



## WEA Legend

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#### **WEA Mission Statement**

The mission of the WEA is to promote the professionalism of outdoor leadership through establishment of national standards, curriculum design, implementation, advocacy, and research driven initiatives.



**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.

### **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.

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This photo serves as a reminder to enjoy winter.

## **President's Report: Looking Toward the Conference**

By Chris Pelchat

This is the time of year when our National Office begins to buzz with conference registration. It is an exciting time for all of us because it is the one time a year that the Wilderness Education Association convenes to see old friends, exchange ideas, share information, and challenge traditional thought. It is also time to welcome new folks that have decided to join our family of outdoor educators over the past year. We have an exciting venue; we are going back to Bloomington Indiana. As the headquarters of the WEA Indiana University provides a great place to conduct our annual gathering. It also has many recreational opportunities to take part in prior to, during, and after the conference. We have several pre-conference events that are sure to capture the attention of our attendees. We also are putting out a great message during this conference with the focus on "Necessary Journeys".

The board has had a very productive year accomplishing many goals, which we will share at the conference. Our proudest achievement that is worthy of mentioning now is the restructuring of the National Office staffing structure. We have reestablished an Executive Director position. Mary Williams is currently acting as the Interim Executive Director and we hope to have the position filled permanently by April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009. This new position will allow the organization to move forward in a more diligent manner as well as serve our affiliates and membership in a more efficient manner. The National Office restructure also added more hours to the national office which should also increase the productivity of what the WEA is able to accomplish.

The board has also put together a strategic plan that we as well as the committees have been working on diligently. This plan will assist in guiding the association over the next couple of years and we look forward to your help on these projects. Friday afternoon of the conference is the time where committees will discuss projects for the year and share task lists for each project. This is your opportunity to jump in on projects that share your passions. The committees keep the WEA moving forward. Without their voice the board is left to make decisions on our own, so we encourage you to get involved. To find out more information visit:

<http://www.weainfo.org/en/cms/?264> and  
<http://www.weainfo.org/membernews/>.

### **WEA TRIVIA**

*Test your WEA history knowledge.....*

1. What year was WEA founded?  
A. 1977  
B. 1988  
C. 1965
2. Who founded WEA?  
A. Paul Petzoldt & Mark Wagstaff  
B. Paul Petzoldt, Frank Lupton, Robert Christie, & Charles Gregory  
C. Paul Petzoldt, Frank Lupton, & Robert Christie
3. How many WEA affiliates are there?  
A. 35  
B. 40  
C. 45

*Answers: 1. A 2. B 3. C*

## **WEA National Office Update December 2008 Bloomington, IN**

Winter is here, the holidays are in full swing and so are conference preparations in the National Office. As the calendar year winds down, activity in the national office really is kicking up! To help us keep up with the end of the year demands, we have hired Jessie Rome, a graduate student here at IU, to work with us in the National Office. She has been a great asset in the office and I look forward to introducing her to you all at the conference! Mallory is also getting along famously in the office and by now, many of you have had the opportunity to interact with her. I couldn't be happier with the people that I get to work with each day at the WEA!

Every year we work with the Events Committee to make running the conference more efficient in the administration of the conference and to provide a great conference experience for attendees. Some of the biggest initiatives we are undertaking right now include acquiring sponsorships for the conference, acquiring donations for the Kitty Drury Scholarship Auction and Raffle, collecting conference presentation proposals, service crew applications and conference registrations, along with keeping the website up to date and fielding phone calls and emails.

In addition to the conference the winter months keep us busy working with Affiliates and Instructors to close out all

2008 courses. This time of year also finds us with a bevy of membership applications both renewals and new members joining for the first time. December and January will be busy as we work with the committees, committee chairs and the Board of Trustees to prepare for the annual meetings that occur before, during and after the conference.

There never seem to be enough hours in a day and there is always more work to be done. Yet somewhere in the mayhem we take a little bit of time to spend with family and friends during this holiday season. I hope that each of you enjoy the holiday season and that you take time to be with those you care about. In the end, it is not our jobs and our busy schedules that make the year successful, rather it is the joy we find in the people that we care about. I hope to see all of you in February at the conference - it is the people in the WEA that make all of the work worth it in the end.

*Mary Williams*

**Interim Executive Director  
Wilderness Education Association**

Check out the Member News page on the website at:

[www.weainfo.org/membernews](http://www.weainfo.org/membernews)



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

By Paul Van Horn

Last month's article discussed the need to reduce consumerism in outdoor recreation. This article will discuss some of the barriers that must be confronted in order to begin the process.

First, Ben Lawhon, Education Director at Leave No Trace, sees safety as an important issue for many: "I think that you're going to run into a lot of people who will play the 'safety' card on this one. Whether it's climbing, paddling or even backpacking, people feel that more or newer gear will keep them safe. From the newest PFD, to the latest sat phone, to the most technologically advanced belay device, I think that we're going to be hard pressed in today's litigious climate to get outdoor programs to actually move to less and simpler gear (Personal communication November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008)."

