reduced by sharing or renting rather than purchasing gear solely for our own use.

The second change is to use each and every item of gear until it is completely worn out. Equipment and clothing are often retired prematurely because we shun gear that looks worn, dirty, or simply “old”. Laura and Guy Waterman, in their book *Wilderness Ethics* tell the story of an old pair of wind pants that they salvaged and continued to use for many years after they had been resigned to the dumpster by a previous owner. That attitude should act as a model for how we all approach the concept of wearing out gear!

The third point ties directly to the second: Before gear is discarded, it should be repaired if possible. The ability to do this first demands two things of the owner: That they select durable, simple, repairable gear in the first place and that they develop the skills needed to affect the repairs. Many modern gear items are either too

*Continued on page 6*



## Towards True Sustainability Continued

lightly built or complex to facilitate easy repairs, whereas “old school” gear is often very over built and simple. Highly functional equipment, from wooden spoons to backpacks and wood/canvas canoes, can also be made by the outdoor enthusiast, who can then make repairs to the item in the future.

Finally, we must learn to resist fashion trends, unnecessary gadgets, and dubious “improvements” in gear and learn to ignore advertising completely (after all, if we truly need it, we’re smart enough to go looking for it on our own!) If you would like to become more sustainable, skip the titanium cup, GPS, altimeter and backcountry ice cream maker. Now *that* would be a *truly* earth-friendly thing to do! In the words of Patagonia CEO and green business icon Yvon Chouinard “...thinking that we can buy our way out of it (obsolescence) is totally bogus.” If that’s true, then we *must* re-

duce our overall level of consumption. So how do we get to that point? The second article in this series will examine the roadblocks we must confront in order to begin to make changes.

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“Polyethylene Terephthalate”. Downloaded on 08/24/08 from: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polyethylene\\_terephthalate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polyethylene_terephthalate)

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## The Promise of Wilderness Therapy: A Book Review By Geneviève Marchand

A book that includes “promise” and “comprehensive” on the cover page, assumes the complicated mission of delivering a large range of detailed and unbiased information. In this case, *The Promise of Wilderness Therapy* attempts the difficult task of guiding parents and practitioners through the complex field of wilderness therapy (WT), and to provide readers the tools necessary to make an informed decision for adolescents who may benefit from WT.

To give parents and practitioners’ grounded information about WT, this book is divided in nine chapters. Each section is geared towards building a better understanding of WT and the chronological order is designed to easily deliver the appropriate content to parents and practitioners. The chapters are summarized as: 1) WT definition, 2) brief history of WT, 3) WT perception versus reality, 4) theoretical framework of WT, 5) credentials of programs and professionals, 6) effectiveness of WT, 7) overview of some WT programs, 8) choosing a program, and 9) examples of WT success and failure.

The book, according to the authors, is mostly geared towards parents. This raises some concerns about the organizational and theoretical style, which often seems more suited for practitioners. This is particularly true in regards to the sixth section: *How effective is wilderness therapy*. The authors successfully cover a large array of research findings about the effectiveness of WT, the different types of research and the need for such research. However, parents in search of answers may find the rigors of academic research tedious to read and long to draw to conclusion. Also, to avoid information overload, the readers desiring detailed information concerning history and theory, could have been referred to reading: “*Wilderness therapy: Foundation, theory and research*”, previously written by the same authors.

Further, it may be difficult for readers to create their own opinion about WT since the authors regularly bring their own beliefs and bias to the book. This seems particularly true in the last chapter of this book, *Fulfilling the promise*, which recounts two examples of WT, both related to the authors.

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## Book Review Continued

I was also left perplexed by the section concerning specific programs, which seemed unnecessary in a book that claims to separate marketing *hyperbole* from hard facts.

In reading this book, I also took a more critical approach as a researcher and as a WT worker. In fact, I read part of this book as I was working with six struggling adolescents, enlisted in a 21 day WT program. For a practitioner, this book offers somewhat of a literature review on the subject of WT. The theoretical framework is explored in depth, and an attempt to demystify the reality from the image portrait by the medias and the Internet was an interesting aspect of this book. For practitioners unfamiliar with WT, this will be a welcomed source of information.

