



## **Vocational Training for Outdoor Professionals**



### **Course Catalog**

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**American Alpine Institute, Ltd.**

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**American Alpine Institute**  
**Vocational Training for Outdoor Professionals**  
**Course Catalog**

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*Accreditation:* The American Mountain Guides Association has accredited the American Alpine Institute since the inception of the AMGA accreditation program in 1987.

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Selected programs of study at the American Alpine Institute are approved by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board's State Approving Agency (WTECB/SAA) for enrollment of those eligible to receive benefits under Title 38 and Title 10, USC.

The American Alpine Institute does not and will not provide any commission, bonus or other incentive based directly or indirectly on success in securing enrollment or financial aid to any persons or entities engaged in student recruiting or admission activities or in making decisions regarding award of student financial assistance.

All training locations for VA education benefits recipients will be wholly in Washington State.

## **Introduction to Outdoor Professions**

Imagine a situation where you get to live and work in the mountains. Imagine a situation where your desk is a belay station, where instead of writing reports and punching a time clock, you work with ice tools, skis and ropes. Imagine a situation where work travel doesn't mean non-descript hotel rooms in non-descript cities, but instead means travel to mythic places like the Alaska Range, the Rocky Mountains, the Andes...

Imagine the life of an outdoor professional. This can be a professional mountain guide, an outdoor educator, a ski patroller, a mountain rescue technician...the list goes on.

Now, imagine the reality. Working in the mountains is hard and the unpredictability of nature can be taxing. Backpacks are heavy. It's not always sunny out and the people you are surrounded by for long periods of time are not always pleasant. You may spend a lot of time away from home on multi-day trips or rescue operations; and until you establish yourself as an outdoor professional, the winter work season may be sparse. Beginning level outdoor professionals don't receive great compensation for the work that they do. And some people get tired of climbing the same routes over and over again...

But on the other hand, if you love being outside, if you love being in the mountains, if you love getting to know people from all walks of life, if you love teaching, if you relish your students' excitement as they enjoy new experiences in the mountains, if you love working with a team, then perhaps this is a career for you.

Over the last twenty-years, working as an outdoor professional in North America and the world has grown from a fringe-type job into a real profession. To obtain employment in the outdoor realm, one must have a number of baseline skills. To make a profession out of it, one must have a high level of training, skill and keep up-to-date with certifications.

It's not the easiest profession to break into. And indeed, it is not the easiest profession in which to find year-round employment. However, with perseverance, skill and a willingness to train hard, anybody can become an outdoor professional and indeed, anybody can make a decent living working in the mountains and in the outdoors.

### **Employment**

The jobs of outdoor professionals are extremely diverse. What career path you decide on depends on many different aspects such as your previous experience and training, the terrain you'd like to work in, the different age groups you'd like to work with, the intensity of the job, the travel requirements of the job, etc. Many outdoor professions require training certifications to be current and training programs to be taken as continuing education. Below we outline some of the employment options people have as outdoor professionals.

### **Mountain Guide**

Some people may focus solely on the job of mountain guiding. In other words, they take people up a mountain route and then back down again, whereas others may focus on rock, ski, or expedition style guiding. It is not uncommon for a guide to focus on an area of strength and then to primarily guide in that area of strength, but some will develop their skills so that they may guide in every medium.

The more diverse one's skills are, the more guide and instructor employment opportunities there are. It is not at all uncommon for a guide to work in the Cascades or the Sierra in the summer and then to work on rock in the Desert Southwest in the winter. It is also not uncommon for one to stay in a mountainous range year-round and then to teach avalanche courses, to run ice trips or to ski guide in the winter. Others will spend their year globe hopping, working in South America, Antarctica or in Nepal.

Wages for traditional guide work vary dramatically. Most guides in the United States are paid on a per diem basis (by the day), and most will make between \$120 and \$300 a day. However, those who work for themselves may be able to make more.

The highest paying annual guide opportunity in the United States is on Denali, the tallest mountain in North America. Guides who work on Denali usually start out making approximately \$2,500 per trip, but can easily work their way up to approximately \$10,000 per trip.

Guides who have completed the highest level of certification through the American Mountain Guides Association (IFMGA Certification) have the opportunity to work in Europe. Guide wages in the Alps are significantly higher than wages in the United States. Most guides make in excess of \$500 a day. However, it is an expensive place to live and there are a lot of regulations on foreign guides.

### Instructor

Like guiding, there are many different types of instructing options for outdoor professionals. There are backpacking instructors who teach students how to pack a backpack correctly, how to set up a campsite, and how to prepare for a one night or multi-night trip. At the other end of the spectrum, there are multi-day expedition style instructors who teach students how to plan, prepare and execute a very technical mountain objective. And there are many options in between those two examples. Outdoor professional instructors are very similar to guides in that the more diverse one's skills are, the more instructor employment opportunities there are.

For example, you could be a rock climbing and mountaineering instructor in the summer in the Cascades and then in the winter months instruct avalanche safety courses or instruct ice climbing courses. With the proper training and prerequisites, instructors can also teach Wilderness First Responder courses or Leave No Trace Training courses.

In many cases, being a guide and being an instructor are seen as synonymous professions.

The preceding are all considered traditional options for the outdoor professional. However, there are a handful of options that are both "outside-the-box" and are perhaps even more common than the traditional options. Following is a breakdown of these different options for outdoor professionals:

### University Programs

There are two types of university programs. The first are University Outdoor Pursuits Programs. And the second are University Outdoor Recreation Programs.

Outdoor Pursuit programs are usually student funded on-campus organizations that develop outdoor adventure programs for students. Some of the programs they develop are climbing and skiing related, but many others may relate to backpacking, kayaking, or river rafting. Most outdoor pursuits programs have a non-student employee who has well-rounded outdoor skills, training and certifications overseeing a staff of student instructors and guides.

University Outdoor Recreation programs are degree programs in outdoor education. Professors tend to have master's degrees or PhDs in outdoor education or in experiential learning. As all students in these programs are exposed to climbing, highly trained, skilled and certified professors are in high demand.

The advantage to working for a university program – either in pursuits or in recreation – is that these tend to be stable jobs with benefits. They often also provide one the opportunity to take time off to participate in traditional mountain guiding activities during school breaks.

Salaries for those who run outdoor pursuits programs range from \$30,000 to \$55,000 a year, where professors in outdoor recreation programs can expect to make between \$35,000 and \$70,000 a year.

### Military Recreation Programs

Military recreation programs are quite similar to University Outdoor Pursuits programs. The main difference is that these programs exist to provide recreation opportunities for military personnel as well as their families on and around military bases.

Civilian employees with a wide array of outdoor training, skills and certificates commonly run military recreation programs. These programs generally provide year-round employment and benefits.

Salaries for Military Recreation program personnel are on the NF pay scale. NF stands for non-appropriated funds. These salaries vary dramatically. Those at the very bottom of the scale make approximately \$33,000 a year. However, those at the very top can make up to \$191,000 a year.

### Private School Recreation Programs

Private schools run the gamut from small, underfunded parochial schools, to large well-funded boarding schools. Employment can include anything from extreme part-time work, to full-time, year-round employment.

The needs at these schools are as variable as the employment. Some schools may be looking for an individual who can develop a variety of outdoor programs, whereas others may be looking specifically for a climbing, mountaineering or ski program coordinator. Some may want to bring someone in to run a single trip, whereas others may want someone to come in full-time.

As there is no standard model for these programs, it would be difficult to pinpoint a salary. But it would be reasonable to assume that an inner-city parochial school will not be able to pay anywhere near what a high-end college prep school might be able to pay. Full-time instructors at parochial schools make between \$40,000 and \$65,000 a year. A full-time instructor at an independent college prep school averages between \$50,000 and \$90,000 a year. A small parochial school that wants to get their kids outside for a day may pay \$100 for an instructor to oversee twenty students. Whereas a prep school might pay \$1,000 for the exact same thing...

Employment in the private school sector will require a lot of self-reliance and all of your negotiating abilities as well as your training and certificates.

### Wilderness Therapy

The following definition from an article by Michael Conner published at Princeton Online provides one of the best definitions of wilderness therapy:

Wilderness therapy is an experiential program that takes place in a wilderness or remote outdoor setting. Programs provide counseling, therapy, education, leadership training and primitive living challenges that foster community and group interdependence as well as individual honesty, awareness, openness, responsibility and accountability.

Sometimes referred to as “hoods-in-the-woods” programs, wilderness therapy is used to help teenagers and adults with significant behavior problems to overcome negative attitudes through adventure and reconnect with their families and community in a positive way.

Many wilderness therapy programs employ individuals who are highly trained and certified and who can effectively run mountaineering, skiing, rock climbing or ice climbing programs. Those who work in wilderness therapy must be exceedingly patient and must be willing to put up with some level of abuse from the participants.

Wilderness therapy programs tend to pay instructors by the day, much like traditional guide work. Most instructors make between \$150 and \$200 a day. Food and lodging while in the field are commonly included.

### Youth Camp Programs and Youth Adventure Programs

Boy Scout camp, Girl Scout camp, YMCA, religious camp, academic camp, band camp, day camp, overnight camp, multi-day and multi-location adventure programs, the sky's the limit...most camp programs have an adventure contingent and many employ a climbing specific instructor or outdoor educator. Most adventure programs have two or three co-instructors for a group of teenagers or adolescents and the instructors take the group on multi-adventure experiences throughout the country or the world. The camp staff and instructors are required to have experience in many different types of terrain and at least a current Wilderness First Responder certificate.

The downside is that most of these programs only run during the summer months and instructor pay can be low. The upside is that these places are a great place to get your feet wet and to begin to build your professional instructor resume.

Summer camp salaries as well as adventure program salaries are commonly lump sum. Most instructors will make between \$2,000 and \$4,000 for the summer season depending on certifications and experiences. Food and lodging are commonly included.

### Not-For-Profit Outdoor Programs

The two most popular not-for-profit outdoor programs are Outward Bound and the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS). The mission of these two schools, and most of those that are like them, is to provide participants with a robust and well-rounded outdoor education.

There are a number of other outdoor not-for-profits that focus on the use of outdoor adventure education to accomplish a different goal. Some focus on religious studies, whereas others focus on the development of community.

Salaries for these types of programs tend to be built on the traditional guide and instructor day model. Most not-pro-profit outdoor programs require their employees to have extensive training in different mediums as well as current certifications. Most not-for-profit guides make between \$100 and \$250 a day. Food and lodging while in the field are commonly included.

The daily wage may seem low; however, some programs provide an opportunity to work in a year-round environment with some field-time and some supplemental office work. Those who commit to such programs for the long haul often see their wages continue to rise. Many people support their families and make their careers at not-for-profit outdoor programs.

### National Park Institutes

Many national parks have non-profit organizations that are located within them. These field institutes tend to approach each park's unique resources from an educational perspective. Following is a quote from the NPS website on their institutes and field schools:

National Park institutes and field schools share one key characteristic: they all provide in-depth education for small groups in natural and historic settings. Instructors draw upon their expertise as professional scientists, authors, historians, artists, and adventurers to unravel the intricacies of our national parks. Courses range from one-day field seminars to multi-day backcountry experiences.

Many institutes have a field contingent to their programs. Some of these have climbing related programs that will require experience, training and certifications like the Single Pitch Instructor course.

Guides are generally paid between \$150 and \$200 per day. Food and lodging are often provided, but not always.

### Rock Climbing Gym Outdoor Programs

Many rock climbing gyms have small outdoor climbing programs. Generally, gym employees work these programs. Some gyms pay an hourly rate of \$13-\$30 an hour, whereas others pay a daily guide rate of anywhere from \$100-\$200 a day. These require a Single Pitch Instructor course completion certification and those that take participants outside must have a Wilderness First Responder certification.

### Climbing/Backcountry Ranger

National Parks, National Forests, BLM Lands, and even some State Parks all have backcountry rangers. Some places, like Yosemite, Joshua Tree, Mount Rainier and Denali, have a climbing specific ranger staff. Most of these jobs are seasonal, but a handful of them are year-round.

Obviously, these jobs do not involve directly guiding people or direct involvement in instruction. Most of the work that these individuals do revolves around educating the climbing and backcountry communities. Some of these jobs also include elements of search and rescue.

There are a number of different agencies and each one pays somewhat differently. However, most backcountry rangers will make between \$34,000 and \$50,000 a year. As these tend to be government jobs, the benefits for year-round employees are quite good.

### Professional Search and Rescue

Volunteers do the vast majority of the search and rescue (SAR) in the United States. Some police departments have professional search and rescue personnel. Most of those who work in these specialized units are former members of police SWAT teams. Professional SAR teams are common in places where large cities sit up against wilderness.

Some professional SAR programs have an advisor that comes from the guide world. Indeed, there are a few companies that focus specifically on teaching high-angle and mountain rescue techniques to police and fire personnel.

Yosemite Search and Rescue is one of the few professional SAR programs that hires highly trained and skilled climbers over those with a police or SWAT background. Most of the YOSAR employees are well versed in big wall and aid climbing as well as in mountain rescue techniques. As the YOSAR staff is small, it is extremely prestigious to be selected to be on their crew.

Working as a SAR professional for a police department requires a handful of years working as a police officer before becoming a SAR professional. As a result, most of these individuals make approximately \$60,000 a year.



Those who consult for police departments or for volunteer SAR programs make a variety of different rates and one's ability to negotiate is paramount.

Those who teach SAR and high angle rescue courses tend to be paid just like traditional guides on a daily basis, with pay averaging between \$170 and \$350 a day. Some programs provide a food and lodging stipend while instructors are in the field.

YOSAR provides free housing to its employees and significant discounts on local food. Members are only paid when they are in training or are actively working on a mission. Pay averages between \$23 and \$34 an hour.

### Outdoor Administration

As the outdoor industry grows, more and more companies are hiring administrative employees that have previous outdoor experience, training and certifications. Like in most industries, it is attractive to employers that prospective employees have previous experience in what their company provides. Many outdoor professionals start their careers in office administrative work since they have first-hand knowledge, background and real-life experiences to provide customers, students and clients with a clear understanding of what the company offers.

Every outdoor company is different in regards to what they find as valuable assets for their employees to have. But one thing all outdoor companies have in common is that they want to see their employees enjoy time in the outdoors and that their employees have a desire to grow their knowledge and experience in the outdoors. The programs below offer these types of trainings.

Outdoor administration positions usually run year-round and pay averages between \$25,000 to \$45,000.

### Other Options

Many people work a traditional guide job throughout the summer season and then supplement that work with one of the many options listed above. Some may also include teaching Wilderness First Responder first aid classes or work as a ski patrol which requires avalanche safety and skiing at an advanced level. Some people may choose to be mountain rescue technicians. Others supplement their income by teaching school, writing outdoor related articles, or selling photographs from their trips. And some even develop sponsorship deals with gear and equipment manufacturers.

## **About the American Alpine Institute**

### *Mission:*

*To provide world-class mountain education, exceptional guided experiences, and to inspire natural preservation.*

*Climbing, mountaineering and skiing provide us with something special. These activities take us to wild places and allow us to test ourselves against both nature and our own abilities. They provide us with a journey to a summit where friendship, challenge and skill intermingle to create personal growth. And they also give us insight into the value of wild places and mountain cultures throughout the world. They allow us a reason to become stewards and preservationists. The experiences that come from these activities can make people better...*

*The American Alpine Institute strives to provide students with the skills they need to independently access the mountains, to employ the most modern travel and climbing techniques, to understand the hazards associated with mountain travel, to develop the most progressive self-rescue skills available, to accept the serious responsibility of mountain partnerships, to understand mountain environments and the threats to them, and to develop preservationist attitudes, so that the mountains are there for generations to come. We strive for this because we believe that the mountains and the activities that we engage in within them allow people to grow, both in the way that they view themselves, as well as in the way that they view the world...*

The American Alpine Institute was founded in 1975, and since then has held a singular focus on the mountain education of climbers, mountaineers, backcountry skiers, mountain rescue personnel, outdoor educators and guides. Throughout the time that the company has been in existence, the Institute has fashioned itself as first, a climbing school; second, as a guide service; and third as an advocate for land stewardship and preservation.

Most guide services have developed a model that insulates their guests from the reality of the mountains. They are in the business of creating return guests dependent on them to access their adventures. The Institute is in the business of developing independent self-sufficient and environmentally savvy climbers that will eventually graduate from the need of a guide.

The climbing school has two major areas of focus. First, students are provided opportunities to practice every aspect of the discipline they are studying. And second, they are educated in stewardship and preservation. As such, every program attempts to provide students with opportunities to:

- plan tours and/or climbs, including appropriate food and equipment.
- develop personal navigation skills with an emphasis on the skills needed for the area where a course was taken.
- develop hard technical climbing and/or skiing skills.
- develop good judgment of terrain and objective hazards.
- advance climbing and/or skiing movements skills through coaching from instructors.
- develop self-rescue skills.
- advance the skills required for efficiency of movement.
- Integrate specific technical climbing skills with general goals and objectives to facilitate efficient, secure, and self-dependent climbing and/or skiing.
- develop an understanding of the geology and history of an area.
- develop an understanding of alpine ecology.
- practice Leave No Trace techniques in travel, camping, climbing and skiing.

