

Potential Woods Project Summer 2010 leader--

This summer, The Woods Project will have even more opportunities for 30 great leaders to get involved in the July 17-31st summer program. We will be taking even more kids this summer—140 students, as compared to 110 students last year, with even stronger programming to be provided by our wilderness partners. We are partnering once again with Naturebridge, with camps at both Yosemite/Crane Flats and Marin Headlands, and with Gateway Mountain Center at Clair Tappaan Lodge in the Lake Tahoe area. Both organizations have been excellent partners and are further refining their programming for our students in 2010. Leaders will be able to select their first choice location.

We are enhancing the program this year with a number of refinements that will make operations across all of the Camps more uniform and simplify the student and camp management processes. Highlights of 2010 programming changes:

- Each Camp will be managed by a team made up of a Logistics Manager and a Relationship Manager. The Relationship Manager will be responsible for setting and managing the behavior standards and overseeing the leader team. The Logistics Manager will be responsible for the physical aspects of the program- student and staff movements, backpacking coordination, and relations with our wilderness partners.
- Students will be separated into groups of 9-13 students per group. Each group will include students from several schools and will be roughly even in terms of boys/girls.
- Each student group will have two or three Woods Project leaders, so that each leader will be able to have at least one day off each week.
- We will have two sections of students (24 to 36 students in total) who will be involved in an enhanced science program, which will include a week at the Marin Headlands Science Center and a week in Yosemite at Crane Flats. The students will take part in a science exploration project that will compare/contrast/study biologic and geologic features of Marin and Yosemite, and will include a final presentation of findings. This program is being designed for the student who has a strong interest in science and is looking for a deeper engagement in academic work as part of the experience. Students in this program will be the only students NOT backpacking as part of their experience.
- All of the students, other than those in the enhanced science programming sections, will backpack as part of the experience. Our student surveys have indicated that the backpacking component is a highlight for the students and has a profound effect upon both their world view and their vision of self.
- We will have more opportunities available for student leadership this summer- with a junior leader being part of each backpack leadership team at Donner Pass/Desolation wilderness this summer
- No group of students/leaders will spend more than eight consecutive days at any one location.
- The student application process is being enhanced to insure that each student is right for the program.
- In addition to all the schools that participated with us last summer, we will have several new partner schools this year—including Houston Academy for International Studies- an HISD charter school and KIPP-Austin. We are also in discussions with several other schools
- Leaders and students who are at the Marin location for one of the two weeks will not have an opportunity to backpack.
- Leaders who do not want to backpack will be leaders in the science program. All other leaders will be backpacking for five nights with the students as part of the program.

We have opportunities for 31 leaders this summer, which will give us a ratio of 4.5 students per leader. In addition to our leaders, our wilderness partners will have one staff person for each group of students, for an ultimate student/leader ratio of about 3.5/1.

We expect to have approximately 60 students at both Donner Pass and Crane Flats in our regular programming and 24-36 students involved in the enhanced science program. The students at Donner and Yosemite will each spend five nights backpacking and 9 nights at the Camp. At Donner, each student group will include 10 students, with one of the students being a designated student leader. Student leaders will be veterans of our programming who will have taken additional training to qualify them as the 'third leader' on a backpack trip. Yosemite and Science groups will be made up of 11-13 students.

Each week, three groups will be backpacking in the Desolation Wilderness and two groups will be backpacking in Yosemite. As such, we will have a total of 10 backpack groups, with groups, including leaders, of 15 in Yosemite and 12 in Desolation Wilderness.

Leader Costs:

Each leader is responsible for raising/paying a minimum of \$1,200 in donations to The Woods Project. The actual costs of our having a leader participate varies depending on the Camp, but ranges from \$1,200 to \$2,000. Typically, leaders who are sent by their schools as the school representative are sponsored by their schools, with the school making a \$1,200 donation to the program for each leader they send. Donations to support your participation are due by May 1, 2010. We will be adding a donation raising module to our website so that leaders can ask their friends/family for pledges to cover the cost of their participation.

The program covers airfare costs (up to the amount of the actual cost that we incur for our students traveling round trip from Houston to either San Francisco or Reno) and all other travel, program, meal and lodging costs other than personal purchases during the event and meals purchased during travel to/from the camps. Leaders traveling from other points will meet us in either San Francisco or Reno.