I was left perplexed by some of the information concerning the risk of wilderness settings since the research findings to support keeping adolescents in traditional treatment modality are still lacking. I was also cautious of the strong endorsement of licensed wilderness counselors, when authors of this book have been advocating for years the necessity of licensed staff working in WT. To this day, there is no research showing that programs employing licensed counselors who are present full-time in the field with adolescents, have better results than those who have licensed counselors visiting adolescents once or twice a week in the wilderness setting. Finally, the authors justifiably caution parents from using coercion, and to be weary of escort services, but offer no other alternatives towards defiant and destructive ado-

lescents who refuse to submit themselves to therapeutic treatment.

It is worth noting that the authors make some important suggestions to insure that youth are placed in safe and appropriately supervised WT organizations. An excellent section on professional membership organizations offers some solid tools for parents and practitioners. It also serves to broaden the work and missions of these organizations. A series of questions and suggestions offer a good start to the process of choosing the right treatment option for adolescents.

Overall, *The Promise of wilderness therapy* is a well-intentioned book and makes a good contribution to a field that is often lined with anecdotal facts and marketing schemes. While some people may find this book too lengthy and long to draw to poignant information, most parents will probably feel reassured by the depth taken by the authors to ensure that they are making informed choices when choosing a WT program. Further, while this book should be read with an open mind, practitioners will also appreciate the information given to help parents make the difficult decision of therapeutic placement.

### Reference

Davis-Berman, J. & Berman, D. (2008). *The promise of wilderness therapy*. Boulder: Association of Experiential Education.



# Technology Usage on the Continental Divide Trail

By Dr. Mike Reynolds  
Ouachita Baptist University

## Background:

In 2007, *Backpacker* magazine sponsored the Continental Divide Trail (CDT) Project. The goal of the CDT Project was to “create a Forest Service approved map (of the entire CDT) that eliminates travel confusion and gives hikers a definitive document for trips.” Although the CDT was established in 1978 and is the longest of the “long” distance trails, it does not have one established route.

To carry out the CDT Project, *Backpacker* selected 200 volunteers (over 3100 applied) to map the 3,100 miles of CDT trail. To accomplish this task the CDT was divided into 46 segments and the 200 individuals were assembled into 46 teams. A person from each team was delegated the task of being the team leader.

## Purposes of the Study:

The purposes of the study were: (1) to document which technological devices were carried by teams while mapping the Continental Divide Trail and (2) to reveal if “personal” usage of technological devices became a distraction during the mapping of the CDT.

Since the individuals selected for the CDT Project were considered by *Backpacker* as leaders in the field of outdoor recreation and come from a variety of backgrounds (i.e. different states, abilities, genders, interests, age, occupations, education, etc), this study will be useful in exposing what technology is being used in outdoor recreation by “the masses”.

## Methodology:

An internet survey “Technology on the Continental Divide Trail” was developed and sent to the 46 team leaders participating in *Backpacker* magazine CDT Project. 34 of the team leaders responded to the electronic mail survey. This translates to a response rate of 74% which is outstanding for an internet survey.

## Results

Results are summarized on page 9

## Implications of the Study and Points to Ponder:

If you haven’t already noticed, technology usage in outdoor recreation has arrived. The results of the survey, “Technology Usage on the Continental Divide Trail” document this existence. With 91% of the teams on the CDT Project using some form of technological device, it appears the leaders in outdoor recreation are “solidly” using technology. Question, are we preparing students to embrace technology as tools to be used in outdoor recreation?

With the increased availability of solar technology (affordable and low weight) to charge the devices listed in the above survey, how will we as outdoor educators handle the influx of these “gadgets” into the outdoors? Is banning these devices still a viable option when 91% of the teams mapping the CDT carried some form of technological device?

The survey also documents distractions associated with technology in the outdoors. Yes, these frustrations are real and unfortunately will continue as usage increases. Previous research (Reynolds, 2006) dealing with technology usage on college campuses reveal that most college outdoor recreation programs have policies in place to restrict technological devices on outdoor recreation trips. With leaders in outdoor recreation using technology, college students possessing this equipment, and with “charging devices” available to allow these gadgets to be taken to the outdoors, it is inevitable that outdoor recreation programs will soon embrace technology in outdoor recreation. How will we handle the shift?

Questions, comments, and inquiries about this article are welcomed and encouraged. Please contact Dr. Mike Reynolds [reynoldsm@obu.edu](mailto:reynoldsm@obu.edu).