- develop an understanding and acceptance of climbing and mountaineering ethics.

When we guide people in mountainous environments, we still employ many of the teaching elements enumerated above. All of our guides are instructors first, so even when people are engaged in guided ascents, they continue to develop mountain knowledge, skills and preservationist attitudes.

Finally, the staff at the Institute is deeply concerned about threats to wild places. These include both existential threats like anthropogenic climate change or massive housing developments near climbing areas, as well as more manageable threats like trail-braiding or human waste in the backcountry. The staff at the Institute has been involved in many different efforts to advocate for wilderness, mountain culture and preservation over the years. And we plan to continue to engage in these efforts for the foreseeable future.

The Institute is a patron or supporting member of the following organizations:

Conservation Alliance

A consortium of 70 predominantly outdoor equipment manufacturers who provide grants to grassroots environmental groups.

High Country News

The Research Fund arm of HCN allows writers to delve more deeply into environmental issues in the West.

Leave No Trace

This organization teaches backcountry ethics to all user groups. They publish the widely used and highly regarded Leave No Trace booklets.

National Audubon Society

Promotes the study and conservation of birds and other wildlife, their habitat, and the environment, as well as teaching, and advocating for environmental policy.

The Nature Conservancy

Nationally recognized habitat conservation group.

The North Cascades Institute

The Northwest's premier environmental education organization focusing on natural and cultural history.

Oregon Natural Resources Council

Conservation consortium promoting environmental protection by educating the public and influencing public servants via legal and legislative process.

People for Puget Sound

Educates and involves people in protecting and restoring the lands and waters of Puget Sound

Washington Wildlife and Recreation Council

Dedicated to outdoor recreation opportunities, wildlife habitat, and natural areas in Washington.

Whatcom Land Trust

Preserves and protects wildlife habitat, scenic, & agricultural land, and open space in Whatcom County for future generations.

Southern Nevada Climbers Coalition

Preserves and protects the climbing resources in the greater Las Vegas area, with a focus on protecting the world-famous climbing found in Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area.

#### Washington Climbers Coalition

The mission of the WCC is threefold. First, to get climbers involved in discussion of issues related to climbing area management and access. Second, to encourage active involvement in coordinated efforts to take care of Washington crags. And third, to maintain good relations with other recreational users and land managers or owners.

#### Northwest Avalanche Center

The Northwest Weather and Avalanche Center (NWAC) promotes safety by helping reduce the impacts of avalanches and adverse mountain weather on recreation, industry and transportation in Washington, and northern Oregon through data collection, mountain weather, avalanche forecasting and education.

#### Bellingham Mountain Rescue Council

The BMRC is a volunteer organization dedicated to saving lives through rescue and mountain safety education based in the North Cascades.

## **American Alpine Institute Administrative Staff**

The Institute staff is composed of some of the world's most accomplished climbers, skiers, and mountain educators. Together they have climbing, research, and expeditionary experience in every major range of the world and have one or more degrees in areas related to the physical or cultural aspects of the domestic and foreign environments in which they guide. Most commonly their academic backgrounds are in biology, ecology, geology, and outdoor education, but others hold degrees in park and forest management, medicine, geography, meteorology, writing, languages, and engineering.

In addition to extensive and very diverse personal climbing experience, they have received professional training in advanced guiding techniques and rescue. Collectively they have one of the highest levels of wilderness first aid training among the world's international guide services. All have been certified as Wilderness First Responders, Emergency Medical Technicians, or the equivalent.

### **Jason Martin, Executive Director, Instructor, and Guide**

Jason oversees the day-to-day operations at AAI. He joined the Institute as a guide in the year 2000 and moved into an administrative position in 2008. He took over as director of the organization in 2019. In addition to his work at AAI, Jason serves on the Mt. Erie Climbing Committee for the city of Anacortes, participates in the annual Association for Outdoor Recreation and Education (AORE) conference and volunteers for the Bellingham Mountain Rescue Council. He was also on the Board of Directors for the American Mountain Guides Association for 6 years. He serves as the technical director for the annual Red Rock Rendezvous climbing festival and previously served on the Board of Directors for the Las Vegas Climbers Liaison Council. Jason has guided in Red Rock Canyon, Joshua Tree National Park, the Cascades, the Sierra, the Alaska Range, in Canada's Coast Range and in the Andes of Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru. Jason is a playwright, film critic and outdoor adventure writer. He co-authored 'Washington Ice: A Climbing Guide' and 'Rock Climbing: The AMGA Single Pitch Manual,' and authored 'Fun Climbs Red Rocks: Topropes and Moderates' and Best Climbs: Red Rocks.' AMGA Certified Rock and Alpine Guide, Rope Rescue Technician, and International Technical Rescue Association Level 3 Rope Instructor.

### **Michael Powers, Assistant Director for Staff Development**

Michael oversees the hiring, training, and continuing education of climbing and ski guides at the Institute and also greatly enjoys his work as an instructor and guide. Among his other assignments, he looks forward to leading AAI's trips in the French and Swiss Alps each summer. He has led programs in the Cascades, Ouray, Joshua Tree, Red Rock, Alaska, Canada, Ecuador, Chile, Argentina, France, and Switzerland. He is an IFMGA certified guide and has completed numerous rock and ice routes at a high standard in France, Switzerland, New Zealand, Nepal, Alaska, and the western U.S. He has also served as chairman of the AMGA Technical Committee and director of America's national guide certification program. Speaks French & Spanish.

### **James Pierson, Director of Operations and Guide**

James works with climbers on trip selection and preparation for our Cascade Programs. Although he was born in Kansas, he was bit by the Mountain Bug when he went to high school just south of Jackson Hole, WY. After college and working in Colorado as a snowboarding instructor, he moved to the Olympia area, joined the Mountaineers and started climbing. Since then he has climbed throughout Washington and Oregon, as well as ice climbing trips to Colorado, Montana and British Columbia. James also enjoys skiing in the winter, kiteboarding in the summer and speaks a little German on the side.

### **Lacey Scottum, Pacific Northwest Programs Coordinator**

Lacey has been drawn to the outdoors since she was little. She loves trail running, rock climbing, mountaineering, splitboarding, backpacking, and kayaking. In 2019, Lacey was the recipient of the Trail Sisters Adventure Grant. She attempted the FKT of the Superior Hiking Trail, a 310-mi trail in northern MN. Her endeavor got cut short due to a good ole stress fracture, but it was an amazing life

experience nonetheless. In 2020, Lacey and her family moved to Washington just to be closer to the mountains, their veritable playground. There isn't a day off that they aren't having some adventure in the wilderness. She loves being a part of AAI and being able to use her passion for the outdoors to help others achieve their adventure goals.

**Arran Walton, Satellite Programs Coordinator**

Arran manages our programs in the Desert Southwest, Sierra Nevada, Colorado, South America, and at our mountain center in Bellingham. Originally from North Carolina, he was introduced to climbing in the Appalachian mountains and at crags along the east coast. After a few seasons of exploring the western states, he landed in Washington where he can be usually found exploring granite in the Cascades and British Columbia. Arran holds a degree in Business Administration and Studio Art.

**Tom Kirby, Assistant Director for IT and Marketing**

Guides in the Cascades and Alaska. Tom has been climbing rock since 1980, first on crags in Virginia and New Hampshire, then eventually all over the western U.S., including the Colorado Rockies, the Tetons, and the Cascades. Along the way, he added ice climbing and backcountry skiing to his repertoire. He has worked as a software developer, a teacher, and a timber framer. He holds a BA in English, the only language he speaks fluently - though he speaks some Spanish as well. Tom is an AMGA Certified Single Pitch Instructor.

**Mike Madsen, Assistant Shop Manager**

Mike grew up on the flat plains of South Dakota. After a 2011 Himalayan Mountaineering course by NOLS Mike was hooked! He attended Black Hills State University majoring in mass communications. Mike says, "I was raised in the farmlands of South Dakota and braised in the rains of the Cascade Mountains of Washington. He is a member and still active in The American Alpine Club, Trout Unlimited, Access Fund and Black Hills Climbers Coalition. When not climbing Mike enjoys spending time with family, fishing, coffee, food, and mountaineering literature.

**Erin-Leigh Hardy, Vocational School Manager, Permitting Manager, and Guide**

Erin-Leigh works with students looking to use their VA education benefits to gain specific vocational training with the American Alpine Institute. She has guided in New Hampshire and Washington and is a Leave No Trace Level 2 Instructor Provider.

She is the School Certifying Official and works with the Washington State Workforce Board as well as the VA to ensure the vocational courses are compliant with both entities.

Phone contact is 360-671-1505 and email is [erin-leigh@alpineinstitute.com](mailto:erin-leigh@alpineinstitute.com).

## **American Alpine Institute Field Staff**

### **Michael Abby, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington, Alaska, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming. Extensive rock and alpine climbing throughout the world including Grade V first ascents, 5.13 sport, and trad on-sights up to Grade V 5.12b. Successfully guided climbs and mountains such as the West Buttress of Denali, Mt. Rainier, Mont Blanc du Tacul, East Buttress of El Capitan, Direct South Buttress of Mt. Moran, Complete Exum Ridge, North Ridge and North Face of the Grand Teton, the Vampire, North Face of Granite Peak, and East Buttress of Mt. Whitney. Guided ice climbs to WI 6. Alpine ascents of the Harvard Route on Mount Huntington in Alaska; Les Dru, the North Face of Les Droites (ED2), and the Direct Supercouloir (ED2) of Mont Blanc in Chamonix, France. Numerous Teton ascents including the Grand Traverse in 14 hours, and the Complete South Buttress of Mt Moran in 16. Former Force Recon Marine. Current instructor for US Special Operations personnel. Alpine and Backcountry ski and avalanche instructor. Steep ski descents in the Alps and Teton, including the Grand Teton in a day. Is an instructor for the AMGA certification courses.

### **Joel Anderson, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington, Nevada and Canada. Joel grew up in central Idaho, where he learned to love and appreciate the outdoors while spending his first summers in a fire lookout tower. Now, he spends most of his summers working with helicopters as a wildland firefighter for the Forest Service. Joel gained a passion for teaching by working as a ski and snowboard instructor for 15 years. At the age of 23, climbing entered his life and he quickly became passionate about all aspects, including rock, ice, and alpine climbing. Joel began guiding while working for a gap year academy where he took young adults backcountry skiing and climbing.

### **Isaac Bernstein, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington, Colorado, Nevada and Canada. Isaac has spent much of his late teen years and early adulthood exploring the mountains of the United States. Isaac went to school in Johnson, Vermont and studied Outdoor Education and Wilderness Leadership. During the last few years of college he began his journey in the guiding/instructing world. Isaac has spent time living, climbing and guiding in Colorado, Utah, California, Wyoming, Idaho and Washington as well as his home base regions in the North East - the White Mountains, the Green Mountains and the Adirondacks. Isaac is most passionate about sharing the mountain environment with his guests, not only to guide them but to teach them as well. His passion for teaching and for the mountains pair together perfectly for the profession of mountain guiding.

### **Noah Besen, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington, Nevada and California. Noah grew up in Massachusetts and learned his love of the outdoors and all things wild on the icy mountains of New Hampshire. His first passion was ski racing, but that blossomed into rock climbing, backcountry skiing, and mountaineering. After he moved west Noah got his start rock guiding in Squamish B.C. and now travels the world looking for new and wild walls to climb. He also loves to share his knowledge and passion for all things climbing, empowering people to have new and life changing experiences.

### **George Bieker, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington, Nevada, Colorado, Alaska, Arkansas, Canada and Africa. George was born and raised down south in Fayetteville, Arkansas. He has been guiding since 2010 and climbing since 2008. He holds a Masters in Higher Education and a Bachelors in Outdoor Recreation. Passions include; climbing, teaching, cosmology, writing, and health & wellness.

### **Jason Camacho, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington, Nevada and Canada. Before starting his career as a guide, Jason served in 1st Ranger Battalion and earned a BS in Petroleum Engineering. After completing his military service and graduating from college, he and his wife spent three years climbing and skiing full-time together in the Cascades, the Tetons, the Sierras, and in Chamonix. When he's not in the mountains; he likes Dungeons and Dragons, Nintendo, and reading authors like Cormac McCarthy, Alan Watts, and Phillip K. Dick.

#### **Emily Cavanagh, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington and Canada. Emily has worked in outdoor education since 2015 and has a deep appreciation for the transformative power of wild places. She works predominantly in snow covered, alpine or glaciated environments, whether in boots, snowshoes or on skis. She is passionate about the empowering potential of expeditions, as folks gain competence and confidence through skill building and hands on experience with risk assessment and decision making, and are therefore more equipped to handle a variety of challenges in everyday life. Emily is originally from New York state but has been a nomad since graduating from Vermont's Middlebury College as a 'Feb' in early 2015. Some of her favorite life highlights include bike touring the length of New Zealand, instructing a 30 day course on the Chilean Patagonia Northern Ice Field and milking goats for a season in Taos, New Mexico.

#### **Thomas Chapman, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington, Colorado and Canada. Hailing from the flatlands of Florida, Thomas started his climbing career on southeastern stone in North Carolina and Tennessee. Building up his skills for climbing in the western U.S and abroad. He began guiding for summer camps in western NC and for his university outing program in Sewanee, Tennessee. He has since moved west to climb, ski, and guide on bigger and grander adventures. In addition to working as a climbing guide, Thomas also works as a ski instructor for people with disabilities in the winter months.

#### **Chad Cochran, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in the Cascades. Originally from the Eastern United States, Chad has climbed and guided throughout the lower 48 as well as traveling south to explore Argentina and Chilean Patagonia. He holds a degree in Recreation and Parks Management.

#### **Joshua Cole, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington, Alaska, California, Nevada and Oregon. Joshua Cole has been guiding for more than 20 years, and is an IFMGA Licensed American Mountain Guide, member of the AMGA Instructor Team and AIARE Pro Instructor. He has climbed and skied extensively in the North Cascades, Swiss Alps, Italian Dolomites and Alps, Sierra Nevada, New Zealand and the ranges of SW Montana. Josh is a risk management consultant and has given trainings and presentations on wilderness risk management to numerous organizations. Josh has worked as a professional ski patroller in Montana and New Zealand, and has a former life as a research geologist. Is an instructor for the AMGA certification courses.

#### **Dawood Dhada, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington. Dawood works and plays prioritizing a sense of enchantment both for himself and those around.. From teaching leadership to Midshipmen from the Naval Academy to guiding interpretive hikes in municipal parks, Dawood does everything to ensure the opportunity for people to learn and grow in ways they may not have had the opportunity to before.

#### **Jared Drapala, Instructor and Guide**

Jared is originally from Upstate New York and was introduced to climbing in the Adirondacks. He continued to pursue rock and ice climbing while at college in Vermont. He also led climbing trips while in college for the school's Outing Club. His personal climbing has taken him to Alaska, the Tetons, Wind Rivers, the Sierra, and various parts of the Southwest. He has a degree in Economics.

#### **Ross Erickson, Instructor and Guide**



Guides in Washington, Colorado, Nevada and Canada. Growing up in the vast plains of Illinois, Ross had dreams of being high in the mountains. He wanted to have everything on his back, scaling walls of stone with grand views and nights under the stars. He made that dream a reality through the Boy Scouts. He quickly gained skills and a love for stewardship. In 2010, he moved to Denver and immersed himself in the mountains. Since then he's thru hiked multiple trails, climbed ice, alpine rock, desert towers, and vertically camped on the big walls of Yosemite.

#### **Tamsin Fitzgerald, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington and Canada. Originally from New Zealand, Tammy is a keen skier, climber and boater. After completing a Masters in Entrepreneurship, Tammy took off to guide her way around the world - working and living in China, Australia, Hong Kong, USA, NZ, Thailand, India and the Virgin Islands. In the winter, Tammy works as a certified ski instructor in Colorado. Fun Facts: Tammy joined the New Zealand Army at 18 to help pay for college, and if she's not adventuring or working, Tamsin is probably eating. Loves snacks, hates raisins.

#### **Alex Fletcher, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Nevada, California, Arizona, Utah, and Washington. Alex grew up in the south and started climbing in Arkansas before moving west to join the Marine Corps. A long-standing desire to pursue colder climates and higher elevations brought Alex to summit peaks in the Sierra, Cascade, Sawtooth, Bugaboo, and Teton mountain ranges. Alex has climbed in nine U.S. states as well as in Mexico, Canada, Thailand, and Spain.

#### **Adam Gellman, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington and Canada. Adam grew up in the urban sprawl of New York City but escaped to the woods of the Northeast as soon as he could. There he found his love for teaching climbing as well as the gritty New England sport of ice climbing. After spending a few seasons bouncing back and forth between the Matanuska Glacier in Alaska and the Green Mountains of Vermont, Adam moved to the Cascades to continue to work as a guide and educator. When he is not in the mountains, he enjoys playing folk music and woodcarving. Emergency Medical Technician.

