



Alpine Institute

Leaders of Tomorrow Itinerary

Program Details

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

Students have 2 options in the program. Some students may wish to participate in the first 6 days of the program that emphasizes rock climbing and frontcountry camping. Others may wish to continue for a full 13 days to develop backpacking, mountaineering, and glacier travel skills.

During the full program, our guides help students develop a complete set of alpine climbing skills for rock, snow, and ice, from the basics up. Students learn route-finding and hazard assessment skills as well as self-rescue.

In this program, we place as much emphasis on good mountain judgment as we do on the development of technical skills. Throughout this course, we help 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.

Difficulty Grade

Beginner to Moderate

Prerequisites

- All students must be between the ages of 15 and 17 at the time of the program and must possess a high level of maturity.
- Basic hiking experience.
- Overnight backpacking experience is preferred but not required.

Inclusions and Exclusions

Inclusions: Climbing and camping permits; Camping (lodging) for every day of the program; Food (backcountry, frontcountry, and restaurant food); Travel during the program; All program rentals; Transportation from the Bellingham airport or bus station in Bellingham to AAI's headquarter; All group equipment.

Exclusions: Airfare; Personal equipment; Personal travel insurance; Guide gratuities.

Itinerary

Day 1

- Travel to Bellingham, Washington. Alaska Airlines and Allegiant Airlines fly directly to Bellingham.
- **Meet at AAI at 3 pm. If students are dropped off at the Bellingham 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 for details on what is available for rent and 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.

Skills to be Covered: Meet and greet the other students and get the lay of the land for the program. An introduction to gear used in the program.

Lodging: Frontcountry campground with access to the van.

Day 2

- 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 the remainder of Part I.
- After shopping, the team will return to the front- a camp. There they will receive their first instruction on the use of camp stoves and will begin to learn the art of backcountry cooking.

Skills to be Covered: Introduction to rock climbing skills. Skills include selection and use of personal equipment, basic knots and hitches, climbing commands, movement skills, belaying and rappelling.

Lodging: Frontcountry campground with access to the van.

Day 3

- The team will once again travel from the campground to the crag.

Skills to be Covered: Review knots from the previous day and then continue the development of their knowledge of knots by learning the figure-eight on-a-bite, the munter-hitch, the overhand, the water-knot, the barrel knot and the autoblock hitch. Introduction to climbing guidebooks and route topos. Learn how to place and remove both passive and active rock protection. Introduction to cooking at camp.

Lodging: Frontcountry campground with access to the van.

Day 4

- Once again return to Mt. Erie.

Skills to be Covered: Review knots from the previous days and then continue the development of their knowledge of knots with the double-bowline, the double-fisherman's knot, the mule-hitch, the klemmhiest, and the prussik-hitch. Continue the development of movement skills for intermediate rock climbs.

Lodging: Frontcountry campground with access to the van.

Day 5

- The team will make their way to Mt. Erie one last time for a final day of rock climbing in Part I. At the end of the day, the team will transition to a different campground closer to Bellingham.
- The team will have a celebratory dinner in Bellingham to say goodbye to those who are only on Part I.

Skills to be Covered: Review the previous days' knots and hitches.

Use traditional climbing gear to set up a top-rope anchor. Learn how to use a static rope or webbing to set up a multipart top-rope anchor. Practice the rappel techniques that have been developed over the preceding days.

Lodging: Frontcountry campground with access to the van.

Day 6

- **Students who are only participating in Part I will be dropped off at the American Alpine Institute headquarters in Bellingham, the Bellingham Airport, or at the bus station at noon.**

This is the conclusion of the Rock Camp portion of Leaders of Tomorrow

Day 6 (Continued)

- Prep day for the next section of the trip.
- A new guide will join the program to assist.
- The team will sort food and gear for their first backcountry stint. Significant time will be spent on backcountry packing techniques.
- Once all the food and gear are sorted and the packs are packed, the team will drive to Mt. Baker. We will determine which side of the mountain is best given current conditions.

Skills to be Covered: Packing for the backcountry. Prepping for the hike into the mountain.

Lodging: Front-country campground

Day 7

- Pack up and drive to the trailhead.
- The team will hike into Base Camp, which will range from 3 miles to 5 miles depending on camp location and the day's objective.

Skills to be Covered: Packing for the backcountry.

Lodging: Backcountry campground.

Day 8

- Build a solid understanding of snow, how to walk on it, and how to protect oneself on glaciers and steep terrain.

Skills to be Covered: 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, bergshroud, moraine, ice fall, serac, compression zone, accumulation zone and ablation zone

Lodging: Backcountry campground

Day 9

- The eighth 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.

Skills to be Covered: *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.*

Lodging: Backcountry campground

Day 10

- Introduction to ice climbing technique.
- The team may choose to move camp up to a high camp depending on summit strategies.

Skills to be Covered: 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.

Lodging: Backcountry campground

Day 11

- On Day Ten the team will climb to the summit of Mt. Baker 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.

Skills to be Covered: This will wrap all of the skills learned to this point together.

Lodging: Backcountry campground

Day 12

- On the morning of Day Eleven, the team will go ice climbing for a second time.
- 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.

Skills to be Covered: 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.

Lodging: Frontcountry campground with access to the van

Day 13

- **The program finishes at the American Alpine Institute at noon on Day 13. Students will be dropped off at the Bellingham airport or at the bus station at that time.**

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 principles