## Summary of Results from Technology Usage on the Continental Divide Trail

1. What technological devices did you and members of your team carry with you while mapping the Continental Divide Trail? (select all that are applicable)

| DEVICE   | RESPONSE TOTAL           | RESPONSE % |
|--|--------------------------|------------|
| Cell Phone   | 28                       | 85%        |
| Satellite Phone  | 8                        | 24%        |
| Lap top computer                                       | 0                        | 0%         |
| Palm Pilot   | 0                        | 0%         |
| Game boy   | 0                        | 0%         |
| DVD Player   | 0                        | 0%         |
| Blackberry   | 4                        | 12%        |
| MP-3   | 3                        | 9%         |
| I-Pod  | 5                        | 15%        |
| CD Player  | 0                        | 0%         |
| Global Positioning System<br>(other than the team GPS) | 23                       | 70%        |
| Walkie Talkie  | 5                        | 15%        |
| Two-way Radio  | 2                        | 6%         |
| Personal Locator Beacons                               | 1                        | 3%         |
| Weather Radio  | 1                        | 3%         |
| None   | 3                        | 9%         |
| Others: Digital Camera                                 | 6                        | 18%        |
|  | Total Respondents 33     |            |
|  | Skipped this Question: 1 |            |

2. At anytime during the mapping of the Continental Divide Trail did "personal" usage of technological devices become a distraction to you or any of the other team members?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| 15% |  |
| 85% |  |
|     |  |

3. If you answered Yes to question 2 (distraction), please describe.

There appears to be three areas in which technology became a distraction while mapping the CDT. The first, frequent stops to check to see if cell phone coverage was available. The second, frustrations associated with operating a GPS (i.e. batteries, waypoints, how to use, etc). The third, conversations while on the trail "seemed" to drift to talking about technology (i.e. digital camera, blackberry, and gps). To this individual this was a paradigm shift from the normal outdoor recreation conversations.

# Yurts and Conflict Resolution in the Bear River Range, Northern Utah

By J.C. Norling, Ph.D. and Paul Bowman



J.C. Norling

The outdoor recreation center (ORC) at Utah State University provides a well-managed system of yurts for wilderness access in the nearby Bear River Range, and easy entrée to some of the finest powder, and sweetest, spring corn snow conditions. Yurts are circular, canvas tents, with wooden lattice walls, built on wooden platforms, supplied with wood burning stoves, kitchens, and bunk beds to accommodate from 6-12 people. The Yurts are located at four different locations in Logan Canyon, Utah, and can be reserved through the ORC.

Despite pristine snow-clad conditions, winter recreation conflict issues have gained increasing importance for public land managers as competition has intensified between non-motorized and motorized backcountry enthusiasts for access to high quality winter recreation areas (Gibbons & Ruddell, 1995; Vaske, Carothers, Donnelly, & Baird, 2000; Vaske, Dyar, & Timmons, 2004). This is particularly true of the Bear River Range which hosts a considerable amount of snowmobile users along with a hearty group of backcountry snowboarders and skiers.

To address the volatile issue of limited winter access concerns, the current U.S. Forest Service, winter recreation use plan for this

area (see references) provides both motorized and non-motorized zones. The plan evolved through several iterations and involved a bitter struggle between values driven concerns of both coalitions. The resulting plan reasonably situated the ORC yurts within the non-motorized access zones, which provide opportunity for solitude, wilderness, and untracked powder.

Originally built in the 1980's, Bunchgrass (8,400 feet) and Steam Mill (8,100 feet) yurts are owned by Powder Ridge Ski Touring and are managed by the ORC. Excellent skiing can be found near the Blind hollow yurt (8,200 feet), while the most easily accessible is the Green Canyon yurt (6,121 feet), purchased from Pacific Yurts in 2007. The numbers of users for the yurts have grown to approximately 350 -400 per winter.

There are several key issues with the maintenance of the yurts, including caring for shallow pit toilets, cutting and preparing firewood, keeping the yurts snow free, keeping the yurts clean, and repairing damages. Access to the Green Canyon yurt requires special consideration as it doubles as a Nordic skiing area. The ORC uses a snowmo

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J.C. Norling

## Yurts and Conflict Resolution Continued

bile, roller, and a Ginzu groomer to double-track for classic skiing and corduroy finish for ski skating. The canyon is groomed 2-3 times per week and snow conditions report is provided on the ORC website. Ironically, where conflict by a skier toward a snowmobiler may occur in another location, in Green Canyon the snowmobile is appreciated as a means toward improved cross-country skiing conditions.