#### **Quincy Godwin, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington. Quincy began his climbing journey as an undergraduate in the Piedmont of North Carolina. He has spent time climbing all over the United States including on iconic formations such as Moonlight Buttress and El Capitan. He shifted to an interdisciplinary focus when he became an adaptive ski instructor in Colorado and now spends his winters ski mountaineering on the Sierra Eastside. When he is not playing in the mountains he spends his time playing the bluegrass guitar and mandolin.

#### **Will Gordon, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington, California, Nevada and Canada. Will is originally from the Southeast, but has lived in Colorado for most of the past decade. He has climbed extensively throughout the Rockies and the Desert Southwest. In the winters, he works as a ski patroller in Breckenridge, CO.

#### **Billy Haas, Instructor and Guide**

Billy was raised in the Northeast, but cut his teeth in the Tetons and Wasatch Ranges. He is an internationally-certified IFMGA mountain guide, and splits time between Jackson Hole, Wyoming and Salt Lake City, Utah. In addition to guiding, Billy is a professional avalanche instructor and forecaster.

#### **Ryan Harris, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington, Colorado, Nevada and Canada. Ryan grew up in the front range of Colorado, and spent that time snowboarding, climbing, and exploring the mountains at his front door. This quickly turned into a passion for the outdoors which led him to seek out professional certification specifically in rock climbing and avalanche education. You can find Ryan at any of the climbing areas in the front range and further, such as Eldorado Canyon, Boulder Canyon, and the famous Rocky Mountain National Park. In Ryan's eyes the best

part of guiding is seeing people turn their interest in outdoor recreation into a passion, and loves to be the person to help that process.

**Nick Herrick, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington. Nick began his outdoor journey in Alaska where he learned to backcountry ski and climb. He spends any free time alpine climbing in the north Cascades during the summer and fall and in the spring he enjoys crack climbing in Indian Creek. His winters are spent on the slopes of Mt Hood. He has a Bachelor of Science in Natural Science from the University of Alaska Anchorage. He hopes to make long lasting connections to the outdoors with each participant. He's also trying to perfect his pizza making skills...yes even while camping.

**Ama Hartman, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington. Ama was practically born on skis in central Washington. In high school, she competed in big mountain ski competitions and taught skiing and mountain biking at Stevens Pass. Later, she moved to the city to pursue degrees in mechanical engineering where she discovered some of her own strength through academic research, sport and trad climbing, long distance trail running, and mountain scrambling. Her passion for the outdoors led her to schedule her graduation in time to start her first season out of school as a ski patroller at Stevens Pass, and her continued interest in growing as a mountaineer and sharing skills with others led her to pursue a career guiding.

**Cameron Hygate, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington, California, Nevada, Alaska and Canada. Cameron grew up in Southern California but traded sunny beaches and warm temperatures for the cold rugged mountains of Alaska. He began his climbing career on small sea cliffs just outside Juneau Alaska and quickly took those fundamental skills to larger venues such as the Mendenhall Towers, Harding Icefield, Chugach Mountains, and Hayes Range. In addition to a deep love for snow, ice, and the cold, Cameron also has a great affinity for desert rock climbing in Nevada and Utah. Cameron is a National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians certified Emergency Medical Technician-Basic.

**Wesley Jones, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington, Nevada and Canada. Wesley is from Bloomington, Indiana and moved out to the Pacific Northwest in 2013 after studying geological sciences at Indiana University. He has been a raft and fly fishing guide since 2011. Wesley currently works as a pro snowboard patroller for Mt Bachelor in Bend, Oregon. Wesley has spent years traveling the west pursuing his passion for Splitboarding and climbing in alpine environments. Wesley is a National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians certified Emergency Medical Technician.

**Elias Jordan, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington, California, Nevada, Utah, Colorado and Canada. Elias has been instructing climbers since 2012. He studied Astrophysics at the University of Arizona and lived throughout the Desert Southwest before moving to Mazama, Washington. Prior to joining the Institute, he worked as an Ice Farmer for the Ouray Ice Park and as a youth climbing coach. Elias is a National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians certified Emergency Medical Technician and a Technical Rope Rescue Technician.

**Sheldon Kerr, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington. Sheldon started her mountain guiding career in Alaska and quickly added the Cascades, the Tetons, and the Andes to her resume. She patrolled in Crested Butte and Silverton Mountain before finding her way to Ouray, CO and putting down roots. With a degree in Feminist and Gender Studies from The Colorado College, almost 20 years in guiding, and years of advocacy for women in the outdoor industry, the only thing missing was a partner who shared her values and technical stoke. Is an instructor for the AMGA certification courses.

**Andrew Krause, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington, California, Nevada and Canada. Andrew hails from the great frozen Northeast. He grew up as a competitive runner and climber then quickly fell in love with many outdoor pursuits. After guiding in New England for 8 years he made his way to the West coast in search of new mountains and experiences. Andrew has a passion for education and the simplicity of outdoor pursuits.

**David Lapidus, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington and Canada. David is from Chicago and lives there with wife and cat when not guiding and instructing. David has climbed throughout the United States and Canada on alpine, water ice, and rock terrain. He is passionate about working with aspirant climbers from all backgrounds towards their respective climbing journeys and goals.

**Tali Levin, Instructor and Guide**

Tali found her passion for mountain climbing on the glaciers of Mt. Rainier, and she honed her technical skills north of the border, dividing her time between granite splitters in Squamish, skiing pow in Whistler, and traveling to spend time climbing ice in the Canadian Rockies, alpine rock the Bugaboos, big walls in Yosemite, desert rock in Utah and Nevada, and more. Now based in Bellingham, Tali is passionate about providing high quality mountain education and guiding. She holds an Interdisciplinary BA in Gender, Social, and Environmental Justice in Outdoor Recreation from Western Washington University. Guides in Washington, Alaska, Nevada, and Canada.

**Suzanna Lourie, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington, Colorado and Canada. Suzanna discovered her love of “big” mountains working as a travel writer exploring remote regions of the Himalaya and Patagonian Andes. She eventually moved to Colorado and changed careers to work as a wilderness guide in the Four Corners region. Inspired by the landscape, Suzanna dove headfirst into more technical pursuits like alpine climbing, mountain running and backcountry skiing. She hasn’t looked back since. When she’s not in the Cascades, Suzanna is based in Ouray, Colorado, where she tries to climb as much ice as possible and enjoys scrambling above 13k around her home. Suzanna is passionate about empowering others to reach their mountaineering goals. She is a certified yoga teacher and aspires to guide on some of the highest peaks in the world.

**Holly Mackin, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Wyoming, Utah, Nevada, Idaho, and Washington. Holly got exposed to mountain culture in her college days at the University of Colorado Boulder. She’s spent many summers playing in Grand Teton National Park where she set roots as a mountain guide. Her passion for rock climbing took her to the southwest every fall and spring frequenting areas like Indian Creek and Red Rock Canyon. In the winter, Holly is usually found in the Tetons hunting for untouched powder and teaching snow science.

**Morgan McGlashon, Instructor and Guide**

Born and raised in the Tetons, Morgan McGlashon is no stranger to the mountains. Her first love with mountains began on skis at age two, but has grown to include all mediums and seasons including summer alpine and rock climbing.

**Jim Mediatore, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington, California, Nevada, Alaska and Canada. Jim began to climb in 1992, and since then the sport has taken him all over the US and beyond- to the Alps, Alaska, Patagonia, Mexico, Argentina, Ecuador, Peru, and Norway. Jim is an MIT-trained biologist with a passion for travel, teaching, Scrabble, and finding new ways to tease his nephews. AMGA-certified Rock Instructor and Rope Rescue Technician. Speaks English and Spanish.

**Mike Morris, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington, California, Nevada, and Canada. Mike has spent an awesome amount of time climbing and skiing in California, Washington, Nevada, Wyoming, Colorado, New York, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Mexico. In his free time Mike enjoys a meditation practice, service work, getting rowdy in the hills, laughing and talking about himself in the third person. Mike is living with the intention of compassion and loving kindness.

#### **Ian Nicholson, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington. Ian Nicholson's enthusiasm is legendary, and there are few mountain guides who can match Ian's rare combination of skill and expertise with his never-ending patience, understanding, and teaching ability. Ian has been guiding for more than 17 years and is an extremely well respected member of the Northwest's guiding community. He is an internationally licensed IFMGA/UIAGM mountain guide, meaning he is certified by the American Mountain Guides Association (AMGA) in the Rock, Alpine, and Ski disciplines. In the guiding world this is the literally the highest level of training and certification you can receive in the United States and the world. Ian is so passionate about his guests' experience and the mountain guiding craft that he now teaches for the AMGA on a national level helping to train the next generation of mountain guides. Ian's passion to help people achieve their goals and dreams is well renowned and we encourage you to reach out regarding your next adventure. Is an instructor for the AMGA certification courses.

#### **Mick Pearson, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington. Mick has traveled the world over in search of the perfect mountain experience. After working for years under other companies' ethos and philosophies, nothing quite fit with his personal convictions and passions. In 2006 he set out on his own to make his vision of the holistic mountain experience a reality for anyone who shared his passion for the outdoors. Is an instructor for the AMGA certification courses.

#### **Ian Peterson, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington, Colorado, Utah, and Canada. Ian grew up on the East Coast, where he remained for college before making the move west full time. His academic and professional background in education and environmental studies drives his passion for supporting each individual's progression into the mountains, and he works tirelessly to build deep connections between individuals and the landscapes they move through. When not guiding, he can be found pursuing ski mountaineering objectives, reading, and cooking tasty meals.

#### **Taylor Peterson, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington and Canada. His climbing career started part way through a stint as a roboticist and put an end to his circus days as a trapeze artist. He aspires to continue to learn, grow, and share great experiences in the mountains.

#### **Richard Riquelme, Instructor and Guide**

Richard's climbing and skiing has taken him throughout Chile, Peru, and Argentina as well as to the US, Canada, and Europe. His academic training is in metallurgical engineering. He has extensive experience in search and rescue operations. Also guides for AAI and teaches AIARE avalanche courses. Native speaker of Spanish, fluent in English, and proficient in German. Richard is a Rope Rescue Technician.

#### **Paul Rachele, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington, Colorado, Maine, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Brunswick, New Hampshire, New York, Oregon, Quebec, Vermont and Wyoming. Paul is a midwest transplant who drifted to the mountains after college and never really left. Climbing has taken Paul from the deserts of southeast California to the glaciers of central Alaska and everywhere in between. Some of Paul's most memorable climbing experiences are the Cassin Ridge on Denali and a solo, nighttime ascent of the Hossack-McGowan on the Grand Teton. In the winter, Paul enjoys skiing and ice climbing throughout the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. His most memorable descent was skiing the Grand Teton in boot-top powder, and his favorite run is the Do-Its on Teton Pass. Is an instructor for the AMGA certification courses.

**Nathan Sandidge, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington, California, Colorado, Nevada, Utah, and Canada Nathan was born and raised in Colorado, but didn't find his passion for climbing until going to college in Western New York. He cut his teeth in the New River Gorge, and eventually moved back to Colorado to Perdue bigger mountains and more technical terrain. When not working, you can find him trail running, making videos, and exploring the dry tooling crags. He has a BS in mechanical engineering and is always down to nerd out about climbing systems, airplanes, calculus, and of course, gear!

**Hali Scroggins, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington and Canada. Originally from West Tennessee, Hali never saw a snowy peak till she was 19 years old on a ski trip to Colorado. Upon returning, she packed up her things and moved to Park City, Utah where she immersed herself in all things ski related by working in the industry for 7 years. Seeking new challenges and a fresh focus, she decided to hike the Pacific Crest Trail in 2019 which inspired her move to the PNW. Over the years her excitement for the natural world and climbing big mountains led her to pursue guiding as a career. Hali believes the mountains are a sacred space, with endless lessons to teach us. She is especially passionate about helping aspiring mountain enthusiasts learn new skills to move beyond what they thought was possible. Hali enjoys moving through the mountains in various ways, whether it be on skis, long alpine rock routes or mountain biking. During the winter season she ski patrols at Stevens Pass.

**Chris Simmons, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington and Oregon. Chris's mountain guiding career started in 1999, but my love for the mountains and all things hilly started with skiing in the Sierra Nevada as a child. He believes that we are fundamentally changed and bettered by challenging ourselves in the mountains. Is an instructor for the AMGA certification courses.

**Lauren Smith, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington and Canada. Lauren grew up with the Cascades as her backdrop, which inspired her to start climbing in High School. When she's not honing in her skills in the Cascades, she can be found in Squamish, Moab, and chasing alpine ice. She is passionate about creating experiences with others in the mountains and pursuing guiding full time. She splits her year between Washington, climbing ice in Bozeman, and climbing rock in the Southwest.

**Eli Spitulnik, Instructor and Guide**

From Northern California, Eli cut his teeth climbing big walls in Yosemite Valley and alpine rock routes in the High Sierras. Eli's enthusiasm for alpine climbing brought him to the Pacific Northwest to climb on the snowy and icy mountains of the Cascades. When Eli is not studying philosophy and mathematics at Western Washington University, he can likely be found at his favorite climbing areas such as Squamish, the Bugaboos, the North Cascades, and Yosemite.

**Joe Thompson, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington, Alaska, Colorado, Nevada, Utah and Wyoming. Joey's journey started in New York climbing and skiing, but his love of big mountains quickly led him west to ski and climb around Arizona, California and Nevada before settling in Colorado with his wife Susan and doggy Honcho. After taking on various jobs to support his outdoor passions, Joey realized he wanted to empower and lead others to enjoy the mountain adventures he loved all around the US. Joey currently guides rock and alpine climbing and ski mountaineering in Alaska, Canada, Wyoming, Washington and Colorado and currently scheduling trips in Europe. Years later, the AMGA recognized Joey as the 2013 Guide of the Year for exceptional dedication to his mountain craft and clients Is an instructor for the AMGA certification courses.

**Char Tomlinson, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington and Canada. Char grew up in the ancient Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia and got her start climbing early on classic east coast crags like Seneca Rocks. After making the move to California to pursue outdoor education, she started climbing in the Sierra and has never looked back. She is a graduate from UC Berkeley Geography where she studied mapping, geomorphology and geographic theory, with a keen interest in topography and anticolonial mapping practices. When she's not in the alpine, you might find her doing silly dynamic boulder problems, climbing the tallest trees she can find, or playing hacky sack. Her favorite climbing areas are Tuolumne, Joshua Tree, Yosemite Valley, and the Dolomites.

**Alasdair Turner, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in the Cascades, Red Rock, Alaska, Canada, and Bolivia. A Scotsman by birth, Alasdair has climbed in the Washington Cascades for the last 15 years where, among his long list of achievements, he notched the first winter ascent of the Serpentine Arête on Dragontail Peak. Alasdair has ventured onto big walls and into mountain ranges outside Washington as well, making difficult ascents throughout Canada, Alaska, Wyoming, California, and Utah. His degree is in Chemistry.

**Justin Votos, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington and Oregon. Born and raised in the Green Mountains of northern Vermont. B.S. in Forestry from the University of Vermont. Former USFS climbing ranger for the Gifford Pinchot NF on Mt. Adams. When Justin is not climbing, skiing, running or guiding he's busy spending quality family time sleeping under the stars and being pulled through the snow by his sled dog.

**Jeff Ward, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington. Jeff has been working as a full-time professional mountain guide since 1995. Jeff is an instructor and examiner for the American Mountain Guides Association, teaching the next generation of American mountain guides. Jeff lives in Leavenworth, WA with his wife Kristen and 14-year old daughter Allison. Is an instructor for the AMGA certification courses.

**Isabelle Wassilie, Instructor and Guide**

Guides in Washington. Born and raised in Juneau, Alaska. Started guiding at 16 years old on dog mushing tours on glaciers in Alaska. An avid snowboarder and passionate about snowboard mountaineering. Has experience climbing and snowboarding in Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, California and Washington.

## **American Alpine Institute Programs and Facilities**

The American Alpine Institutes administrative offices are located at:

4041 Home Road  
Suite A  
Bellingham, WA 98226

Courses are hands-on experiential field training programs and are run in the mountains, at the cliffs and on the glaciers where AAI is approved to provide instruction. The American Alpine Institute is an authorized National Park Service Concessionaire and operates under concession permits, commercial use authorizations and special use permits in the following parks and forests:

Denali, Wrangle-St. Elias, North Cascades, Mount Rainier, Sequoia and Kings Canyon, Joshua Tree National Parks; Inyo, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie, Gifford-Pinchot, Uncompahgre (GMUG), Humboldt-Toiyable, and Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forests; Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area; Moab and Monticello BLM Lands; Stawamus Chief, Murrin and Bugaboo Glacier Provincial Parks.