2010 LEADER TRAINING:

2010 leaders will need the following training:

Leaders not backpacking will need to attend a 2 hour Woods Project orientation program. This program will be offered on two Saturdays in the spring, probably over lunch. This training will go over general TWP protocols and answer any questions you might have about the program. For those out of town, we will arrange to have a conference call with the leaders to cover the same information. This information will also be covered in the four hour backpack leader orientation course, so backpack leaders will NOT have to attend both orientation courses.

In-charge Backpack leaders will need to be Wilderness First Aid certified. WFA is a 16 hour training that will take place over a weekend in the spring, likely at Camp Strake. This is an outstanding course that focuses on treating injuries when a 911 call isn't an option. At least one backpack leader on each trip will need to be WFA certified. We will arrange to offer the WFA course and the leader training course over a weekend this spring. We will provide the details in the next couple of weeks.

All backpack leaders will take a four hour course that will cover Woods Project wilderness backpack protocols and risk management as well as prudent backcountry leadership practices. Leaders taking this course will not be required to take the 2 hour TWP orientation course that is required for non-backpack leaders as the information from the orientation will be included in the backpack leadership training. The Backpack leadership course will be offered twice in the spring, with one of the offerings in conjunction with the WFA certification.

MORE BACKGROUND FOR THOSE LEADERS WHO HAVE NEVER TAKEN PART IN THE WOODS PROJECT'S SUMMER PROGRAM:

Our goal is to provide an outstanding experience for both our students and our leaders. While our leaders have responsibility for students, we strive to create an atmosphere conducive to positive leader/student relationships and an experience for the leaders that approaches that of a vacation. A goal of The Woods Project is to develop student leadership and initiative, and, to that end, we ask our leaders to teach and not do—to show the students how to do a task and then to step back and let them be successful with the activity- whether it be doing the dishes, cooking breakfast, setting the hiking pace, etc.

Our Wilderness Partners are responsible for the students from after breakfast through the end of the field work day- typically 3:30- 4 pm. They are then responsible for after-dinner programming, for approximately two hours after dinner. During the time that our Wilderness Partners have primary responsibility, with our leaders are taking part in the activity as well, with secondary responsibility.

Our Wilderness Partner personnel are all degreed wilderness educators, typically ranging in age from 23 to 35, with degrees in environmental education or a germane science and strong experience in working with high school students. They are adept at activities ranging from science education to bonding activities and are typically very happy to utilize our leader's expertise in their programming.

Day-time programming by our Wilderness Partners typically includes 3-6 miles of hiking/wilderness travel, as well as geology/biology/history exploration and study. As a Woods Project leader, you have the opportunity, but not the responsibility, to be involved in delivering the program. You will accompany the students on the daily programming and assist our wilderness partner leader as needed. Substantially all of the activities involve exploring the wilderness. Less than 10% of the activities the students engage in might involve a 'classroom' setting, other than the science program, which may involve more such traditional learning environments.

You will have responsibility for the students at all times that the students are not under the direct management of our wilderness partner. Each camp will have a Woods Project Relationship Manager who will be responsible for overall tone setting and supporting the leaders in the event that support is required. The Relationship Manager is typically a teacher/administrator from one of our partner schools who has been on a previous Woods Project summer program and has an interest in insuring consistency and correctness of behavior and program tone. At the Donner Pass camp, adult leaders will oversee the students making breakfast and packing lunches as well. At Yosemite, all meals are provided by the Camp.

Woods Project leaders will stay in the dorms with the students at night. During nighttime, our leaders have primary responsibility for the students.

Backpack trips are 100% under the control of Woods Project leaders. No Wilderness Partner personnel will be involved in the backpack portion of the experience. Each backpack group will have either two or three adult leaders. The trips with two adult leaders will have a student leader. Each trip will have at least one leader who is Wilderness First Aid certified.

Backpack trips are all five night events, with daily mileage averaging about 6 miles, with one or two mountain passes as part of the trip. To date, every Woods Project backpack trip has had some period of time where the students were able to hike/play in the snow.

Please don't hesitate to contact Mary Harvey at (713) 824-0756 or marynharvey@gmail.com or Steve Rosencranz at 713-248-7602 or Srosencranz@sbcglobal.net if you have any questions about the program.