Interactions with snowmobiles will undoubtedly be had at the Steam Mill yurt parking lot, which provides access to Franklin Basin, a popular motorized recreation venue. For the backcountry skier, there is a one-mile stretch of shared, groomed snowmobile road before one finds the skin trail to the yurt. However, a friendly wave will gain you good graces, as you'll find most Cache Valley snowmobilers to be courteous and respectful. Once you've departed the road you'll be skinning through heavily aspen groves and sparse evergreen, and the



only interference may be your chatty friends or the squeak of a boot in an unlubed telemark binding.

One benefit of the ORC yurts are the timeless symbolic nature of the circular structure that brings people to the heart of things – the wilderness experience. The yurts are important gateways and waypoints for backcountry enthusiasts that stay for extended outings in one yurt, or as a means to link a winter tour. Many outdoor education groups use the system, such as USU, Washington State University, University of Utah, Prescott College, and Cache Valley Learning Center.

For travelers that are earning their way up the mountain the yurts are imbued with significant meaning. Although Americans enjoy their rights to travel by any means they choose, fossil fuel or human powered alike, the yurt-havens harken us back to a quieter, primal place

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## Yurts and Conflict Resolution Continued



J.C. Norling

a still point within. They represent the last bastion of solitude within an increasingly urbanized wildland playground. The impermanent structures provide a visceral connection with our nomadic ancestors who used yurts for shelter from the harsh elements, and as a communal space to share stories and a good brew after a long day. At the ORC yurts this spirit is alive and well, and any conflicts or would be goal interferences will soon be forgotten as you fall asleep to the sound of a roaring wood fire in the pot belly stove, and dream of tomorrow's turns.

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## WEA Affiliate Article

### The WEA – CCO Connection

By Paul Harbison and Francois Guilleux

The partnership between the Coalition for Christian Outreach (CCO) and the WEA grew out of my own journey (Paul's) to be part of the WEA. In 1983, early in my work with the CCO, I read a magazine article that Paul Petzoldt wrote about the three goals of an outdoor experience – safety, enjoyment, and conservation of the wilderness. These three values deeply resonated with my own values. In the article, he said that judgment by far was the key ingredient and that leadership competency was dependent upon it. Experience does not necessarily translate into effective leadership. It was in the article that Paul Petzoldt spoke of the WEA. I was intrigued and wanted to learn more about it.

At the same time that I read Paul Petzoldt's article (the fall of 1983), the WEA held a mini-conference at Slippery Rock University. Paul Petzoldt was the keynote speaker right in my backyard! Being a NOLS grad and knowing the commitment Paul Petzoldt had to preparing wilderness leaders and his focus upon judgment, I needed to further investigate. I went to the conference and convinced Paul Petzoldt to have a conversation with me. In his warm, persuasive, collaborative, and resourceful manner, Paul welcomed my involvement with WEA and invited me to be on the WEA Pilot Instructor Course planned for summer of 1984 in Driggs, ID. I went to Driggs, completed the course and I was hooked with WEA.

On the course, I learned about the 18-point curriculum and knew it would fit with my work for the CCO on many levels. One level was setting the standards for any leader for any outdoor experience. Another level was for the students to become familiar with those same skills/values/attitudes. And the third level was for training

other staff and students for their own competency in wilderness travel and leading others into the wilderness. This became especially important as the interest for wilderness programming started growing in the CCO in the late 80's and early 90's.

A few years after we ran our first NSP to the Wind River Mountains (1988), we sent the first of what would be several groups of CCO staff to other affiliates for Professional Short Courses and their introduction to the WEA. These exchanges helped our staff discover the richness and flexibility of the WEA curriculum and to understand the opportunities for partnering with others in our work in the wilderness.



The relationship between the CCO and the WEA is a working out of how we view integration. At the CCO, the staff of the Outdoor Leadership Team (the group of us who specialize in outdoor experiences) is committed to long-term experiences in the wilderness, believing that such experiences are vital for students to understand our world and how we live in it. We view such experiences as using multidimensional leadership in a multidimensional environment working with other multidimensional beings to encounter a multidimensional truth (Harbison, n.d.; Seerveld, 1980). The WEA curriculum fits very well into this perspective. The curriculum accounts for the complexity and variants of wilderness living and the multiple relationships interacting in that context. Because this is enormously multidimensional it is then also dynamic in that it is possible to address an infinite variety of goals, purposes, needs, etc. To echo Paul Ylvisaker's (1988) description of experiential education, these experiences involve leadership positions with real opportunities, real authority, and real consequences.