Second, the durability of equipment concerns John Gookin, Curriculum and Research Manager at the National Outdoor Leadership School. "One barrier is a mindset about equipment that ignores sustainability. I see a recent trend towards "light and fast" gear and techniques. Some of this lightweight gear is semi-disposable, that is it isn't so durable so it has a much shorter lifespan. This does not align with Wendell Berry's approach to responsible consumerism (buy good stuff that you can hand down to your grandkids). Plus, in the institutional setting, it becomes unreliable earlier in its life cycle, so it needs to get "turned over" before it becomes a problem. I am not saying this is a huge problem, but I am concerned about the trend towards lighter gear that is less durable because it conflicts with our core value of responsible consumer-

ism. I think these types of conflicts are the edges that help us understand where our values align with our actions." (Personal communication November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008),

Third, in the world of outdoor recreation and education, image matters for many users. There are many who recreate in the outdoors who have built their persona around their adventure pursuits, and the gear, clothing and other trappings of their pursuits are seen as key parts to their identities, not to mention to actually participating in the activities, and their associated social networks. Let's face it: If you don't have a mountain bike with full suspension or the latest high-tech telemark ski gear, you can't "hang" with friends who do. The same is true of most other gear-dependent sports such as kayaking and climbing. Keeping up your identity with the latest and greatest does not lead to sustainable practices.

In the end, the most significant barrier to reducing consumerism is simply the fact that it is built in to nearly every aspect of our American culture, including the outdoors. Northland College's outdoor recreation sustainability model notes that "The bar has shifted from consumption of what is necessary to survive to consumption of luxuries that are thought of as necessities." (Bauer, et al. 2007) Industry magazines gleefully jump on the consumer bandwagon, issuing yearly gear guides, and exhorting outdoor enthusiasts to buy all the latest gizmos and gadgets. Backpacker Magazine even makes newness an editorial policy, stating in its photo submission guidelines "We will not run photos of hikers wearing jeans, and sneakers, nor cloth-



## Towards True Sustainability Continued

ing that is out of date (more than 5 years old). Gear in the photos should also be current and fit properly.” (2008) The pressure to look the part and buy, buy, buy is everywhere!

A big shift in perspective may be needed to reign in this tendency. Jeff Sanders (personal communication November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2008), the Field Director at Boulder Outdoor Survival School indicates that “It excites us to see what else we can do without instead of to see what is new in the stores that we did not know we needed. We however are not blind to the fact that for our school to exist requires some technology. Though getting rid of all “stuff” is an ideal that may never be reached, it is an ideal that we embrace because it is something that constantly challenges us to improve our abilities.” While the curricular demands of a primitive living/survival school lend themselves perfectly to this cause, the underlying attitude of-

fers much to our larger field: Let’s learn to get excited about doing more with less!

Like any changes in personal behavior, adherence to these ideals will require a bit of psychological tinkering. The next article will suggest how we might overcome these barriers by shifting our mental paradigms towards true sustainability.

### References

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## The Case for Teaching the Rational Decision Making Process

By  
Jack Drury

I occasionally have been asked why, in *The Backcountry Classroom*, we place all of our emphasis on the rational decision model and don’t give any space to tacit or naturalistic decision making. I don’t have a good response for not giving considerable space to naturalistic decision making and when a third edition of the book is published we will be sure to make up for that shortcoming. On the other hand I have a ready response as to why we place so much emphasis on rational decision making. The rational decision making process is mechanistic in nature. Its steps are visible and transparent thus it is easy to teach,

practice and reflect upon unlike naturalistic models. If you want to teach decision making to novices this is where you want to start. Let me make a sport’s analogy. If you want to teach basketball to 13 and 14 year olds do you start by teaching them the triangle offense made famous by Phil Jackson who used it to win 9 NBA championships? Of course not. Why not, it has proven incredibly successful for Phil Jackson. You don’t teach novice basketball players the triangle offense because it is incredibly difficult to learn and takes an incredibly long time to master. Proponents however argue that once learned, this

## Rational Decision Making Continued

difficult to learn offense becomes very natural and is structured to make sense. I would say the exact same thing regarding naturalistic decision making. Once decision making is mastered it is extremely natural (thus its name) and makes complete sense but to the novice you might as well ask the person to do a triple salchow, it is impossible.