Courses that run in the Pacific Northwest meet at our equipment and rental shop in Bellingham at 7am on the first day of the program. The instructors meticulously go through each person's equipment and students are given the opportunity to complete rentals or make any last-minute purchases. When this is finished, the instructors will escort the group into the mountains where the bulk of the course will be taught.

Students receiving VA education benefits may train outside of Washington, but those programs will not be certified to the VA for reimbursement.

Most programs require students to provide their own personal camping and climbing gear. Students will also be required to provide their own food for the duration of the programs. The Institute will provide transportation to and from program areas for all group courses (with the exception of the SPI program, WFR and avalanche courses), will provide group-climbing gear, and will cover all the costs of land use permits.

Each course has its own equipment list. However, a sample equipment list has been included here in Appendix B

Instructor to student ratios vary by program. Following is a breakdown of the ratios and class sizes that participants should expect:

<b>Course</b>	<b>Maximum Number of Students</b>	<b>Ratio (Students: Instructors)</b>
Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part I	10	5:1
Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part II	9	3:1
Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part III	6	2:1
Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part IV - Ptarmigan Traverse	8	2:1
Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part IV - Ski Mountaineering	4	2:1
Wilderness First Responder Certification Course	18	9:1
Technical Rope Rescue Comprehensive	10	5:1
Professionalism for the Outdoor Educator	18	9:1
Leave No Trace Level 1 Instructor	10	10:1
Leave No Trace Level 2 Instructor	10	5:1
AIARE Avalanche Level I	16	4:1
AIARE Avalanche Rescue Skills Course	16	4:1
AMGA Single Pitch Instructor Course	12	6:1
Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue	10	5:1
Alpinism 1: Introduction to Mountaineering	10	5:1
Alpinism 2: Intermediate Mountaineering	6	3:1
Alpine Ice Climbing: Introduction	6	3:1
Avalanche Pro Level I	10	5:1
AMGA Alpine Skills Course	8	4:1
AMGA Alpine Guide Course	8	2:1
AMGA Alpine Rock Module	12	4:1
AMGA Alpine Snow and Glacier Module	12	4:1
AMGA Rock Guide Course	12	3:1
AMGA Ski Guides Course	12	4:1

The Wilderness First Responder program, Professionalism for the Outdoor Educator, Avalanche programs, and the Technical Rope Rescue Comprehensive all have some combination of classroom and field time. The standard classroom space is approximately 500 square feet.



### **About AAI's Vocational Training for Outdoor Professionals**

The American Alpine Institute has certain programs that are vocational in nature and are designed to fill-in education and certificate gaps outdoor professionals might have as climbers, mountaineers, ski patrollers, mountain rescue technicians, outdoor educators, office administrators, instructors, guides, etc. Each course can be taken as a stand-alone program. Many outdoor professions require certifications and continuing education training to remain current while employed.

These vocational programs can be taken as needed to advance one's career in the mountains and to build a professional resume. As these are stand-alone programs, there is no course flow or sequence in which they need to be completed. For example, if you attend our 12-day Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part I course, there is not a deadline or limiting date to complete the 12-day Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part II course. Likewise, if you need the Avalanche Pro Level I training and you meet the prerequisites, you can take that course alone.

As long as the prerequisites are met, students can take these programs as needed for job requirements and gain new skills that are new to the outdoor industry due to changes in the industry.

Every student will need to meet the prerequisites of any course they wish to enroll in and will need to provide an outdoor resume that outlines previous training, experience, and certifications.

Prior education and training will be reviewed for all students and VA education benefits recipients entering any vocational program.

Please note that VA education benefits cannot be used for refresher training to repeat learning of the same skills.

### **Credentials Awarded**

You will be awarded the following credentials based on the vocational program(s) you choose to take:

- Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part I Completion Certificate
- Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part II Completion Certificate
- Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part III Completion Certificate
- Alpine Mountaineering Expedition Leadership Completion Certificate (upon completion of all 4 Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership courses)
- Technical Rope Rescue Comprehensive Completion Certificate
- Professionalism for the Outdoor Educator Course Completion Certificate
- AIARE Avalanche Level I Completion Certificate
- AAIARE Avalanche Rescue Skills Course Completion Certificate
- AMGA Single Pitch Instructor Course Completion Certificate
  
- Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue Course Completion Certificate
- Alpinism 1: Introduction to Mountaineering Course Completion Certificate
- Alpinism 2: Intermediate Mountaineering Course Completion Certificate
- Alpine Ice Climbing: Introduction Course Completion Certificate
  
- Avalanche Pro Level I Certificate
- AMGA Alpine Skills Course Completion Certificate
- AMGA Alpine Guide Course Completion Certificate
- AMGA Alpine Rock Module Completion Certificate
- AMGA Alpine Snow and Glacier Module Completion Certificate
- AMGA Rock Guide Course Completion Certificate
- AMGA Ski Guide Course Certificate
  
- Wilderness First Responder Certification
- Leave No Trace Level 1 Instructor Certification
- Leave No Trace Level 2 Instructor Certification

## **Program Requirements and Hours Required**

Our vocational programs have hour requirements. As this is mountaineering and climbing, the days are extremely long. Yes, there are a few programs that will have eight-hour days, but most days will be nine to twelve hours long with a few days that will be sixteen to twenty-hours long.

The Washington State Workforce Board and the Veterans Administration require these hours to be quantified in a way that fits into a traditional school. As such, multi-day backcountry programs are given a generic 10-hours a day and front-country programs are given either an 8 or a 9-hour day.

Prior education and training will be reviewed for all students and VA education benefits recipients entering any vocational program.

### **CORE CURRICULUM**

#### **Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part I (120-Hours)**

This is a twelve-day program. Most days on this course are eight to ten hours in length, but there will be one or two sixteen-hour days.

#### **Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part II (120-Hours)**

This is a 12-day program. Most days on this course are eight to ten hours in length, but there will be one or two sixteen to twenty-hour days.

#### **Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part III (120-Hours)**

This is a twelve-day program. Most days on this course are eight to ten hours in length, but there will be one or two sixteen to twenty-hour days.

#### **Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part IV - Ptarmigan Traverse (120-Hours)**

This is a twelve-day program. Most days on this course are eight to ten hours in length, but there will be one or two sixteen to twenty-hour days.

#### **Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part IV - Ski Mountaineering (120-Hours)**

This is a twelve-day program. Most days on this course are eight to ten hours in length, but there will be one or two sixteen to twenty-hour days.

#### **Wilderness First Responder Certification Course (40-Hours)**

This is a five-day program. Most days on this course are eight hours long.

#### **Technical Rope Rescue Comprehensive (140-Hours)**

This is a 15-day long program with a day off in the middle. Most days on this course are ten hours long.

#### **Professionalism for the Outdoor Educator (40-Hours)**

This is a five-day program. The days will be eight-hours long.

Leave No Trace Level 1 Instructor (20-Hours)

This is a two-day long program. The days will be ten hours each.

Leave No Trace Level 2 Instructor (50-Hours)

This is a five-day program. The days will be ten hours each.

AIARE Avalanche Level I (24-Hours)

This is a three-day program and the days are eight hours in length.

AIARE Avalanche Rescue Skills Course (8-Hours)

This is a one-day program and the day is eight hours in length.

AMGA Single Pitch Instructor Course (27-Hours)

This is a three-day course. Most days on this course are nine hours long.

## BASIC SKILLS COURSE CURRICULUM

Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue (30-Hours)

This is a three-day hands-on class. Most days will be ten hours in length.

Alpinism 1: Introduction to Mountaineering (60-Hours)

This is a six-day program. Most days will be ten hours in length.

Alpinism 2: Intermediate Mountaineering (60-Hours)

This is a six-day program. Most days will be ten hours in length.

Alpine Ice Climbing: Introduction (60-Hours)

This is a six-day comprehensive program. Most days will be ten hours in length.

## UPPER-LEVEL PROFESSIONAL COURSE CURRICULUM

Avalanche Pro Level I (40-Hours)

This is a five-day program. The days will be eight hours in length.

AMGA Alpine Skills Course (50-Hours)

This is a five-day course and the days are ten hours in length.

AMGA Alpine Guide Course (80-Hours)

This is a eight-day course. The days will be ten hours in length.

AMGA Alpine Rock Module (70-Hours)

This is a seven-day course. The days will be ten hours in length.

AMGA Alpine Snow and Glacier Module (60-Hours)

This is a six-day course. The days will be ten hours in length.

AMGA Rock Guide Course (100-Hours)

This is a ten-day course. The days will be ten hours in length.

AMGA Ski Guide Course (100-Hours)

This is a ten-day course. The days will be ten hours in length.

## **Vocational Course Descriptions, Prerequisites, and Employment Options**

Following are course descriptions.

### **Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part I (120 Hours)**

In this first 12-day program, we help you develop a complete set of alpine climbing skills for rock, snow, and ice, from the basics on up, and as we progress through each set of skills, we will provide you with a significant amount of practice climbing so you can master each technique. You will learn route finding and hazard assessment skills as well as self-rescue. Through the course you will make a series of classic alpine ascents on rock routes and on major glaciers, and you and your fellow team members will lead the final climb as you apply all the climbing and leadership skills learned during the program.

We place as much emphasis on good mountain judgment as we do on the development of technical skills, and throughout this course we'll help you observe and analyze climbing routes, terrain features, and hazards so that by the end of the program you 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. The climbs we make typically include four or five of the following: Mt. Baker, Mt. Shuksan, Glacier Peak, Cutthroat Peak, South Early Winter Spire, Liberty Bell, and Silver Star. Join this course for excellent skills development, diverse and beautiful alpine climbing experience, and preparation for leading your own alpine climbing teams.

#### **CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS:**

##### **Alpine Travel & Climbing Skills: (68 hours in total)**

- selection & use of personal equipment as well as ropes, knots, & harnesses (2 hours)
- design concepts, selection, & use of technical equipment for rock, snow, & ice climbing (8 hours)
- the uses of map, compass, altimeter, and GPS (4 hours)
- principles of glacier travel & route finding (6 hours)
- belaying techniques on rock, snow, & ice (8 hours)
- the concept and application of the self-belay (5 hours)
- self-arrest from all positions (6 hours)
- free climbing technique on rock, snow, & ice (8 hours)
- French, German, and American cramponing techniques (8 hours)
- interrelationship, choice between, & application of all principal ice axe positions (2 hours)
- rappelling & prusiking (7 hours)
- glissading for speed & ease of descent (4 hours)

##### **Objective Hazards Evaluation & Self-Rescue Skills: (19 hours in total)**

- evaluation & prediction of mountain weather patterns (6 hours)
- introduction to the assessment of natural hazards (5 hours)
- individual & team crevasse rescue techniques (8 hours)

##### **Leadership Skills: (22 hours in total)**

- technical & personal functions of individuals in the rope team; role and responsibility (7 hours)
- problem solving: gathering appropriate data & assessment techniques (7 hours)
- evolving leadership roles: individual leadership vs. collective decision making (8 hours)

##### **Environmental Protection Skills: (11 hours in total)**

- an introduction to alpine ecology (6 hours)

- Leave No Trace travel, camping, & climbing skills (5 hours)

#### PREREQUISITES:

- Completion of the Backpacking and Wilderness Skills Course, and/or meet the following prerequisites:
  - Completed multiple day-long hikes in the mountains
  - Camped overnight in the mountains
  - Cooked on a backpacking stove
  - Backpacked, having carried all of one's camping gear for at least two days and one night
  - Packed sufficient food, water and gear for the terrain and weather for a backpacking trip

#### EMPLOYMENT TRACK & NEXT STEPS

Employment options after successful completion of this program as well as sufficient personal practice include but are not limited to backpacking guide, field staff, camp instructor, and adventure guide or instructor. This program can be used as continuing education for current outdoor professionals. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options. This course also serves as a prerequisite for higher-level programs such as the AMTL II, Technical Rope Rescue Comprehensive, AMGA Single Pitch Instructor Course, AMGA Alpine-discipline courses and AMGA Rock Guide Course.

#### **Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part II (120 Hours)**

This program is designed to establish sound judgment in the complex alpine environment as well as a high level of technical ability on rock, snow, and ice. The primary goal of this program is that upon completion, you will be able to function successfully as an alpine climbing leader at an intermediate or more advanced level.

In this second 12-day program you will develop more sophisticated technical skills on snow and ice while making ascents of the rugged glaciers and high peaks of North Cascades National Park and on rock while climbing spectacular granite routes. This is one of the rare courses in the world that specifically teaches techniques for leading on rock, snow, and ice. You will increase your proficiency in free climbing, and you will also become capable of setting up sophisticated and effective protective systems.

Your instructors will help you refine your skills of route selection, route finding, and natural hazards evaluation. Additionally, we emphasize the development of both the judgment and the specific climbing and protective systems skills required for leading more advanced climbs. It is our goal that you emerge from this program as a qualified rope team leader on both rock and glacier routes.

#### CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS

##### Alpine Travel & Climbing Skills: (57 hours in total)

- introduction to specialized equipment for intermediate and advanced climbing (4 hours)
- advanced problems in map, compass, altimeter, and GPS use (6 hours)
- introduction to the physics of glacier formation & movement for use in route finding and evaluation (4 hours)
- advanced protective systems and anchoring techniques (12 hours)
- intermediate and advanced free climbing techniques (9 hours)
- steep ice climbing technique (13 hours)
- nutrition & menu planning (1 hour)
- self-rescue skills in high angled terrain (8 hours)

Objective Hazards Evaluation & Self-Rescue Skills: (25 hours in total)

- advanced problems in objective hazard assessment (6 hours)
- introduction to avalanche hazard evaluation (2 hours)
- advanced problems in crevasse rescue (8 hours)
- intermediate and advanced climbing techniques (9 hours)

Leadership Skills: (22 hours in total)

- assessing team strength, security, and safety (7 hours)
- technical leadership on snow, ice, and rock (15 hours)

Environmental protection skills: (16 hours in total)

- assessment of the fragility and vitality of several ecosystems (8 hours)
- Leave No Trace travel, camping, & climbing skills (8 hours)

PREREQUISITES:

- Completion of AMTL I training, or a combination of Alpinism 1 and Alpinism 2, or Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue and Alpinism 2, or equivalent experience within the last two years.
- Minimum Prerequisite experience includes:
  - Mountaineering knots and hitches (figure-8 family, bowline family, clove hitch, Münter hitch, Prusik hitch)
  - Basic top-rope and lead belay techniques
  - Setting up anchors for a top-roped rock climb at a crag
  - Basic rappelling techniques
  - Use of crampons and ice axe
  - Self-arrest maneuvers
  - Crevasse rescue procedures (both how to get yourself out if you fall in a crevasse, and also how to set up a hauling system to rescue a fallen partner)
  - Climbed a glaciated peak within the last two years
  - Climbed a multipitch alpine rock route within the last two years
  - Set up a crevasse rescue system in the last two years

In addition to the above skills, students need to have done the following:

- Climbed a glaciated peak within the last two years
- Climbed a multipitch alpine rock route within the last two years
- Set up a crevasse rescue system in the last two years

NOTE ON AMTL SERIES ENROLLMENTS AND SCHEDULING:

- 1) In order to participate in this high-end training and expedition, you must first complete Part I or have equivalent training. If you took Part II more than a year and a half prior, you will need to take a four-day refresher course. If you have engaged in a significant amount of climbing in the interim this may be waived.
- 2) Beginning summer 2025, we will ask that students interested in taking the full AMTL series plan to have at least a 1-month break between taking AMTL 2 and AMTL 3. We have found, from past experience, a much higher success rate when students take a break between these long courses.

EMPLOYMENT TRACK & NEXT STEPS



Employment options after successful completion of this program as well as sufficient personal practice include but are not limited to backpacking guide, field staff, camp staff, and adventure guide or instructor. The program can be used as continuing education for current outdoor professionals. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options. This program also serves as a prerequisite for higher-level programs such as the AMTL III, Technical Rope Rescue Comprehensive, Alpine Ice Introduction, AMGA Alpine-discipline courses and AMGA Rock Guide Course.

### **Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part III (120 Hours)**

The third portion of the Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Program provides the opportunity to practice and apply the skills that you learned in Parts I and II while engaging in a series of new advanced alpine techniques.

The earlier courses laid a solid foundation for your skills as a mountaineer, an ice climber, and a rock climber. This advanced level course provides an opportunity for you to apply those techniques and to expand on them while specializing in a specific type of alpine travel.

The third part of our Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership series includes two options. Each of these options run on different dates. And though some may wish to participate in only one of these options, others will want to continue to expand their climbing and expeditionary skills by participating in both. Those who wish to use VA education benefits can choose to attend the option IIIa.

- Remote Cascades (IIIa) - Advanced Alpine Mountaineering and Rock Climbing, Aid Climbing, Big Wall Techniques & Remote Cascade Expedition

It is our primary goal that upon completion of this program you will be able to function successfully as an alpine climbing leader at an advanced level. Climbers who successfully complete all 4 parts of this program receive certification in Alpine Mountaineering Expedition Leadership. One does not need to complete Parts IIIa and IIIb to attain this certification. However, you will receive an endorsement based on the part that you choose to complete. Those who elect to complete more than one section will be awarded additional endorsements on their certification.