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## CCO Continued

As Dewey (1938) described in his writings on education, we have come to realize that the quality of transference of material into the learner's everyday life is related to the quality of connections with issues as they are being learned. The learning environment, the learner, and the curriculum are all in a delightful proximity. The things that the learner is learning form the immediate context of the learner's life. When this happens, application and integration are often immediate and spontaneous by the learner. The WEA curriculum connects to a student's whole life, not just wilderness living. This is exactly where we want to be.

The WEA curriculum serves the CCO well in our mission, our students, and our context. We have developed our own course curriculum using the WEA model of engaging students through its curriculum. The role that the WEA curriculum plays in our work is important and we appreciate its value and the opportunity to be part of the overall mission of the organization.

It has also been a wonderful privilege to contribute to the ongoing development of the WEA mission. One of the advantages of being part of a grassroots movement such as WEA is the opportunity for hands-on involvement. Over the years, the CCO has sent delegates to participate in several of the WEA Colloquiums and to serve on several committees: course

monitoring process, curriculum standards revisions, clarifying the instructor certification process, and the creation of the Instructor Training Clinic. One of the more fun-filled highlights has been helping with the birth of the Auction. And the most treasured aspect of connecting with the WEA has been the community of relationships of WEA colleagues that has been cultivated over the years.

We value our relationship to the WEA. We have been glad to serve the WEA over the years and have been willing to contribute to the health and development of the organization because we believe in it and attempt to integrate its mission into our work in and out of the wilderness. The relationship with the WEA has been an encouragement to us as much as we have attempted to be an encouragement to WEA. It has been a great ride to be part of a partnership that is a catalyst for both organizations to thrive.

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## Beyond Networking: Connecting University Outdoor Programs

By Ivan Bartha and Brett Morgan

New jobs are challenging. This can be exceptionally true in outdoor recreation education and leadership. New faculty struggle in figuring out their own department culture, policies and professional development requirements that determine the path of their research. New student life professionals struggle in navigating through business policies, working with student staff that have carried over and defining their own vision for their program. It does not matter if the move is vertical or lateral or if the program is established or new, the struggles seem to be common. The upside of these initial challenges is that they slowly dissolve and are replaced with new challenges.

Often, the success or failure of a university outdoor program hinges on collaboration. Through developing common, mutually beneficial relationships the transition of new leadership can be eased substantially. In the realm of university outdoor programs, the relationship with an academic program often determines program vibrancy and success. If the relationship with an academic program does not exist, that professional needs to look elsewhere to find the support mechanism for collaboration.

The outdoor recreation education and leadership profession is fortunate in the number of professional organizations that represent various interests of the profession. Regardless of the professional organization, there always has been a buzz about how professionals must network. While attending conferences, collecting business cards and being recognized achieves some sense of credibility, it really has little correlation with the success of your program or your ability as a program administrator or outdoor leader.

It is important to recognize that there is a significant difference and meaning between networking and collaboration. Anyone can network. We teach our students that this is an important part of

their entry into the profession. On the other hand, collaboration implies a mutually beneficial relationship. Through division of tasks, clearly defined roles, responsibilities and expectations collaborations become much more than who you have met or whose business cards you have collected. In many ways, collaboration between university outdoor recreation programs is leadership in action and directly benefits the profession.

Unfortunately, we often forget to tell them that this is only the first step and that the real contribution to the profession comes with improving the quality of programs we provide and the people we serve. When multiple programs, academic or not, can develop collaborations a unique opportunity develops not only to become better as respective programs, but also provides a unique learning opportunity for students and staff. The benefits are immense if professionals are willing to put in the time and effort.

In 2006, Brett Morgan from the University of South Florida and myself started a discussion about St. Cloud State University Outdoor Endeavors working together to run a trip in the Everglades National Park. Granted, we didn't really know each other, never had lead a trip together and knew little about the others program but we did agree that it would be a unique way to work together. The following summer we began the planning process through phone conversations, email and division of tasks.