Okay then how do you teach decision making? In my perfect world I would start in elementary school and teach learners what decisions are and have them explore the concepts of options, cause and effect, and consequences. I would reinforce these concepts throughout their elementary school years across the curriculum. Hopefully by the time they reached their early teens they would have a good grasp of decision making and at this point I would introduce them to the rational decision making model as outlined in *The Backcountry Classroom*. I would create an environment similar to competitive athletics; I would introduce the terminology and drill them in the fundamentals. I'd create drills based on these fundamentals; context, what is it, identify the problem to solve, brainstorm options, balance the pros and cons, how would you implement, what does reflection look like, etc.- all the time reinforcing the basic concepts of cause and effect and consequences. I would be providing guided practice for group and individual decision making in a variety of scenarios and gradually more authentic situations.

As learners move into high school I would make their decision making opportunities increasingly more authentic and regularly make them totally authentic. I would also regularly provide opportunities for learners to reflect on decisions made by themselves as well as

the decisions they observe being made by others. The reflection would be both individual (journals) and group (debriefs). By the time these youngsters graduate from high school they will have been practicing rational decision making for six or more years. Some will be ready to explore the naturalistic decision making model but just as most basketball players entering college have a pretty good grasp of the fundamentals, most still aren't ready for the triangle offense. In this case the naturalistic decision making model is as useful to these decision makers as the triangle offensive is to freshman basketball players. Useful to some, but beyond the grasp of most. Still, this would be my perfect world approach to teaching decision making.

There is one catch here that leads me to many questions. There is a growing body of knowledge that demonstrates how as brains develop decision making moves from the amygdala, the more primitive, emotion driven portion of the brain, to the frontal lobes which are more associated with behavioral inhibition. This switch seems to occur in the early twenties and is the reason that young adults have "matured" so much by the time they reach their mid-twenties. What we don't know is the role our culture plays in this. Do the brains in cultures where youngsters are expected to take on more responsibility at an earlier age develop at a faster rate than in our culture where teens are frequently not allowed to make decisions and even more rarely held accountable for them? Are our efforts to teach decision making for naught because we must patiently wait for the brain to mature? Is decision making largely biological, cultural or a combination of the two? Ahh the nature versus nurture argument rears its head once again.

## Experiential Learning in the Tetons

by

Emily Turke and Leigh Ann Fox

Over the summer, ten students participated in a ten day Wilderness Education Association backpacking course set in Wyoming and the Grand Tetons. This field experience course was a supplemental class that would apply all leader-

ship, climbing skills and risk management knowledge that Parks and Recreation Management students learn in the classroom. Experiential learning is a very important element of the PRM curriculum and this course was a great way to apply our knowledge.

Paul Petzoldt once said, “Words mean nothing”. With this in mind we will try to explain our summer adventure in the Tetons. However, in the end the words will mean nothing unless you have been there, experienced the journey and stood face to face with the Grand Teton from an adjacent peak. Spending time in the woods allows you to learn a lot about yourself and the people with you. Personal limits are tested and a greater sense of self is found. We discovered that fry bread is not our favorite food choice, as it gets hard to stomach on the eighth day in the wilderness. The idea of ten days in the wilderness without computers, television, showers, steamed vegetables or grilled steaks sounds like a dream come true. We believe all those who went on the Teton course this summer feel the same way and would do it all over



again in a heart-beat.

The magnificent atmosphere of the Teton Valley was full of clean fresh air, beautiful views and signs of spring peeking through deep snow. We witnessed sunsets that were nothing like the sunsets miles away on the east coast. With

the sun setting in shades of yellow, falling into the calm crispness of the valley, it was apparent that we were in another world.

Throughout our Teton expedition, evidence of Paul Petzoldt’s legacy surrounded us. Petzoldt was one of America’s most accomplished mountaineers. At the age of 16 Petzoldt climbed the Grand Teton in cowboy boots. After realizing how dangerous that mission was he saw a need to develop better mountaineering techniques for future generations. This idea led to the development of the first American school of mountaineering and then the founding of the National Outdoor Leadership School and the Wilderness Education Association.

Petzoldt created a system called the “sliding middleman”. This system uses ice axes, rope and webbing for traversing across mountains in snow. During our expedition, Dr. Maurice Phipps and Todd Murdock taught us the sliding middleman skill. In teams of three, we worked together in order to safely cross the mountainside.

## Experiential Learning in the Tetons Continued

Waking up at 3:45 in the morning sounds unbearable. But with all of us knowing that it was summit day, there was a joyous feeling in the air along with an underlying feeling of uncertainty. Upon waking that morning, we found our tent zippers and boots frozen solid; this seemed to be the coldest morning yet. As we started our ascent, spirits were high. Using the faithful kick step method to climb, we made our way up the steep slope. The anticipation was agonizing, and as a group we reached our goal of summiting Table Mountain. Once we conquered those last few feet,



there was a brief silence followed by comments on the surrounding beauty and the sound of cameras clicking. This was a moment we would remember forever. From looking at the sky earlier that morning we had predicted rain. However the weather held off until we made our descent. As soon as the last person was finished scaling the top, snow began to fall. We quickly roped up into our sliding middleman teams in order to descend safely and escape the weather.