If you elect to take more than one version of the AMTL III, the second course at the AMTL III Level will be counted as an AMTL IV and you will be awarded your certificate of Alpine Mountaineering Expedition Leadership.

### **CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS**

#### **Advanced Aid and Free Climbing Skills: (46 hours in total)**

- selection & use of personal equipment for an aid climb including specific ropes, harnesses, & equipment (2 hours)
- design concepts, selection & use of technical equipment for mixed aid & free climbing (2 hours)
- advanced rigging for multi-pitch climbing (6 hours)
- use of big wall gear & equipment including etriers, daisy chains, mechanical ascenders, haul bags, port-a-ledges, leeper cams, hooks & an assortment of other gear (8 hours)
- use of fixed lines (1 hour)
- strategy for multi-pitch aid or mixed climbs (5 hours)
- strategies for multi-pitch descents (4 hours)
- techniques for hauling, big wall bivies, & for pendulums (3 hours)
- clean aid climbing techniques (7 hours)

- complex hauling systems (3 hours)
- management of hanging belays (3 hours)
- strategies for multi-day routes (2 hours)

#### Expeditionary Skills: (17 hours in total)

- planning and preparing for a large scale backcountry expedition (6 hours)
- continued training on the use of maps, compasses, GPS, and guidebooks (4 hours)
- strategizing for multi-day “carry over” routes in a remote setting (7 hours)

#### Ice Climbing and Mountaineering Skills: (24 hours in total)

- study of ice climbing technique including all ice axe positions (9 hours)
- study of glacial structures and ice structures (2 hours)
- development of advanced technical protective systems in an alpine setting (6 hours)
- advanced study of movement over complex alpine terrain (7 hours)

#### Objective Hazards Evaluation & Self-Rescue Skills: (12 hours in total)

- evaluation & prediction of mountain weather patterns (2 hours)
- introduction to the assessment of natural hazards (2 hours)
- individual & team crevasse rescue techniques (8 hours)

#### Leadership Skills: (21 hours in total)

- study and practice of individual technical leadership skills (10 hours)
- technical & personal functions of individuals on an ascent: roles & responsibility (3 hours)
- problem solving: gathering appropriate data & assessment techniques (3 hours)
- evolving leadership roles: individual leadership vs. collective decision making (2 hours)
- large and small team expeditionary leadership strategy (3 hours)

#### PREREQUISITES:

- Successful completion of AMTL I and AMTL II, or equivalent experience within the last two years.
- Minimum Prerequisite experience includes:
  - o Ability to confidently and smoothly lead 5.6 traditional rock
  - o Ability to build a traditional rock anchor without direct supervision
  - o Ability to properly rig an autoblocking device in a multipitch environment
  - o Strong understanding of French Technique
  - o Ability to lead 45-degree ice

#### NOTE ON AMTL SERIES ENROLLMENTS AND SCHEDULING:

- 3) In order to participate in this high-end training and expedition, you must first complete Parts I and II or have equivalent training. If you took Part II more than a year and a half prior, you will need to take a four-day refresher course. If you have engaged in a significant amount of climbing in the interim this may be waived.
- 4) Beginning summer 2025, we will ask that students interested in taking the full AMTL series plan to have at least a 1-month break between taking AMTL 2 and AMTL 3. We have found, from past experience, a much higher success rate when students take a break between these long courses.

#### EMPLOYMENT TRACK & NEXT STEPS

This program can be used as continuing education for current mountain guides, instructors, or outdoor professionals. Employment options after successful completion of this program as well as sufficient personal practice include but are not limited to backpacking guide, field staff, adventure guide, rock gym instructor and

rock or mountain guide apprentice. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options. This program also serves as a prerequisite for higher-level courses such as the AMTL IV, Technical Rope Rescue Comprehensive, Alpine Ice Introduction, AMGA Alpine-discipline courses and AMGA Rock Guide Course.

### **Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part IV - Ski Mountaineering (120 Hours)**

The final portion of the AMTL program offers participants the opportunity to develop their skills in one of three technical environments. The first option is a Winter Ski Mountaineering Program in the North Cascades of Washington State; the second is a program to develop more sophisticated technical skills on rock, snow and ice on the Ptarmigan Traverse in the North Cascades.

Students who complete all four parts of the AMTL series will receive a certificate of Alpine Mountaineering Expedition Leadership. Students may also elect to take a second version of Part III as a substitution for these Part IV options to receive this certificate.

### **CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS FOR SKI MOUNTAINEERING OPTION**

#### **Ski Mountaineering Skills: (49 hours in total)**

- selection and understanding of ski touring gear (2 hours)
- selection and understanding of transceivers and avalanche equipment (2 hours)
- development of backcountry ski technique (12 hours)
- terrain analysis for uphill and downhill track setting (2 hours)
- development of tour planning strategies (2 hours)
- development of evaluative skills for avalanche terrain (2 hours)
- practical application of snow analysis and record keeping (2 hours)
- construction of snow caves, igloos and emergency shelters (6 hours)
- packing and pulling an expedition sled (6 hours)
- crevasse rescue techniques involving ski equipment (6 hours)
- practical application of self-belay and self-arrest while ski touring (3 hours)
- practical application of rappel techniques while wearing skis (4 hours)

#### **Expeditionary Skills: (10 hours in total)**

- continued training on the use of maps, compasses, GPS, and guidebooks (2 hours)
- strategizing for multi-day backcountry tours in a remote setting (2 hours)
- practical application of expeditionary staged camp techniques (6 hours)

#### **Mountaineering Skills: (25 hours in total)**

- review of glacial and ice structures (2 hours)
- continued development of mountain sense and the ability to follow a "line of weakness" (5 hours)
- development of advanced technical protective systems in an alpine setting (9 hours)
- advanced study of movement over complex alpine terrain (9 hours)

#### **Objective Hazards Evaluation & Self-Rescue Skills: (12 hours in total)**

- evaluation & prediction of mountain weather patterns (2 hours)
- introduction to the assessment of natural hazards (2 hours)
- individual & team crevasse rescue techniques (8 hours)

#### **Leadership Skills: (24 hours in total)**

- continued study and practice of individual technical leadership skills (10 hours)

- development of technical leadership strategies on complex terrain (4 hours)
- technical & personal functions of individuals on an ascent: roles & responsibility (3 hours)
- problem solving: gathering appropriate data & assessment techniques (2 hours)
- evolving leadership roles: individual leadership vs. collective decision making (3 hours)
- large and small team expeditionary leadership strategy (2 hours)

#### PREREQUISITES:

- Successful completion of AMTL I, AMTL II and AMTL III or equivalent experience within the last two years.
- Minimum Prerequisite experience includes:
  - Confidently and smoothly lead 5.7 traditional rock.
  - Lead alpine rock climbs in mountain boots and/or crampons.
  - Apply appropriate aid and bigwall techniques.
  - Lead steep, technical snow.
  - Lead 50+ degree ice.
  - Confidently lead a rope team in complex glaciated terrain.
- Skiers must have successfully completed an AIARE Avalanche Level I Course and AIARE Rescue Skills Day course or the equivalent.

#### NOTE ON AMTL SERIES ENROLLMENTS AND SCHEDULING:

- 5) In order to participate in this high-end training and expedition, you must first complete Parts I, II and III or have equivalent training. If you took Part III more than a year and a half prior, you will need to take a four-day refresher course. If you have engaged in a significant amount of climbing in the interim this may be waived.
- 6) Beginning summer 2025, we will ask that students interested in taking the full AMTL series plan to have at least a 1-month break between taking AMTL 2 and AMTL 3. We have found, from past experience, a much higher success rate when students take a break between these long courses.

#### EMPLOYMENT TRACK & NEXT STEPS

This program can be used as continuing education for current mountain guides, instructors and outdoor professionals. Employment options after successful completion of this program as well as sufficient personal practice include but are not limited to rock or mountain guide apprentice, work in the National Park system as a backcountry ranger, or University Outdoor Program coordinator. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options. This program also serves as a prerequisite for higher-level programs such as the AMGA Alpine-discipline courses, AMGA Rock Guide Course, and AMGA Ski Guide Course, depending on which option you take.

#### **Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part IV - Ptarmigan Traverse (120 Hours)**

The final portion of the AMTL program offers participants the opportunity to develop their skills in one of three technical environments. The first option is a Winter Ski Mountaineering Program in the North Cascades of Washington State; the second is a program to develop more sophisticated technical skills on rock, snow and ice on the Ptarmigan Traverse in the North Cascades.

Students who complete all four parts of the AMTL series will receive a certificate of Alpine Mountaineering Expedition Leadership. Students may also elect to take a second version of Part III as a substitution for these Part IV options to receive this certificate.

## CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE PTARMIGAN TRAVERSE OPTION

### Alpine Mountaineering Skills: (49 hours in total)

- Development of mixed climbing skills - participants will transition from snow climbing to rock climbing on most routes. (7 hours)
- continued development of movement skills on moderate ice and technical rock (6 hours)
- development of simul-climbing skills on lower angled ice with running belays (4 hours)
- study and practice of transitions between glacier travel mode and technical climbing mode (5 hours)
- continued study of the proper choice between and application of the primary ice axe positions: piolet canne, panne, manche, poignard, ramasse, rampe, ancre, and traction (3 hours)
- specialized designs and uses of alpine and technical tools in high angle climbing (2 hours)
- free climbing technique on alpine rock (10 hours)
- advanced concepts in the proper selection and placement of snow, ice and rock gear for belays and intermediate protection (8 hours)
- integration of specific skills with the general goals of efficient, safe, and self-dependent climbing (4 hours)

### Expeditionary Skills: (10 hours in total)

- continued training on the use of maps, compasses, GPS, and guidebooks (2 hours)
- strategizing for multi-day backcountry tours in a remote setting (2 hours)
- practical application of expeditionary staged camp techniques (6 hours)

### Mountaineering Skills: (25 hours in total)

- review of glacial and ice structures (2 hours)
- continued development of mountain sense and the ability to follow a "line of weakness" (5 hours)
- development of advanced technical protective systems in an alpine setting (9 hours)
- advanced study of movement over complex alpine terrain (9 hours)

### Objective Hazards Evaluation & Self-Rescue Skills: (12 hours in total)

- evaluation & prediction of mountain weather patterns (2 hours)
- introduction to the assessment of natural hazards (2 hours)
- individual & team crevasse rescue techniques (8 hours)

### Leadership Skills: (24 hours in total)

- continued study and practice of individual technical leadership skills (10 hours)
- development of technical leadership strategies on complex terrain (4 hours)
- technical & personal functions of individuals on an ascent: roles & responsibility (3 hours)
- problem solving: gathering appropriate data & assessment techniques (2 hours)
- evolving leadership roles: individual leadership vs. collective decision making (3 hours)
- large and small team expeditionary leadership strategy (2 hours)

## PREREQUISITES:

- Successful completion of AMTL I, AMTL II and AMTL III or equivalent experience within the last two years.
- Minimum Prerequisite experience includes:
  - Confidently and smoothly lead 5.7 traditional rock.
  - Lead alpine rock climbs in mountain boots and/or crampons.

- o Apply appropriate aid and bigwall techniques.
- o Lead steep, technical snow.
- o Lead 50+ degree ice.
- o Confidently lead a rope team in complex glaciated terrain.

#### NOTE ON AMTL SERIES ENROLLMENTS AND SCHEDULING:

- 7) In order to participate in this high-end training and expedition, you must first complete Parts I, II and III or have equivalent training. If you took Part III more than a year and a half prior, you will need to take a four-day refresher course. If you have engaged in a significant amount of climbing in the interim this may be waived.
- 8) Beginning summer 2025, we will ask that students interested in taking the full AMTL series plan to have at least a 1-month break between taking AMTL 2 and AMTL 3. We have found, from past experience, a much higher success rate when students take a break between these long courses.

#### EMPLOYMENT TRACK & NEXT STEPS

This program can be used as continuing education for current mountain guides, instructors and outdoor professionals. Employment options after successful completion of this program as well as sufficient personal practice include but are not limited to rock or mountain guide apprentice, work in the National Park system as a backcountry ranger, or University Outdoor Program coordinator. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options. This program also serves as a prerequisite for higher-level programs such as the AMGA Alpine-discipline courses, AMGA Rock Guide Course, and AMGA Ski Guide Course, depending on which option you take.

#### **Wilderness First Responder Certification Course (40 Hours)**

The Wilderness First Responder course is an 40-hour program that was designed to provide outdoor educators and active outdoor practitioners with the skills they need to deal with a wide array of medical issues and traumatic injuries in the backcountry. It is the outdoor education and recreation industry's standard for wilderness medical training. It is the wilderness medicine training course for outdoor professionals

#### CURRICULUM AND ITINERARY:

Day 1: 8:30 am-5:30 pm (8 hours in total)

- Opening & Course Paperwork (.5 hour)
- Course Introduction & Medical/Legal Considerations (.5 hour)
- General Concepts in Patient Care (1 hour)
- Introduction to the Patient Assessment System (1 hour)
- Anatomy & Physiology (1 hour)
- Introduction to Medical Legal (1 hour)
- Basic Life Support Lab & Simulations (1 hour)
- Wilderness Adult & Child CPR/AED Skills Lab (1 hour)
- Introduction to Basic Pharmacology and First Aid Kits (1 hour)

Day 2: 8:30 am-5:30 (8 hours in total)

- Day 1 Review (0.5 hour)
- Chest & Abdominal Trauma (1 hour)
- Introduction to Shock
- Wounds Lecture (1 hour)
- Stable & Unstable Extremity Injuries (1.5 hours)
- Splinting Scenarios
- Focused Spine Assessment (1 hour)

- Litter Carries and Passes (1 hour)
- Wounds & Dislocations Lab (1 hour)
- Head and Spine Management Lab (1 hour)

Day 3: 8:30 am-5:30 (8 hours in total)

- Day 2 Review (0.5 hour)
- Focused Spine Assessment Scenarios (1 hour)
- Vital Signs (1 hour)
- Trauma Scenarios (1 hour)
- Cardiac Scenarios (MI, Anxiety, Muscle Spasm, Lung) (1 hour)
- Respiratory Emergencies (0.5 hour)
- Neuro (Stroke, Seizure, ALOC) (0.5 hour)
- Allergies (0.5 hour)
- Diabetes (0.5 hour)
- GI Problems (0.5 hour)

Day 4: 8:30 am-5:30 (8 hours in total)

- Day 3 Review (0.5 hour)
- Litters & Moving (1 hour)
- Prevention & Preparation (0.5 hour)
- Core Topic Presentation
- Environmental Scenarios (2 hours)
  - Lighting
  - Hypothermia
  - Bites and Stings
  - Snakes
  - Altitude
  - Avalanche
- Pediatrics (1 hour)
- Scenarios (2 hours)

Day 5: 8:30 am-5:30 (8 hours in total)

- Day 4 Review (0.5 hour)
- Practice Scenarios (4 hours)
- Examination (3.5 hours)
  - Written
  - Scenario

While the focus remains on expedition medicine, the information and skills learned during our Wilderness First Responder course may be directly applied to other emergency medical situations where rapid EMS and advanced medical care is not available e.g.: disaster relief, remote health care in third world countries, etc. The course includes certification in adult & child CPR and AED.

#### PREREQUISITES:

- None.

#### EMPLOYMENT TRACK & NEXT STEPS

Mountain climbing guides, river guides, hiking guides, and backcountry rangers are required to have a WFR certification in order to obtain employment. Most land managers in the United States require commercial guides to hold WFR certifications. And every individual that one might be responsible for in these professions expect their guides and rangers to have a Wilderness First Responder certification.

All outdoor professionals should keep this certification current. Please see Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options.

### **Professionalism for the Outdoor Educator (40 Hours)**

This program was designed to provide baseline information for new guides and instructors on how to get and hold a job, to understand industry standards, and to develop a plan of action for a commercial trip to a new location.

#### **CURRICULUM AND ITINERARY**

Day 1: 8am-5pm (8 hours in total)

- Introduction to professionalism (1 hour)
- How to obtain and keep employment (1 hour)
- Common reasons for termination (1 hour)
- Introduction to mountain electronics (2 hour)
- Leave No Trace - Plan Ahead and Prepare (1 hour)
- Map and compass for professionals (1 hour)
- Tour planning (1 hour)

Day 2: 8am-5pm (8 hours in total)

- Diversity and gender issues in the outdoors (1 hour)
- Leave No Trace - Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces (1 hour)
- Commercial permitting and land management issues (2 hours)
- Liability and accident insurance (2 hours)
- Resume development (2 hours)

Day 3: 8am-5pm (8 hours in total)

- Personal marketing (1 hour)
- Ancillary income (sponsorship, writing, photography, etc.) (1 hour)
- Leave No Trace - Dispose of Waste Properly, Leave What You Find (1 hour)
- Type of jobs available and employment requirements (2 hours)
- Ancillary industry organizations (1 hour)
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) inspections (2 hours)

Day 4: 8am-5pm (8 hours in total)

- Development of a risk management plan (4 hours)
- Morning and evening guide meetings (2 hour)
- Leave No Trace - Minimize Campfire Impacts, Respect Wildlife (1 hour)
- Preparation for final assessment (1 hour)

Day 5: 8am-5pm (8 hours in total)

- Leave No Trace - Be Considerate of Other Visitors (2 hours)
- Final Assessment\* (6 hours)

\*Final Assessment: Students will work in teams of two to develop a comprehensive expedition plan. This plan will include marketing materials, meeting place, itinerary, permit rules, equipment lists and a tour plan. They will present their final plan to the group at the end of the day.