Despite the physical distance and separate university systems, each with their own unique approaches to business, Brett and I developed a collaboration that is successful. This success manifested itself in a relatively flawless week of sea kayaking in the Gulf of Mexico this past January. Our collaboration efforts were measured when the participants were surprised to find we had

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## Collaboration Continued

never worked together. They had assumed that we had some history beyond that trip. Just that feedback proved that defining the collaboration and working with another solid outdoor program has benefits far beyond what any single program can produce on their own. It is relationships like this that continue to motivate and inspire future programs that benefit the good of our profession.

Many of the factors contributing to this success were things that both Brett and myself had learned from our involvement in our own outdoor leadership training. Key factors in the success of this joint venture included a certain level of trust, defining roles and responsibilities, identifying potential breakdowns in the process and what our individual expectations were for each other.

Without spending countless hours perfecting our craft, taking in feedback and learning from our mentors, this relationship would not have been as effortless or successful as it turned out.

While we spend a lot of time getting to know each other as professionals, the benefits of actually working together are significant. Collaboration can occur on many different levels, but it takes on a new meaning when the results are a professionally run and seamless wilderness trip. These efforts serve as a stepping stone to providing more diverse and stronger program offerings, elevating our own positions within our respective institutions and lending legitimacy to our chosen profession.



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## Perception is Reality? Examining the Effect of Mentorship on Career Self-Efficacy in Outdoor Recreation

By Gretchen Newhouse Berns, Ph.D.

### Abstract

Despite the large number of new employees and student interns in the field of outdoor recreation, there is little information to guide the mentorship process. With a lack of mentorship, many develop low career self-efficacy and then frequently change jobs or even look outside the field of outdoor recreation for employment in the beginning of their career. This article examines Bandura's self-efficacy theory to better understand how perceptions often become reality as new employees and student interns make decisions regarding their careers in the outdoors.

**Key words:** outdoor recreation, career self-efficacy, internship, new employees, mentorship

### Introduction

Despite the large number of new employees and student interns in the field of outdoor recreation, there is little information to guide the mentorship process. Mentorship is especially important for entry-level employees, such as student interns and new hires, since career development is largely a function of the various mentors rather than the new employee or student intern (Sturges, Guest, & Mckenzie-Davey, 2000). With a lack of mentorship, many new employees and student interns develop low career self-efficacy and then frequently change jobs or even look outside the field of outdoor recreation for employment in the beginning of their career. Career self-efficacy is defined as an individual's perception or beliefs of how well they will perform on various tasks and a career in outdoor recreation (Brooks, Greenfield, & Joseph, 1995). Knowledge and skills are inadequate to determine actual performance in an outdoor career (Taylor, 1988). Many new employees and student interns may know how to complete a task, such as facilitating an icebreaker or teaching canoeing, but do not always perform successfully. Career self-efficacy is not simply a matter of knowing what to do, but integrates cognitive, social, and behavioral skills to develop a combined course of action. Career self-efficacy determines how people feel, think, and motivate themselves

and behave; therefore, this perception often becomes reality as new employees and student interns make decisions regarding their careers in the outdoors (Lent & Hackett, 1987).

According to Albert Bandura's theory (1977, 1986, 1997), self-efficacy provides the theoretical framework to help explain and predict human behavior. This theory attempts to explain the thoughts that consist of a relationship between knowledge, skills, and action and has been applied to numerous behavioral domains such as public speaking, academics, driving a car, rock climbing, and career self-efficacy (Betz & Hackett, 2006). Bandura (1977, 1986) theorized that an individual's perceptions are influenced by a combination of four sources: performance accomplishments; vicarious experiences; verbal persuasion; and emotional arousal.

### Meaningful Experiences

Performance accomplishments provide the most influential source of self-efficacy information because performance is based on active involvement in an experience or task in the outdoors (Bandura, 1977, 1982, 1986, 1989). Performance accomplishments refer to successes or failures. With this direct experience doing specific tasks that may have previously been completed by a mentor, new employees and student interns have the opportunity to judge their performance accomplishments in outdoor recreation (Ducat, 1980). When confronted with new or difficult situations, a new employee and student intern's career self-efficacy is formed by evaluating and integrating past performances in outdoor recreation. If the new experience or internship lacks substance by allowing the new employee or intern to only complete menial tasks or observe, the benefit to the new employee or student intern is lessened and the task does not assist in developing their career self-efficacy (Gornstein, 1994; Ortner, 1998; Swift & Kent, 1999). According to Bandura (1977b, 1997), performance accomplishments have the strongest, highest, and most generalized impact on self-efficacy. Therefore, performance accomplishments throughout the new employment

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experience and internship are extremely important for the development of career self-efficacy.

