



**American  
Alpine Institute**  
*The Spirit of Alpinism*

[www.alpineinstitute.com](http://www.alpineinstitute.com)

[www.guideschoice.com](http://www.guideschoice.com)

[info@alpineinstitute.com](mailto:info@alpineinstitute.com)

Administrative Office: 360-671-1505

Equipment Shop: 360-671-1570

### **American Alpine Institute Leaders of Tomorrow Itinerary**

The Leaders of Tomorrow program was loosely based on the extremely popular American Alpine Institute [Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Program](#) (AMTL). The *Men's Journal* magazine called that program "the country's most respected and thorough rock and mountaineering course." The difference between this high-end program and the Leaders of Tomorrow program is that the latter program has a specific focus on youth climbing (14-17 years old). Participants on the Leaders of Tomorrow program will be exposed to all of the AMTL material as well as a leadership stewardship project and strategic planning.

The Leaders of Tomorrow program provides a comprehensive introduction to all aspect of alpine mountaineering, general team leadership, and leading rope teams on glaciers.

Students have two options in the program. Some students may wish to participate in the first nine days of the program that emphasize glacier mountaineering and ice climbing. Others may wish to continue on for a full sixteen-days. The focus of the additional days will be on rock climbing and alpine climbing which involves both glacier and rock ascents.

In this program, the Institute guides help students to develop a complete set of alpine climbing skills for rock, snow, and ice, from the basics on up. Students learn route finding and hazard assessment skills as well as self-rescue. Students who sign up for all sixteen days will finish their program with an ascent where they lead – with the oversight of the guides – a classic rock, snow and ice ascent.

In this program, we place as much emphasis on good mountain judgment as we do on the development of technical skills, and throughout this course we helps students observe and analyze climbing routes, terrain features, and hazards so that by the end of the program a student will have developed the ability to lead a small team safely through a rugged and complex environment and rope teams on basic and intermediate alpine routes.

Following is an example course itinerary. In most cases a great deal more will be covered during the day than what is listed here. It is important to understand that given conditions certain topics will receive more coverage than others. For example, early in the season more time will be given to snow stability whereas later in the season more time will be spent on ice technique. This is because early in the season there is more snow, whereas late in the season there is often more exposed ice.

It is extremely important for those who participate in this course to understand that this itinerary is not set in stone. Changes may take place at any time due to weather or summit strategies. If you do not understand why an itinerary change occurred, please ask your guide.

### **Day One**

- Travel to Bellingham, Washington. Alaska Airlines and Allegiant Airlines fly directly to Bellingham. Other airlines fly to Seattle. Students may take a shuttle from Seattle to Bellingham (approximately 3 hours – <http://www.airporter.com/>).
- Meet at AAI at 3pm. If students are dropped off at the airport or a bus station, an AAI staff member will meet them and bring them to the 3pm meeting.
- Complete a gear check and pick up any rentals required at the AAI equipment shop. Rentals are included as part of the program's tuition. However, some students may need to make additional purchases. Please see the equipment list (<http://www.alpineinstitute.com/media/274041/lot-equipment-list.pdf>) for details on what is available for rent and for purchase or call the equipment shop at 360-671-1570.
- Have an initial dinner together at a local Bellingham restaurant. All food and meals out are included in the course tuition.
- Drive to a local front-country campground and spend the night. Students who are new to camping will be given additional instruction on how to set-up for the night.

### **Day Two**

- Drive to Mt. Erie, a rock climbing area near the town of Anacortes.
- Introduction to rock climbing skills. Skills include: selection and use of personal equipment, basic knots and hitches, climbing commands, movement skills, belaying and rappelling.
- In the late afternoon, students will drive to a local store and will do their first expedition food-buy. The team will select food for seven days in the backcountry.
- After shopping, the team will return to the front-country camp. There they will receive their first instruction on the use of camp stoves and will begin to learn the art of backcountry cooking.

### **Day Three**

- The team will finish sorting food and gear for their first backcountry stint. Significant time will be spent on backcountry packing techniques.
- Once all the food and gear is sorted and the packs are packed, the team will drive to the south side of Mount Baker. The trailhead may be found at 3,200 feet.
- The team will hike into Base Camp in approximately five miles. Camp options include a semi-sheltered camp at the last trees at 5,600 feet, Sandy Camp at the end of the Railroad Grade at 6,000 feet or west of the moraines slightly higher.
- Discuss Leave No Trace techniques and how they pertain to human waste.
- Following the hike, the team will set-up camp and will receive further instructions on how to camp in the backcountry.
- If there is still time, participants will learn the following: prusik-hitch, rope-coiling, double-fisherman's knot, overhand-knot, clove-hitch, munter-hitch.