This five-day program provides four days of instruction and one day of assessment. Participants should expect homework, study and reading assignments each night.

**PREREQUISITES:**



- None.

## EMPLOYMENT TRACK & NEXT STEPS

Employment options after completion of the course abound as this is a training to attain and keep employment as an outdoor professional. For example, current mountain guides and instructors can take this program as continuing education and receive their Leave No Trace Level 1 Instructor certificate. New mountain guides, instructors, or other outdoor professionals can learn more about what to include in their professional resume for future employment. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options.

## **Technical Rope Rescue Comprehensive (140 Hours)**

The technical rope rescue comprehensive takes the skills and techniques learned in the climbing courses and applies them specifically to rescue scenarios in mountain environments. The TRRC will take rescue skills learned in multi-pitch rock rescue seminars and then expand on them. The course will also delve into the specific and different techniques used in both mountain rescue and fire rescue.

Students will practice rescue techniques in both low and high angle environments. Students will be instructed in rescue operations, incident management, safety factors and forces, the grammar of rescue, and the use of rescue equipment.

## CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS

- Team Rescue Hauling Systems - 3:1, 6:1 and 9:1 (6 hours)
- Self-Rescue Hauling Systems on Rock and on Snow and Ice - 3:1, 5:1, 6:1 (10 hours)
- Pulley Systems - simple, compound and complex (2 hours)
- Lowering Systems - with a break rack, scarab, munter-hitch, super-munter, tube-style device, and autoblocking device (10 hours)
- Anchor Systems - for team rescue and self-rescue on high-angle terrain, steep-angle terrain and on snow and ice. (12 hours)
- Lowering Systems with a Litter (9 hours)
- Use of a Guiding Line (9 hours)
- Use of High Lines and Reeving Systems (9 hours)
- Patent Packaging - with and without a harness (4 hours)
- Specialized Rescue Equipment - including discussions of Class I-III harnesses, chest harnesses, rigging plates, pulleys, swivels, edge protection, and tripods (9 hours)
- Improvised Rescue Equipment - waist and chest harnesses, improvised tri-pods and bipods, high points, and improvised anchors (6 hours)
- Rope Climbing Techniques - with a friction-hitch system, with an autoblocking device, with an assisted breaking device (4 hours)
- Belay Escapes - off an autoblocking device and off the body (4 hours)
- Belays - tandem prusik belays, body belays, belay plates, mechanical belays (6 hours)
- Passing Knots - in both a multi-pitch self-rescue setting as well as in a team rescue setting with a litter (5 hours)
- Scene Management - command structure (2 hours)
- Special Considerations for Mountain Rescue (2 hours)
- Crevasse Rescue - critical procedures for team and self-rescue (5 hours)
- Multi-Pitch Descents with a Patient in a Self-Rescue Setting (5 hours)
- Helicopter Operations (1 hour)
- Pick-Offs - patient pickoffs for rope rescue teams and self-rescue (4 hours)
- Physics of Rescue Systems on Anchors and on Equipment (8 hours)

- Rappelling - classic rappel, extended rappel, tandem rappel, and counterbalance rappel techniques (4 hours)
- Knots - figure-eight family, overhand, double-overhand-on-a-bite, bowline, double bowline, long-tail bowline, butterfly, high tension tie-off, wrap-three-pull-two, and wrap-two-pull-one (2 hours)
- Bends - double-fisherman's, overhand flat bend, water bend, double sheet bend, frost bend (2 hours)
- Hitches - prusik, klemheist, autoblock, clove, munter, and garda (2 hours)
- Load Releasable Hitches - munter-mule and radium-release (2 hours)

#### PREREQUISITES:

- Successful completion of Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue Course and Outdoor Rock Climbing - Intensive Introduction Course or equivalent experience in the following within the last two years:
  1. Experience traditional climbing
  2. Experience building anchors on snow and rock
  3. Experience mountaineering and crevasse rescue systems

#### EMPLOYMENT TRACK & NEXT STEPS

Employment options after completion of this program includes being a part of a search and rescue team and any job that it is required to have National Fire Protection Association Technician Level training, such as fire service and other emergency response personnel who perform technical rescue operations. This program can be used as continuing education for current mountain guides, instructors, SAR team members, or other outdoor professionals. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options.

#### **Leave No Trace Level 1 Instructor (20 Hours)**

Trainer courses are designed for educators, guides, agency employees, and other outdoor professionals. Successful graduates of the Trainer Course gain the skills to teach Leave No Trace techniques and ethics to their clients, friends and family.

Participants learn the concepts of Leave No Trace and prepare to teach Leave No Trace curriculum in a variety of settings. Workshop topics include the underlying ethics and seven principles of Leave No Trace:

#### CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS:

- Plan Ahead and Prepare (3 hours)
- Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces (3 hours)
- Dispose of Waste Properly (3 hours)
- Leave What You Find (3 hours)
- Minimize Campfire Impacts (3 hours)
- Respect Wildlife (3 hours)
- Be Considerate of Other Visitors (2 hours)

#### PREREQUISITES:

- Completion of the Backpacking and Wilderness Skills Course, and/or meet the following prerequisites:
  - Completed multiple day-long hikes in the mountains
  - Camped overnight in the mountains
  - Cooked on a backpacking stove
  - Backpacked, having carried all of one's camping gear for at least two days and one night
  - Packed sufficient food, water and gear for the terrain and weather for a backpacking trip

#### EMPLOYMENT TRACK & NEXT STEPS

Employment options after completion of this program as well as meeting other job requirements includes outdoor education, guiding, agency employee, among other outdoor professional roles. This is the minimum requirement for outdoor professionals and can be used as continuing education for current outdoor professionals. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options.

### **Leave No Trace Level 2 Instructor (50 Hours)**

The Leave No Trace Level 2 Instructor program is a longer version of the Trainer program. Those who complete the five-day program will be able to provide Trainer programs to students or co-workers after completing the certification.

#### **CURRICULUM AND ITINERARY**

Day 1: 8am-5pm (8 hours in total)

- Introduction to Leave No Trace (1 hour)
- Introduction to teaching topics (1 hour)
- Introduction to outdoor pedagogy (1 hour)
- Lesson planning (1 hour)
- Equipment and food check (1 hour)
- Gear rentals (1 hour)
- Tent and food partner planning (1 hour)
- Development of the week's plan, and principal one - plan ahead and prepare (1 hour)

Day 2: 7am-5pm (10 hours in total)

- Locate and set up camp (2 hours)
- Principal two – travel and camp on durable surfaces (4 hours)
- Principal three – dispose of waste properly (4 hours)

Day 3: 7am-6pm (11 hours in total)

- Break down camp and move to second backcountry camp (2 hours)
- Principal four – leave what you find (4 hours)
- Principal five – minimize campfire impact (4 hours)
- If conditions are acceptable, the team will build a mound fire (1 hour)

Day 4: 7am-6pm (11 hours in total)

- Break down camp and move to a third backcountry camp (2 hours)
- Principal six – respect wildlife (4 hours)
- Principal seven – be considerate of other visitors (4 hours)

In addition to these topics, the instructors will demonstrate how to complete several different types of bear hangs. Obviously, if the trip is in bear country, this will be done earlier in the program. (1 hour)

Day 5: 7am-5pm (10 hours in total)

- Break down camp and pack up (2 hours)
- Outdoor ethics (3 hours)
- Authority of the resource (2 hours)
- How to run a Leave No Trace Level 1 Instructor course (3 hours)

#### **PREREQUISITES:**

- Completion of the Backpacking and Wilderness Skills Course, and/or meet the following prerequisites:
  - Completed multiple day-long hikes in the mountains

- Camped overnight in the mountains
- Cooked on a backpacking stove
- Backpacked, having carried all of one's camping gear for at least two days and one night
- Packed sufficient food, water and gear for the terrain and weather for a backpacking trip

#### EMPLOYMENT TRACK & NEXT STEPS

Employment after completion of this program as well as other job requirements includes working with land management agencies and LNT Level 2 Instructor for a guide service to complete internal Trainer trainings for their staff. This program can be used as continuing education for current outdoor professionals. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options.

#### **AIARE Avalanche Level I (24 Hours)**

On average 37 people are killed each year by avalanches in the United States alone. The people caught in them start almost all of these avalanches. Some basic level or training and knowledge can dramatically increase your margin of safety while traveling in the backcountry.

In this 3-day course, we will teach students what to look for in the snowpack, how to test stability, how to read terrain and avoid danger zones.

The goals of this course are to:

- Provide a basic understanding of avalanches.
- Describe a framework for decision-making and risk management in avalanche terrain.
- Focus less on providing "answers" and more on identifying the right questions.
- Provide lessons and exercises that are practically oriented, useful, and applicable in the field

#### CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS:

- Types of avalanches (3 hours)
- Characteristics of avalanches (2 hours)
- An introduction to how avalanches form and release (3 hours)
- Avalanche terrain (4 hours)
- Trip planning and preparation (4 hours)
- Travel techniques (4 hours)
- Decision making (4 hours)

This course does not cover snow science or avalanche technology in any detail. While it touches on and introduces advanced subjects such as snowpack development and metamorphism, these are discussed at a basic, non-technical level.

#### PREREQUISITES:

- Previous experience on snowshoes, skis or a splitboard

#### EMPLOYMENT TRACK & NEXT STEPS

This program can be used as continuing education for current mountain guides, instructors, or other outdoor professionals. Employment after completion of this program as well as being a proficient skier or snowboarder includes but is not limited to ski or snowboard instructors at a ski resort, ski area or snow park, hiking or snowshoe guide, ski patroller, or backcountry ranger. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options.

## **AIARE Avalanche Rescue Skills Course (8 hours)**

On average 37 people are killed each year by avalanches in the United States alone. The people caught in them start almost all of these avalanches. Some basic level or training and knowledge can dramatically increase your margin of safety while traveling in the backcountry.

In this Avalanche Rescue Skills Course, students who have previously completed the AIARE Avalanche Level I will learn how to rescue themselves and partners if caught in an avalanche.

### **CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Avalanche rescue skills and scenarios (8 hours)

### **PREREQUISITES:**

- Completion of the AIARE Avalanche Level I
- Previous experience on snowshoes, skis or a splitboard

### **EMPLOYMENT TRACK & NEXT STEPS**

This program can be used as continuing education for current mountain guides, instructors, or other outdoor professionals. Employment after completion of this program as well as being a proficient skier or snowboarder includes but is not limited to ski or snowboard instructors at a ski resort, ski area or snow park, hiking or snowshoe guide, ski patroller, or backcountry ranger. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options.

## **AMGA Single Pitch Instructor Course (27 Hours)**

The American Mountain Guides Association (AMGA) Single Pitch Instructor Course is the first in the AMGA sequence of climbing instructor and guide training programs.

The SPI course was designed to help capable recreational climbers transition into capable and effective climbing instructors. The course focuses on the technical skills required by an instructor as they are applied in all forms of single pitch climbing instruction. In addition to this, the course addresses the essential educational and environmental tenets required to teach climbing. Those seeking certification may go on to take a two-day field examination following the course or at any time within three years after successfully completing the course.

Certified Single Pitch Instructors are expected to demonstrate the technical and educational proficiencies necessary to instruct a variety of single pitch rock climbing skills in a safe and effective manner to both groups and individuals. While not all students are fully prepared for the certification exam by the end of the course, every participant will have the training to practice and prepare for an exam in the future and will leave the course with many new ideas and skills.

The SPI course is intended for recreational climbers who are already proficient in both top-rope and lead climbing. It was designed to benefit those who wish to facilitate outdoor climbing programs for groups such as those offered by guide services, camps, schools, universities, therapeutic groups, churches and climbing gyms. Those who wish to teach climbing in the outdoors tend to have a much higher success rate in obtaining employment as climbing instructors with this training and certification. The AMGA strongly suggests this course as a precursor to those interested in pursuing Rock Instructor or Rock Guide training and certification.

### **CURRICULUM AND ITINERARY**

Day 1: (9 hours in total)

- SPI and AMGA Program Overview (1 hour)
- Professionalism (1 hour)
- Equipment (1 hour)
- Knots and Hitches (1 hour)
- Protection and Anchoring (1 hour)
- Instructor Lead Demonstration Climb (.5 hour)
- Belaying (1 hour)
- Base Managed Sites (1 hour)
- Base Managed Assistance Skills (1 hour)
- Daily Debrief (.5)

Day 2: (9 hours in total)

- The Climbing Site (1 hour)
- Site Organization and Group Management (1 hour)
- Top Managed Sites (2 hours)
- Lowering (1 hour)
- Top Managed Assistance Skills (1 hour)
- Rappelling (2 hours)
- Daily Debrief (1 hour)

Day 3: (9 hours in total)

- Programing and Risk Management (2 hours)
- Instructional Technique (2 hours)
- Teaching Climbing Movement (2 hours)
- Review Sessions (2 hours)
- Final Group and Individual Debriefs (1 hour)

PREREQUISITES:

- You are at least 18 years old.
- You are a member of the American Mountain Guides Association at the time of the course. (If you're not a member already, you can sign up at [amga.com](http://amga.com).)
- You have a genuine interest in rock climbing and instructing novices on single pitch crags.
- You have at least 12 months of prior climbing experience.
- You are an active climber with traditional lead climbing experience, and you have lead a minimum of 15 traditional pitches.
- You are able to comfortably set-up climbs, to belay, to rappel without guidance and can demonstrate familiarity with anchoring principals, natural anchors and artificial anchors (wires, hexes, passive and active cams). These skills may be assessed at the start of your course.
- You are capable of comfortably climbing 5.8 while on top-rope.
- Successful completion of AMTL I or equivalent experience

EMPLOYMENT TRACK & NEXT STEPS

This program can be used as continuing education for current mountain guides, instructors, or other outdoor professionals. Employment options after completion of this course and once you have passed the AMGA Single Pitch Instructor Exam include being an instructor of outdoor climbing programs for groups such as those offered by guide services, camps, schools, universities, therapeutic groups, churches and climbing gyms. See

Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options. This course is also a prerequisite for higher-level programs such as the AMGA Rock Guide Course and Technical Rope Rescue Comprehensive.

### **Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue (30 Hours)**

The Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue course is a three-day hands-on class that fully takes place on the massive glaciers of Washington's Mt. Baker, considered the best glacier training ground in the U.S. The intent is to give students the fundamental skills to be a contributing member of a rope team. This is an introductory level course and is essential to build your tool kit in order to kick off your mountaineering career. Continual improvement of our curriculum ensures that this course is a good way to keep up with the state of the art for continuing education as well.

In this course, you will learn front pointing and French cramponing techniques, the eight principal ice axe positions, self-arrest, anchor placement, procedures for glacier travel, crevasse rescue technique, and route finding.

We recommend this program for climbers who would like to brush up on glacier travel skills in preparation for other programs, as these skills are prerequisites for intermediate courses and some students might have all the other required skills except for glacier travel and crevasse rescue.

Though this program takes place on the upper flanks of Mt. Baker, we do not make a summit attempt. Instead, we maximize our instructional time and dedicate our three days to learning and practicing essential glacier travel skills.

#### **CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS:**

- selection & use of personal equipment as well as ropes, knots, & harnesses (2 hours)
- the uses of map, compass, altimeter, and GPS (2 hours)
- principles of glacier travel, route finding, glaciation, mountain weather, & geology (4 hours)
- self-arrest from all positions (4 hours)
- French, German, and American cramponing techniques (3 hours)
- interrelationship, choice between, & application of all principal ice axe positions (2 hours)
- rope work (5 hours)
- snow anchors (4 hours)
- rappelling & prusiking (4 hours)

#### **PREREQUISITES:**

- Completion of the Backpacking and Wilderness Skills Course, and/or meet the following prerequisites:
  - Completed multiple day-long hikes in the mountains
  - Camped overnight in the mountains
  - Cooked on a backpacking stove
  - Backpacked, having carried all of one's camping gear for at least two days and one night
  - Packed sufficient food, water and gear for the terrain and weather for a backpacking trip

#### **EMPLOYMENT TRACK & NEXT STEPS**

This program can be used as continuing education for current mountain guides, instructors, or other outdoor professionals. Employment options after successful completion of this program as well as sufficient personal practice include, but are not limited to backpacking guides, field staff, adventure guides and co-leaders or apprentices. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options. This course also serves as a way to gain prerequisite experience for higher-level programs such as the AMTL II, III, & IV, Technical Rope Rescue Comprehensive, Alpine Ice Introduction, AMGA Alpine-discipline courses and AMGA Rock Guide Course.