The timing of performance accomplishments is also critical, especially at the beginning of a career in the outdoor recreation field. Performance failure or success early in someone's career is likely to have a great impact on self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977b). Past performance successes will create and facilitate high career self-efficacy, while past failures will result in lower career self-efficacy. Although performance failure early in an outdoor recreation career is likely to have a great impact on career self-efficacy, a high number of repeated successes in the outdoors would likely increase career self-efficacy and make any failures seem less significant (Bandura, 1977b).

A mentor's guidance is essential throughout big and small tasks to ensure successful performance which then leads to increased career self-efficacy. It is, however, important to balance this guidance given to new employees and student interns, because it is crucial that they believe they were responsible for successful completion of the task and not the mentor or internship faculty supervisor. Successes or failures will have a more powerful impact if they are attributed to internal factors (effort, abilities, and persistence) than to external factors (assistance from supervisors, difficulty of task, and luck).

### Observation

Vicarious experiences, or modeling, allow the new employee and student intern to observe the mentor's successful performance and mastering various behaviors or tasks in the outdoors. It is important that the mentor and new employee or student intern spend time together to not only talk about the expectations and responsibilities of employment or the internship, but also to allow for some observational time before the new employee and student intern are responsible for various tasks, such as planning food for an outdoor recreation trip or teaching survival skills. This observation raises the new employee and student intern's own career self-efficacy for success; consequently, observing failure may lower career self-efficacy without positive debriefing. It is imperative to focus on positive aspects when failure does occur. According to Bandura (1977), most behavior is learned observationally. However, simply watching does not necessarily impact the new employee and student intern, but they must retain the information observed, have the

skills to reproduce the behavior, and be motivated and open to change the behavior. Applying Bandura's work to the outdoors, the impact of a vicarious experience is dependent on three things: when the new employee or student intern perceives the mentor as being similar, has few prior outdoor experiences to judge capability, and observes several outdoor leadership models in various situations (Bandura, 1986). New employees and student interns who are more similar to the mentor demonstrating the behavior or task provide the most vicarious influence on career self-efficacy.

### Verbal Encouragement

Verbal persuasion, or encouragement, provides another source of information that influences career self-efficacy. Bandura (1977) cited that those verbally encouraged by a mentor have a much higher probability to master a situation or task than those who did not receive any verbal encouragement. It is important to recognize that the mentor's encouragement throughout various tasks and formal or informal evaluations of performance are essential to building career self-efficacy. Although participant feedback is important, new employees and student interns will most value the feedback and encouragement of mentors whom they respect. The more respected the mentor and the stronger the verbal encouragement, the greater the likelihood the new employee and student intern will initially attempt a task and persist until success. While our workforce has become a culture that expects rewards and encouragement regardless of the outcome, Savell (1986) argued that the most influential verbal encouragement is accompanied by a successful performance accomplishment of the behavior or task. If verbal encouragement is disconfirmed by unsuccessful performance, career self-efficacy decreases, the credibility of the mentor is questioned, and verbal encouragement has little to no impact on the new employee or student intern (Bandura, 1977).

### Appropriate Challenges

The final source of career self-efficacy is emotional arousal. Arousal levels can positively and negatively influence self-efficacy (Pajares & Miller, 1994). According to Bandura (1986), moderate levels of physiological arousal will most likely provide the greatest influence on increasing self-efficacy. If a new employee and student intern experiences a high amount of arousal, they may perform at a low level

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while attempting a new behavior or task like processing or debriefing a challenging rock climb, because some of the effort may be focused on the potential obstacles or failure. New employees and student interns with high career self-efficacy and moderate arousal tend to intensify their focus on the behavior or task and requirements to accomplish success rather than potential obstacles or failure (Bandura, 1982, 1986, 1991). It is important to delegate challenging or difficult tasks to new employees and student interns since an unchallenging outdoor leadership experience is likely to be unproductive for both the new employee and the outdoor program or organization; however, it is essential that the task is appropriate for their strengths and weaknesses to maintain moderate levels of physiological arousal (Swift & Kent, 1999). Some mentors assess the new employees and student intern's strengths and weaknesses based on entry-level outdoor leadership competencies to maintain moderate levels of emotional arousal when assigning tasks and responsibilities (Hurd & Schlatter, 2007).