### **Day Four**

- The focus of Day Four is to build a solid understanding of snow, how to walk on it and how to protect oneself on glaciers and steep terrain.
- Snow school techniques to be covered include: snow travel with and without an ice-axe, parts of an ice-axe, self-arrest, glissading, shuffle step, plunge step, diagonal ascent, piolet canne, and piolet manche.
- Snow anchors to be covered include: deadmen, pickets, snow flukes, ice-axes and snow bollards.
- Glaciology discussion will include the following terms: crevasse, bergshrund, moraine, ice fall, serac, compression zone, accumulation zone and ablation zone

- Techniques to create multi-point snow anchors.
- Snow seats and belaying on snow with both a static and a dynamic belay.

#### **Day Five**

- The fifth-day of the program will primarily concern glacier travel and crevasse rescue. Students will spend the full day on the glacier and everyone will have the opportunity to go down inside a crevasse.
- Crevasse rescue studies will include prusiking, a 2:1 Drop C, a 3:1 Z Pully and a 6:1 C on Z.
- Upon return to camp, a map, compass, altimeter and GPS lecture will cover the uses of each of these instruments.

#### **Day Six**

- Introduction to ice climbing technique. Topics to be covered include: French, German and American technique, step cutting, pied a plat, pied en canard, pied assis, piolet ramasse, piolet rampe, piolet panne, piolet poniard, piolet appui, piolet ancre. If there is adequate time, participants may practice piolet traction. Note: The amount of time spent on this curriculum will be determined by snow cover.
- Move camp up to a high camp. Probe for crevasses and set-up camp on the glacier.
- Discuss summit strategies.

#### **Day Seven:**

- On Day Seven the team will climb the Easton Glacier to the summit of the mountain and then descend back to Base Camp
- Once the team is at Base Camp, they will take a long rest. After dinner the guide will introduce the concept of Strategic Planning.

#### **Day Eight:**

- On the morning of Day Eight, the team will go ice climbing for a second time. New ice skills will be introduced, including vertical ice climbing, ice climbing leadership, ice anchors, and overhung “extreme” ice climbing. Students will practice setting up topropes on ice climbs.
- At approximately noon, the team will return to camp, have lunch and then pack up.
- The team will hike out back to the car at the trailhead.
- That evening, the team will go out to dinner at a restaurant.
- Following the restaurant, the team will go to a front-country campground. The campground that will be used will have showers, so students will have the ability to clean up after seven days in the backcountry.

#### **Day Nine:**

- Students who are only participating in the nine-day program will be dropped off at the American Alpine Institute headquarters in Bellingham. A staff member will then bring the student to the airport or the bus station and see that the student is appropriately taken care of before leaving.
- The remainder of the students will participate in a service project at Mt. Erie. They will use ropes to remove scotch broom, an invasive species, from cliff’s and ledges on the mountain. In addition to working on scotch broom removal, the students will build very solid rappel skills.
- Following the service project, the students will drive to the east side of the Cascades where they will camp at a front-country campground near the town of Mazama, Washington.

- Students will do a second food-buy for the following few days.

**Day Ten:**

- Students will have their second rock climbing day at Fun Rock, near Mazama, Washington.
- Students will study the following: top-rope set-ups, traditional gear placement and removal, traditional rock anchors, introduction to basic sport leadership, and rock climbing movement skills.
- Additionally, students will practice a baseline rock rescue skill. Students usually study either a knot pass or a belay escape.

**Days Eleven through Thirteen:**

- The following two days will be reserved for one-day alpine ascents in Washington Pass, about 20 miles from Mazama. Each of the routes takes between 8 and 12 hours car-to-car. The students will select the specific routes based on their interests.
  1. South Arete of South Early Winter Spire
  2. North Face of Kangaroo Temple
  3. Becky Route on Liberty Bell
  4. Prime Rib of Goat Wall
- Students will continue to car camp at a front-country campground during this section of the program.

**Days Fourteen and Fifteen:**

- Days fourteen and fifteen are reserved for a student-led ascent.
- On the morning of day thirteen, the students will do their final food-buy. They will pack for an overnight program and then drive to the trailhead in the AAI van.
- Most ascents will go to one of the following destinations:
  1. Sulphide Glacier of Mount Shuksan
  2. Silver Star Glacier of Silver Star Mountain
  3. East Ridge of Eldorado Peak
  4. Quien Sabe Glacier of Sahale Peak
- On the night of day fifteen, the team will go out to dinner and then drive to a front-country campground with access to showers for their final night.

**Day Sixteen:**

- After breakfast, the team will return to the AAI headquarters in Bellingham, Washington. From there students will say their goodbyes and will be dropped off by a staff member or guide at the bus station or at the airport.

*Depending on time and conditions additional course lectures may include the following:*

- Mountain First Aid
- Mountain Weather
- Avalanche Awareness
- In depth discussion of Leave No Trace principals
- Rock Rescue Techniques