### **Alpinism 1: Introduction to Mountaineering (60 Hours)**

This course is intended to serve as an intensive and complete introduction to off-trail alpine travel, and to all the fundamental alpine mountaineering skills of rock, snow, and ice climbing. The course is presented in the most highly glaciated area in the conterminous forty-eight states and offers exposure to an unusually large variety of landforms and climbing surfaces. Groups are small and individual attention is very great, allowing instructors to respond to participants who are progressing at different rates or who want emphasis on different parts of the curriculum.

Upon completion of the program, each participant should be qualified as a technically competent rope team member capable of making alpine mountaineering ascents on routes of intermediate difficulty.

#### **CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS:**

##### **Climbing Skills: (43 hours in total)**

- Selection and use of personal equipment (1 hour)
- Selection and use of ropes, knots, and harnesses (1 hour)
- Selection and use of rock, snow, & ice anchors for belays & intermediate protection (4 hours)
- Belaying techniques on rock, snow, and ice (5 hours)
- Free climbing techniques on low and high angle rock, snow, and ice (9 hours)
- Principles of glacier travel & route finding (5 hours)
- Self-arrest; rappelling, & prusiking (5 hours)
- The concept and application of the self-belay (5 hours)
- Individual & team crevasse rescue techniques (8 hours)

##### **General Mountain Skills: (17 hours in total)**

- Leave No Trace travel, camping, and climbing (5 hours)
- An introduction to alpine ecology (2 hours)
- Map, compass, altimeter and GPS use: reading, intersection, and triangulation (3 hours)
- Evaluation and prediction of mountain weather patterns (2 hours)
- Introduction to avalanche hazard evaluation (2 hours)
- Introduction to first aid and the evacuation of injured climbers (3 hours)

#### **PREREQUISITES:**

- Completion of the Backpacking and Wilderness Skills Course, and/or meet the following prerequisites:
  - Completed multiple day-long hikes in the mountains
  - Camped overnight in the mountains
  - Cooked on a backpacking stove
  - Backpacked, having carried all of one's camping gear for at least two days and one night



- o Packed sufficient food, water and gear for the terrain and weather for a backpacking trip
- Additional prerequisite experience, including:
  - o Good physical condition
  - o Ability to carry 45-55-pound backpack for multiple hours
  - o Stamina to hike for over 8 hours (including breaks and with lesser pack weight)

## EMPLOYMENT TRACK & NEXT STEPS

Employment options after successful completion of this program as well as sufficient personal practice include but are not limited to backpacking guide, field staff, and adventure guide or instructor. This program can be used as continuing education for current mountain guides, instructors, or other outdoor professionals. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options. The Alpinism 1 also serves as a prerequisite for other programs such as the Alpinism 2, AMTL II, and AMGA Alpine Skills Course.

### **Alpinism 2: Intermediate Mountaineering (60 Hours)**

This program is designed for climbers who have participated in introductory level mountaineering training or who have a similar level of skill and climbing experience. In this program you will review and refresh those glacier and alpine rock skills and advance your climbing to the next level. It includes three days on alpine rock and three on glacier routes.

To qualify for the course, you need to have a few days of rock climbing under your belt plus previous experience with the basics of self-arrest, cramponing, crevasse rescue, and glacier travel. We review those skills briefly and then build on them in order to help you move confidently to the intermediate level of alpine climbing.

For the first day of the alpine rock section of this program, we use an easily accessible cragging area just east of the Cascade crest. We work on anchors, belaying, and free climbing technique, and during this day you will also refresh your knowledge and develop more advanced skills with knots, building and equalizing anchors, and managing the rope.

On our second and third days, we apply those skills to multi-pitch routes on Liberty Bell and South Early Winter Spire, both above Washington Pass, the Cascade's premier alpine rock climbing area. During these multi-pitch climbs, your guide will continue to evaluate your climbing technique and help you refine it as you become steadily more comfortable with challenging ground and exposure.

We then shift to a different part of the North Cascades for an ascent of a major glaciated peak, most commonly Mt. Shuksan, Sahale Peak, or Eldorado Peak. The routes we climb offer excellent snow and ice climbing, and these peaks are among the most beautiful glaciated mountains in North America.

In addition to reviewing skills, throughout this program your guide will help you advance your technique and complete your repertoire of skills for intermediate level mountaineering and ascents. Additionally, we will involve you with route finding and terrain assessment with the goal of helping you further develop good mountaineering judgment. As in all AAI programs, we will also thoroughly cover Leave No Trace skills so that you can minimize or eliminate impacts on the environment whenever you camp and climb.

By the time you have completed the classic ascents in this program, you will have become a climber who is more highly skilled, a better judge of hazards, and adept at applying LNT techniques in a variety of mountain environments.

## CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS:

### Alpine Travel & Climbing Skills: (51 hours in total)

- o Selection of specialized equipment for intermediate climbing (3 hours)
- o Intermediate problems in maps, compass, altimeter, and GPS use (4 hours)
- o Introduction to the physics of glacier formation & movement for use in route finding and evaluation (8 hours)
- o Intermediate free climbing techniques (10 hours)
- o Toprope systems (4 hours)
- o Traditional climbing gear removal (3 hours)
- o Knot passing (2 hours)
- o Multi-pitch climbing systems and anchoring techniques (10 hours)
- o Intermediate problems in crevasse rescue (5 hours)
- o Intermediate problems in objective hazard assessment (2 hours)

### General Mountain Skills: (9 hours in total)

- Leave No Trace travel, camping, and climbing (5 hours)
- Alpine ecology: the fragility and vitality of several ecosystems (2 hours)
- Evaluation and prediction of mountain weather patterns (2 hours)

## PREREQUISITES:

- Successful completion of Alpinism 1 or equivalent experience in the following within the last two years:
  - o Overnight backpacking experience
  - o Ability to cook for yourself on a backpacking stove
  - o Good physical condition
  - o Ability to carry 45-55-pound backpack for multiple hours
  - o Stamina to hike for over 8 hours (including breaks and with lesser pack weight)
  - o Familiarity with the basics of rock climbing, including knots and hitches, belaying, rappelling, and basic climbing movement
  - o Previous experience with self-arresting, cramponing, crevasse rescue, and glacier travel

## EMPLOYMENT TRACK & NEXT STEPS

This program can be used as continuing education for current mountain guides, instructors, or other outdoor professionals. Employment options after successful completion of this program as well as sufficient personal practice include but are not limited to backpacking guide, field staff, and adventure guide or instructor. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options. The Alpinism 2 also serves as a prerequisite for other programs such as the AMTL II, AMGA Alpine-discipline courses.

### **Alpine Ice Climbing: Introduction (60 Hours)**

The first course offered by AAI in 1975, this intensive program provides thorough instruction in all the skills required on difficult alpine ice climbs. Through this curriculum, you will develop a complete repertoire of state-of-the-art high-angle snow and ice climbing skills and learn to apply them efficiently in all conditions. All of this instruction is located in America's top glacier training area, the Coleman Glacier of Mt. Baker.

Participants are instructed in a highly refined, hybrid ice climbing technique that combines the most effective aspects of American, German, and French approaches to snow and ice. Groups are very small and there is flexibility in emphasis according to individual needs.

## CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS:

- Design concepts, performance, and selection of ice axes & technical tools (2 hours)
- Proper choice between and application of the primary ice axe positions: piolet canne, panne, manche, poignard, ramasse, rampe, ancre, and traction (5 hours)
- Choice between and application of American, French, and German cramponing techniques (4 hours)
- Proper selection and placement of ice screws, snow flukes & pickets for belays and intermediate protection (6 hours)
- The uses of mechanical belay devices in alpine climbing (4 hours)
- Specialized designs and uses of alpine and technical tools in high angle climbing (4 hours)
- Free climbing technique on overhanging ice (8 hours)
- Setting up and operating hanging belays (4 hours)
- The uses of prusiks (3 hours)
- Crevasse rescue techniques: self-rescue, pulley systems, and pulley system combinations (8 hours)
- The use of skiing glissades for ease and speed of descent (2 hours)
- Glacial structure and movement: using large external landforms to predict inner glacial structures and hence the difficulties and hazards of a potential route (2 hours)
- Evaluation of the objective hazards of avalanche, rock fall, and ice fall (2 hours)
- Integration of specific skills with the general goals of efficient, safe, and self-dependent climbing (4 hours)
- Leave No Trace travel, camping, & climbing (2 hours)

## PREREQUISITES:

- Completion of the Backpacking and Wilderness Skills Course, and/or meet the following prerequisites:
  - Completed multiple day-long hikes in the mountains
  - Camped overnight in the mountains
  - Cooked on a backpacking stove
  - Backpacked, having carried all of one's camping gear for at least two days and one night
  - Packed sufficient food, water and gear for the terrain and weather for a backpacking trip
- Additional prerequisite experience, including:
  - Basic alpine mountaineering experience
  - Basic snow climbing skills
  - Basic glacier travel skills

## EMPLOYMENT TRACK & NEXT STEPS

This program can be used as continuing education for current mountain guides, instructors, or other outdoor professionals. Employment options after successful completion of this program as well as sufficient personal practice include but are not limited to field staff, adventure guide, or ice climbing co-instructor or apprentice. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options. This program also serves as a way to gain prerequisite experience for higher-level programs such as the AMTL III, AMGA Alpine-discipline courses.

## **Avalanche Pro Level I (40 Hours)**

The Avalanche Pro Level I Course develops an understanding of snowpack formation and metamorphism. Observation guidelines and recording standards for factors that influence and indicate snowpack stability are

presented. Avalanche formation and release are discussed. A stability analysis and forecasting process is introduced. This course is designed for those who have an interest in expanding their knowledge and understanding of snow stability and snow stability factors. It is ideal for snow safety and guiding professionals and people interested in these and related careers. The Pro Level I serves as a pre-requisite for Avalanche Pro Level II courses.

This course will be held over five full, consecutive days, including both classroom and field instruction. Participants on a Pro Level I course can expect a mix of classroom and field hours in the following subjects:

#### CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS

- Avalanche formation and release (6 hours)
- Snow stability factors (5 hours)
- Observing and recording weather (7 hours)
- Observing and recording the snowpack (7 hours)
- Observing and recording avalanche activity (8 hours)
- Stability analysis and forecasting (7 hours)

#### PREREQUISITES:

- Completion of an AAA recognized Level 1 course for students pursuing the Professional track.
- Completion of an AAA recognized Avalanche Rescue course (available starting in late 2017)
- One winter season (20 days or more) of relevant experience, demonstrated through one of the following:
  - Prior avalanche work experience or
  - A supervised unpaid work internship in the guiding/avalanche industry, supported by a letter of reference or
  - Winter backcountry travel experience supported by documented trip planning and recorded field observations that contributed to avalanche hazard assessment and personal avalanche risk management or
  - Letter of Recommendation from professional member or
  - AAA Membership, Affiliate or Professional

#### EMPLOYMENT TRACK & NEXT STEPS

This program can be used as continuing education for current mountain guides, instructors or other outdoor professionals. Employment after successful completion of this program along with being a proficient skier or snowboarder includes, but is not limited to ski patrol for a ski resort, ski area or snow park, backcountry ranger, or avalanche forecaster/observer for a ski resort, a railroad, a mining operation or a department of transportation. This level of certification is required for those who wish to seek employment as avalanche instructors. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options.

#### **AMGA Alpine Skills Course (50 Hours)**

The Alpine Skills Course (ASC) can be the first step in the AMGA's Alpine Guide training and certification process. It is a 5-day course, designed for aspiring guides and instructors who have an alpine climbing background and interest in developing their guiding skills in this setting. The ASC places strong emphasis on maximizing client rewards while effectively managing risks.

The ASC addresses guiding techniques commonly used on simple glacier routes that may include rock scrambles up to Class 4 with short steps of easy 5th class. The terrain might also require technical descents, management and movement of multiple clients, small team rescue and other related skills and knowledge.

There will be considerable structured practice in the ASC. Techniques will be presented and/or demonstrated, you will practice on the ground, and then practice in venues that are representative of the terrain.

## CURRICULUM AND ITINERARY

### Day 1 (10 hours in total)

- Introductions and Course Overview (.5 hour)
- MGA / IFMGA Overview (.5 hour)
- Risk Management Discussion and Safety Briefing for Course (.5 hour)
- Professionalism (.5 hour)
- Client Care Discussion (.5 hour)
- Guides Notebook (.5 hour)
- Guides Meeting Process (.5 hour)
- Navigation and Time Management (.5 hour)
- Guides Pack (day and overnight) (.5 hour)
- Knots and Hitches (1 hour)
- Technical Equipment Selection (.5 hour)
- Belay Anchors (1 hour)
- Belay Techniques (1 hour)
- Lowering Techniques (1 hour)
- Rappelling Techniques (1 hour)

### Day 2 (10 hours in total)

- Guides Meeting- Instructor Demonstration (1 hour)
- Client Care Discussion (2 hours)
- Leave No Trace Discussion (1 hour)
- Navigation and time Management (2 hours)
- 5th class techniques and station management with two clients and one rope. (2 hours)
- Short Roping and Short Pitching on rock (2 hours)

### Day 3 (10 hours in total)

- Guides Meeting (.5 hour)
- Snow and Alpine Ice Equipment Selection (1 hour)
- Snow Climbing without crampons (1 hour)
- Crampon and Ice Axe Techniques (1.5 hours)
- Short Roping on Snow (2 hours)
- Snow and Alpine Ice Anchors (2 hours)
- Pitched climbing on alpine ice and snow (2 hours)

### Day 4 (10 hours in total)

- Guides Meeting (1 hour)
- Roping-up Techniques for Glacier Travel (2 hours)
- Short Roping to Glacier Travel Transitions (2 hours)
- Crevasse Rescue (3 hours)
- Short Roping and Short Pitching on snow (2 hours)

### Day 5 (10 hours in total)

- Guides Meeting (1 hour)
- Overview of Rescue Skills (1 hour)
- Knot Pass while Lowering (1 hour)
- Belay Escapes (2 hours)
- Mechanical Advantage Raises (2 hours)
- Rope Ascending Techniques (1 hour)

- Rescue problem-solving practicum (2 hours)

#### PREREQUISITES:

- Current AMGA member
- Current CPR Certification
- Current Wilderness First Responder (WFR) Certification or higher that meets the [Minimum Guidelines and Scope of Practice for a WFR](#)
- Successful completion of a Level I Avalanche Training and Avalanche Rescue Course
- Two years personal climbing experience on a variety of terrain that includes snow, rock and alpine
- Confidence leading 5.6 in rock shoes, at the time of the course
- Confidence on 3rd and 4th class terrain, in mountain boots, at the time of the course
- Competence in overnight backcountry camping
- Experience up to 10,000' in elevation
- Familiar with basic knots, including: figure 8, bowline, clove hitch, munter hitch, mule hitch, prusik, flat overhand, double fisherman's and klemheist
- Confidence placing traditional rock protection
- Familiar with multiple types of belaying techniques, including plates and assisted braking devices
- Familiar with ascending methods
- Familiar with mechanical advantage systems
- Familiar with LNT practices
- Documentation of lead or shared lead on 5 rock climbs rated 5.6 or harder
- Documentation of lead or shared lead on 5 ascents that include snow climbing
- Documentation of 3 overnight backcountry trips
- Successful completion of AMTL I, AMTL II, AMTL III, AMTL IV, or equivalent experience
- Successful completion of Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue or equivalent experience
- Successful completion of Alpine Ice: Introduction or equivalent experience
- Successful completion of Alpinism 2: Intermediate Mountaineering or equivalent experience

#### EMPLOYMENT TRACK & NEXT STEPS

Employment after successful completion of this course includes alpine mountain guide or instructor. This program is also seen as continuing education for current guides or instructors. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options.

#### **AMGA Alpine Guides Course (80 Hours)**

The Alpine Guide Course (AGC) is designed to take a competent alpine climber and develop the fundamental skills she/he needs to guide in a non-glaciated alpine environment. It provides training for aspiring guides and experienced guides who work in a wide range of alpine environments including alpine rock, mixed terrain, alpine ice, and waterfall ice. The AGC emphasizes a hands-on approach to the mechanics of guiding on alpine terrain.