### Conclusion

These sources of efficacy can influence career self-efficacy separately or collaboratively. The combination of these sources provides significant information that influences a new employee and student intern to process, digest, and integrate information based on their leadership capabilities and outdoor skills and then determine the amount of effort expended to accomplish the task (Bandura, 1977). If a new employee or student intern's career self-efficacy is high, more energy will be expended. Those new employees and student interns with high career self-efficacy tend to engage more frequently in related tasks with the same level of difficulty, persist longer when faced with obstacles, and give more effort (Bandura, 1986). As a result, this leads to mastery experiences and a career in the field of outdoor recreation that increases career self-efficacy.

On the other hand, low career self-efficacy contributes to avoidance behavior, feelings of inadequacy, and inability to learn and master new outdoor leadership skills (Bandura, 1977). If a new employee or student intern's career self-efficacy is low, little energy will be expended. New employees and student interns who perceive themselves as having an inability for success have a tendency to imagine a challenge much greater than actually exists and pursue other jobs

or even look outside the field of outdoor recreation for employment. Career self-efficacy influences motivation (effort), determination (persistence), decision-making (choices), and confidence (feelings) (Bandura, 1977, 1982, 1989, 1991; Pajares, 1997). Therefore, understanding the valuable role of mentorship is essential for building career self-efficacy in new employees and student interns and a successful career in the field of outdoor recreation. The following four suggestions will assist mentors in increasing their interns' chances of career self-efficacy success:

1. Allow the intern some time to observe successful completion of mentor's tasks in various situations.
2. Delegate meaningful tasks that provide the intern with the appropriate amount of challenge to the intern's experience, knowledge, skills, and ability.

Balance guidance and encouragement to the intern based on the difficulty of the task and performance.

4. If failure does occur, be sure to take time with the intern to debrief and provide critical feedback and encouragement.

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# Journal of the Wilderness Education Association

## Peer Reviewed Papers

### Instructions to Authors

**Purpose:** The Journal of the Wilderness Education Association is striving to include one peer-reviewed article in each issue of the journal starting in Fall 2006. The purpose of including a peer-reviewed article in each issue of the journal is to promote scholarship within the field of outdoor leadership. We are seeking quality manuscripts that can help establish a strong tradition of evidence-based practice within the field of outdoor leadership. We welcome articles that present research findings, explore concepts and theories, or share program experiences that are relevant to the practice of outdoor leadership. We hope that you will consider submitting scholarly manuscripts for publication in the journal and that you encourage others to do so as well.

#### Manuscript Submission Guidelines

**Manuscript Format:** Manuscripts should be between 2,500 and 3,500 words in length and should include a clear introduction, review of literature, methods, results, discussion, and references. Manuscripts should be prepared according to guidelines in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (5<sup>th</sup> edition). All manuscripts should use Times New Roman 12 point font and allow one-inch margins on all sides of the manuscript. Manuscript pages should be numbered consecutively throughout. All authors, along with their organizational affiliations, should be listed on the title page.

**Abstract:** An abstract of no more than 100 words should follow the title page. The abstract should include the title.

**Keywords:** Three to five keywords should appear below the abstract.

**Tables and Figures:** Tables should be titled and numbered at the top of the table and be numbered consecutively as they appear in the text. Figure

should be titled and numbered at the bottom of the figure and should also be numbered consecutively as they appear in the text. Tables and figures should be inserted at appropriate points within the text. All tables and figures should contain clear and concise footnotes explaining their significance to the text.

**Literature Cited:** References should be listed at the end of the manuscript. Do not list references that are not cited in the text.

#### Review Process

Please submit an electronic copy of your manuscript as an email attachment using RTF format to the Associate Editor of the Journal. When a manuscript is received, it will be sent out to three reviewers for a blind review. These reviewers will determine whether the manuscript should be (1) accepted as is, (2) accepted with minor revisions, (3) recommended for revision and resubmission, or (4) rejected. Manuscripts will be judged according to the following criteria: contribution to theory, concepts, knowledge, and information; evidence/logic; strength of analysis and interpretation; style and grammar; and relevance to the goals of the Wilderness Education Association. Authors should expect the review process to take approximately three months. Any manuscript submitted for review by the JWEA must be unpublished and must not be submitted simultaneously for review in another journal.

Manuscripts should be submitted to Rachel Collins at [rachel.collins@gordon.edu](mailto:rachel.collins@gordon.edu).