In all our endeavors during the two weeks, teamwork was a prominent aspect. Whether we were cooking, navigating, or climbing,



teamwork was crucial to our success. Having good group dynamics was essential to the welfare of camp morale. Friendships were formed and strengthened along the way. Leadership positions were fulfilled each day by a different student, which ultimately strengthened our voices as leaders. At the end of the course, we all have a better understanding of how to be a leader in the wilderness. This adventure in the Tetons is one that we will all treasure.



## Advancing the Field through Evidence-Based Research

By Patricia Chan

As a current undergraduate student at Gordon College in MA, my first introduction to the outdoor/adventure education field came as a freshman, participating in a 12-day wilderness orientation expedition in the Adirondacks. From this point on, my involvement with the outdoor education field progressed from participant to pursuing the field as a vocation. In retrospect, it is interesting to see the constant growth and revision of my ideas and thoughts on the field. I moved from viewing summer trip-leading as pure fun, to experiencing and seeing aspects of outdoor and adventure education that shaped a strong belief in its uses; leadership and character development, personal growth and group formation.

Now, as a senior graduating in May, I am interning at Project Adventure in Beverly, Massachusetts, which is continuing to broaden my view of the field. Toward the beginning of the semester, I was presented with the opportunity to work on an upcoming symposium on the Research and Evaluation of Adventure Programming (REAP), to be held in March of 2009. Evidence-based research (EBR) was an area I initially knew nothing about. But, through working on the project, I have been able to not only learn more about evidence-based research, but also of its importance to the field of outdoor and adventure education.

In my experience, the true value of outdoor/adventure education is missed by many outside observers. Evidence Based Research is important to the field as a whole and to individual programs because it has the potential to create tangible evidence of the benefits of outdoor and adventure education for those

outside observers, and it brings a scientific approach to the researching outcomes. With the current culture of accountability at state and federal levels, EBR is necessary in legitimizing and professionalizing our work. Many state and federal funding agencies also require evidence that programs are effective for the students they hope to serve. In this sense, EBR is critical in maintaining and sustaining these programs.

Now in its fifth year, the REAP Symposium is a means for sharing information about evidence-based research and practice. In addition to REAP, there have been several presentations at the International Association for Experiential Education conference, Association for Challenge Course Technology and others that have spread the word about EBR.

It is through working with this symposium that my ideas of outdoor and adventure education have continued to change and grow. Not only do I believe in its fundamental values and concepts, but I also recognize the need to increase the visibility of this field in the public eye; to create a better understanding of how and why outdoor and adventure education can be used to teach, impact, and transform.

For more information about the REAP Symposium 2009, visit <http://www.aee.org/re/reap>, or contact the REAP Symposium Coordinator: Alison Rheingold, at [alisonrheingold@gmail.com](mailto:alisonrheingold@gmail.com).



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PRACTICE, RESEARCH & THEORY

The Association of Outdoor Recreation and Education (AORE), the Wilderness Education Association (WEA), and the Western Kentucky University Research Foundation (WKURF) launched the *Journal of Outdoor Recreation, Education, and Leadership* (JOREL) in San Diego, California at the 22nd Annual AORE Conference on Outdoor Recreation and Education.

**Call for Papers:** Manuscripts are now being solicited by the *Journal of Outdoor Recreation, Education, and Leadership* (JOREL).

**Journal Mission:** to improve outdoor recreation, education, and leadership through the publication and dissemination of peer-reviewed manuscripts centered on professional practice, research, and theoretical discussions.

**Aims & Scope:** *The Journal of Outdoor Recreation, Education, and Leadership* seeks quality manuscripts to disseminate the latest knowledge related to outdoor recreation, education, and leadership to help develop theory and practice. The journal seeks quantitative and/or qualitative research findings; conceptual or theoretical discussions; or program practices.

Relevant topic areas (centered on outdoor recreation, outdoor education, or outdoor leadership) for the journal include, but are not limited to: outdoor recreation, adventure recreation, outdoor education, outdoor leadership, pedagogy, administration, programming, risk management, wilderness medicine, certification, participant behavior, trends, diversity, training, and outcomes. Published contributions will address the needs of a wide audience including practitioners, faculty, students, policy makers, and others involved in outdoor recreation, education, and leadership.

**Manuscript Submissions and Review Process:**

Manuscript submissions are encouraged from authors inside and outside of academia to help improve research and practice with a goal of reducing the disparity between the two in the represented disciplines. Manuscript preparation and submission guidelines are found on the journal's "Author Instructions" page located at <http://www.ejorel.com/>. All manuscripts, accepted for review, will undergo a blind peer-review process in which the author and reviewer identities are hidden from each other. The Journal of Outdoor Recreation, Education, and Leadership will notify authors of the review process decision within eight (8) weeks from date of submission.

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