#### CURRICULUM AND ITINERARY

##### Day 1 (10 hours in total)

- Introductions (1 hour)
- Morning Guides' Meeting - Instructor Team Demo (1 hour)
- Short-Roping Review (1:1 & 2:1) (2 hours)
- Building and Using Alpine Rock Anchors (1 hour)
- Alpine Belay Techniques - Progression of Security (1 hour)
- Short-Rope Testing (2 hours)

- Combining Short-Roping and Short Pitching (Student Practice) (1 hour)
- Evening Guides' Meeting - Instructor Team Demo (1 hour)

Day 2 (10 hours in total)

- Morning Guides' Meeting - Student Led (1 hour)
- Alpine Transitions Overview (1 hour)
- Short-Roping Transitions to/from 5th-class climbing using 1 rope (2 hours)
- Transitions from Short-Roping to Technical Descents using 1 rope (2 hours)
- Alternative Descending Systems; Equivocation Hitch and Tag/Pull Cords (1 hour)
- Transition Circuits - Student-Led (2 hours)
- Evening Guides' Meeting - Student Led (1 hour)

Day 3 (10 hours in total)

- Morning Guides' Meeting - Student Led (1 hour)
- Guided Climb Instructor Demo (1 hour)
- Guided climbs Student-led (7 hours)
- Evening Guides' Meeting - Student Led (1 hour)

Day 4 (10 hours in total)

- Morning Guides' Meeting - Student-Led (1 hour)
- Alpine Snow and Glacier Equipment Selection (1 hour)
- Snow Climbing without Crampons (1 hour)
- Mountain Axe and Crampon Techniques (1 hour)
- Short-Roping on Snow (1 hour)
- Snow Anchors (1 hour)
- Snow Belay Techniques (1 hour)
- Pitched climbing on Snow (1 hour)
- Techniques for guiding steep traverses on snow (1 hour)
- Evening Guides' Meeting - Student Led (1 hour)

Day 5 (10 hours in total)

- Morning Guides' Meeting - Student-Led (1 hour)
- Roping up for Techniques for Glacier Travel (1 hour)
- Short Roping to Glacier Transitions (1 hour)
- Bealied Down Climbing & Lowering (1 hour)
- Rappelling in a Guiding Context (1 hour)
- Crevasse Rescue Components (Participants Practice Session) (2 hours)
- Evening Guides' Meeting - Student Led (1 hour)
- Gear, Fuel, and Food Selection for a Multi-Day Alpine Climb (1 hour)
- Mountain Navigation (1 hour)

Day 6 (10 hours in total)

- Morning Guides' Meeting - Student Led (1 hour)
- Approach for a Multi-Day Alpine Climb Student-Led (4 hours)
- Guided climbs Student-Led (4 hours)
- Evening Guides' Meeting - Student Led (1 hour)

Day 7 (10 hours in total)

- Morning Guides' Meeting - Student Led (1 hour)
- Guided Climb Student-Led (5 hours)
- Descent to Trailhead (3 hours)
- Evening Guides' Meeting - Student-Led (1 hour)

Day 8 (10 hours in total)

- Morning Guides' Meeting Student Led (1 hour)
- Rescue Skills Overview (1 hour)
- Practical Rescue Components Demo and Practice (2 hours)
  - Belay Escape
  - Rappelling
  - Non-Mechanical Ascension
  - Raising
  - Counterbalance Rappel
  - Load-Releasable Systems
  - Lower/Knot Pass/Lower
- Instructor Demonstration of the Alpine Rescue Drill (1 hour)
- Evening Guides' Meeting - Student Led (1 hour)
- Course Review (1 hour)
- Course Group Debrief (1 hour)
- Individual Debriefs and Interviews (2 hours)

PREREQUISITES:

- Current AMGA member
- Current CPR Certification
- Current Wilderness First Responder (WFR) Certification or higher that meets the [Minimum Guidelines and Scope of Practice for a WFR](#)
- Successful completion of a Level I Avalanche Training and Avalanche Rescue Course, or AMGA approved Level II
- Successful completion of the Rock Guide Course
- A climbing resume (provided by the AMGA) that includes, at a minimum, the following climbs, will be required upon submission of your application for this course:
  - A total of 30 routes that are alpine rock and alpine snow/glacier/ice
    - Lead or shared lead on 15 different alpine rock routes in alpine climbing areas such as the North Cascades, Rocky Mountain National Park, the Sierra, or the Tetons. The 15 routes should fulfill the following criteria:
      1. 5 of which are alpine routes rated 5.8 or harder
      2. 10 or more are grade III or longer
      3. 5 of which are alpine climbs that are rated 5.6 or harder that were climbed in mixed conditions. (note: We encourage you to focus on honing this skill by climbing bolted mixed routes that contain snow and ice in crampons and that are up to M3 in difficulty. The AMGA has noted many students with a lack of experience moving in terrain that is between the medium of pure rock and snow routes.)
      4. 2 routes completed within two years of the application due date
  - Lead or shared lead on 10 different snow/glacier climbs completed in alpine areas such as the Sierra, the Cascades, Rocky Mountain National Park, or Alaska. These 10 routes should fulfill the following criteria:
    - 5 or more are grade III or longer
    - 5 or more snow climbs rated 40 degrees or steeper
    - 5 or more involve overnight camping in an environment with seasonal snow and/or winter snow conditions
  - Lead or shared lead on 5 alpine/water ice routes that involve AI/WI 3 climbing or harder.
  - Of these 30 routes at least 10 have been completed within two years of the application due date



**\*\*Alpine Skills Courses** completed in 2024 or earlier, can be used as a prerequisite for the 8-day AGC through 2026. After 2026, the ASC will not be accepted as a prerequisite for the 8-day AGC. ASC graduates are **STRONGLY** encouraged to take the ARM module before the AGC, or to take both modules as a path to becoming an Apprentice Alpine Guide. Please contact the office to discuss what path will best set you up for success.

- Successful completion of AMTL I, AMTL II, AMTL III, AMTL IV, or equivalent experience
- Successful completion of Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue or equivalent experience
- Successful completion of Alpine Ice: Introduction or equivalent experience
- Successful completion of Alpinism 2: Intermediate Mountaineering or equivalent experience

#### **EMPLOYMENT TRACK & NEXT STEPS**

Employment after successful completion of this course includes advanced level alpine mountain guide or instructor. This program is also seen as continuing education for current guides or instructors. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options.

#### **AMGA Alpine Rock Module (70 Hours)**

The Alpine Rock Module (ARM) prepares competent alpine rock climbers to guide non-glaciated, rock-dominant alpine terrain, focusing on the techniques necessary for guiding clients in alpine environments. As part of the Alpine Guide discipline, the ARM and the Alpine Snow and Glacier Module (ASGM) can be completed to achieve the Apprentice Alpine Guide credential. The ARM emphasizes hands-on practice, coaching, and feedback to develop essential alpine rock guiding skills.

#### **CURRICULUM AND ITINERARY**

##### **Day 1 (10 hours in total)**

- Introductions (in-person) (1 hour)
- Morning Guides' Meeting — Instructor Demo (1 hour)
- Short-Roping Introduction (1 hour)
- Building and Using Alpine Rock Anchors (1 hour)
- Alpine Belay Techniques (1 hour)
- Short-Rope Testing (2 hours)
- Student Short-Roping/Pitching Practice (2 hours)
- Evening Guides' Meeting - Instructor Team Demo (present next day's plan) (1 hour)

##### **Day 2 (10 hours in total)**

- Morning Guides' Meeting — Instructor Demo (1 hour)
- Transitions from Short-Roping to 5th Class Systems using One Rope (2 hours)
- Transitions from Short-Roping to Technical Descents using One Rope (2 hours)
- Alternate Descending Systems; Equivocation Hitch and Pull Cords (2 hours)
- Transition Circuits - Student-Led (2 hours)
- Evening Guides' Meeting — Instructor Demo (1 hour)

##### **Day 3 (10 hours in total)**

- Morning Guides' Meeting — Participant Led (1 hour)
- Participant Led Guided Rock Climbs (8 hours)
- Evening Guides' Meeting — Participant Led (1 hour)

##### **Day 4 (10 hours in total)**

- Morning Guides' Meeting (1 hour)
- Equipment Selection for Guiding Alpine Snow (1 hour)
- Snow Climbing with a Mountain Axe & Crampons (1 hour)

- Short-Roping on Snow (1 hour)
- Crampon and Ice Axe Technique Short-Roping on Snow (1 hour)
- Snow Anchors & Belays (1 hour)
- Pitched Climbing on Snow (1 hour)
- Crevasse Rescue Introduction and Participant Practice (1 hour)
- Evening Guides' Meeting (1 hour)
- Gear, Fuel, and Food Selection for a Multi-Day Alpine Climb (0.5 hour)
- Mountain Navigation Review (0.5 hour)

Day 5 (10 hours in total)

- Morning Guides' Meeting (1 hour)
- Student-Led Approach for a Multi-Day Alpine Climb (8 hours)
- Evening Guides' Meeting (1 hour)

Day 6 (10 hours in total)

- Morning Guides' Meeting (1 hour)
- Participant Led Guided Alpine Climb (5 hours)
- Descent to Trailhead (3 hours)
- Evening Guides' Meeting (1 hour)

Day 7 (10 hours in total)

- Morning Guides' Meeting (1 hour)
- Rescue Skills and Their Importance (1 hour)
- Practical Rescue Components Demo and Practice (3 hours)
  - Belay Escape
  - Rappelling
  - Non-Mechanical Ascension
  - Raising
  - Counterbalance Rappel
  - Load-Releasable Systems
  - Lower/Knot Pass/Lower
- Instructor Demonstration of the Alpine Rescue Drill (2 hour)
- Evening Guides' Meeting (1 hour)
- Course Review (1 hour)
- Course Group Debrief (1 hour)

PREREQUISITES:

- Current AMGA member
- Current CPR Certification
- Current Wilderness First Responder (WFR) Certification or higher that meets the Minimum Guidelines and Scope of Practice for a WFR
- Successful completion of a Level I Avalanche Training and Avalanche Rescue Course, or AMGA approved Level II
- A climbing resume (format provided by the AMGA) that includes, at a minimum, the following climbs, will be required upon submission of your application for this course:
  - Lead or shared lead on 20 different alpine routes in alpine climbing areas such as the North Cascades, Rocky Mountain National Park, Beartooths, or the Tetons. The 20 alpine routes should fulfill the following criteria:
    - 7 or more are alpine routes rated 5.8 or harder
    - 10 or more are alpine routes with a commitment grade of Grade III or higher
    - 5 or more are alpine climbs rated 5.6 or harder that were climbed in mixed conditions w/ boots and crampons (note: We encourage you to focus on

honing this skill by climbing bolted mixed routes that contain snow and ice in crampons and that are up to M3 in difficulty. The AMGA has noted many students with a lack of experience moving in terrain that is between the medium of pure rock and snow routes.)

- 2 completed within two years of the application due date
- Lead or shared lead on 5 snow climbs that are rated 40 degrees or steeper
- Successful completion of AMTL I, AMTL II, AMTL III, AMTL IV, or equivalent experience
- Successful completion of Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue or equivalent experience
- Successful completion of Alpine Ice: Introduction or equivalent experience
- Successful completion of Alpinism 2: Intermediate Mountaineering or equivalent experience

## EMPLOYMENT TRACK & NEXT STEPS

Employment after successful completion of this course includes advanced level alpine mountain guide or instructor. This program is also seen as continuing education for current guides or instructors. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options.

## **AMGA Alpine Snow and Glacier Module (60 Hours)**

The Alpine Snow & Glacier Module (ASGM) is designed to equip competent snow and glacier climbers with the essential skills needed to guide on glaciated and snow-covered alpine terrain. This module focuses on the techniques necessary for guiding clients in these environments, with minimal emphasis on scrambling or 5th-class rock. As part of the Alpine Guide discipline, the ASGM and the Alpine Rock Module (ARM) can be completed to achieve the Apprentice Alpine Guide credential.

## CURRICULUM AND ITINERARY

### Day 1 (10 hours in total)

- Introductions and Course Overview (1 hour)
- Morning Guides' Meeting — Instructor Demo (1 hour)
- Navigation and Time/Route Planning (1 hours)
- Snow and Glacier Climbing Equipment Selection (0.5 hour)
- Ice Axe and Crampon Techniques (1 hour)
- Kiwi Coils: Setting the Rope Up for Short-roping (0.5 hour)
- Snow Anchors (1 hour)
- Snow Belay Techniques (1 hour)
- Setting the Rope Up for Pitched Climbing on Snow (1 hour)
- Participant Short-Roping/Short and Long Pitching Practice Session (1 hour)
- Guides' Meeting — Instructor Demo (1 hour)

### Day 2 (10 hours in total)

- Morning Guides' Meeting — Student Led (1 hour)
- Techniques for Guiding Steep Traverses on Snow (1 hour)
- Belayed Downclimbing and Lowering (1 hour)
- Snow-Specific Rappel Anchors (1 hour)
- Rappelling in a Guiding Context (1 hour)
- Alternate Descending Systems; Equivocation Hitch and Pull Cords (1 hour)
- Short Snow Climb- Student Led (3 hours)
- Evening Guides' Meeting — Instructor Demo (1 hour)

### Day 3 (10 hours in total)

- Morning Guides' Meeting — Participant Led (1 hour)
- Overnight Snow Climbing Equipment Selection (1 hour)

- Snow Climb- Instructor Demo (7 hours)
- Evening Guides' Meeting — Participant Led (1 hour)

Day 4 (10 hours in total)

- Morning Guides' Meeting — Participant Led(1 hour)
- Rigging the Rope for Glacier Travel (1 hour)
- Crevasse Rescue (7 hours)
- Evening Guides' Meeting— Participant Led (1 hour)

Day 5 (10 hours in total)

- Morning Guides' Meeting— Participant Led (1 hour)
- Steep Snow/Ice Climb (glaciated) up to Alpine Grade Grade III- Student-Led (8 hours)
- Evening Guides' Meeting— Participant Led (1 hour)

Day 6 (10 hours in total)

- Morning Guides' Meeting— Participant Led (1 hour)
- Steep Snow/Ice Climb- glaciated if possible- up to Alpine Grade Grade III- Student-Led (6 hours)
- Evening Guides' Meeting — Participant Led(1 hour)
- Course Review (1 hour)
- Course Group Debrief (1 hour)

PREREQUISITES:

- Current AMGA member
- Current CPR Certification
- Current Wilderness First Responder (WFR) Certification or higher that meets the [Minimum Guidelines and Scope of Practice for a WFR](#)
- Successful completion of a Level I Avalanche Training and Avalanche Rescue Course, or AMGA approved Level II
- A climbing resume (format provided by the AMGA) that includes, at a minimum, the following climbs, will be required upon submission of your application for this course:
  - Lead or shared lead on 20 different alpine routes completed in alpine areas such as the Sierra, the Cascades, Rocky Mountain National Park, or Alaska. These 20 routes should fulfill the following criteria:
    - 10 or more are grade III or longer snow/glacier routes
    - 5 or more are 40 degrees or steeper
    - 5 or more of these climbs involved overnight camping in an environment with seasonal snow and/ or winter snow conditions
  - Lead or shared lead on 5 alpine/water ice routes that involve AI/WI 3 climbing or harder. The 5 routes should fulfill the following criteria:
    - 3 routes M3 or harder climbed in mixed conditions w/ boots and crampons (note: We encourage you to focus on honing this skill by climbing bolted mixed routes that contain snow and ice in crampons and that are up to M3 in difficulty. The AMGA has noted many students with a lack of experience moving in terrain that is between the medium of pure rock and snow routes.)
    - 2 routes completed within two years of the application due date
  - Lead or shared lead on 5 alpine rock climbs that involve 5.5 climbing or harder
- Successful completion of AMTL I, AMTL II, AMTL III, AMTL IV, or equivalent experience
- Successful completion of Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue or equivalent experience
- Successful completion of Alpine Ice: Introduction or equivalent experience

- Successful completion of Alpinism 2: Intermediate Mountaineering or equivalent experience

## EMPLOYMENT TRACK & NEXT STEPS

Employment after successful completion of this course includes advanced level alpine mountain guide or instructor. This program is also seen as continuing education for current guides or instructors. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options.

## **AMGA Rock Guide Course (100 Hours)**

This is the entry-level course for the Rock Guide and Alpine Guide programs and the Rock Instructor Certification. The Rock Guide Course (RGC) was designed for aspiring guides who have a strong rock climbing background and for instructors who are interested in improving their skills and increasing knowledge. The RGC trains aspiring guides on routes up to Grade III and 5.9 while emphasizing risk management and client rewards. You are expected to arrive with a strong recreational climbing background with an acquired knowledge of knots, belaying, anchors, protection strategies, and climbing systems. It is assumed that you can lead the climbs listed on the submitted resume and that you are physically, mentally, and emotionally prepared for a week of outdoor activity.

## CURRICULUM AND ITINERARY

### Day 1 (10 hours in total)

- Introductions and Course Overview (.5 hour)
- AMGA / IFMGA Overview (.5 hour)
- Risk Management Discussion and Safety Briefing for Course (.5)
- Professionalism (1 hour)
- Guides Notebook (.5 hour)
- Guides Meeting (1 hour)
- Equipment Selection / Guides Pack (1 hour)
- Knots and Hitches (1 hour)
- Protection (1 hour)
- Belay Anchors (1 hour)
- Belay Techniques (1 hour)
- Station Management (1 hour)

### Day 2 (10 hours in total)

- Guides Meeting – Instructor Demonstration (1 hour)
- Leave No Trace Discussion (1 hour)
- Techniques for Multiple Client Guiding (2 hours)
- Lowering Techniques (2 hour)
- Rappelling Techniques Transitions and Rope Management Efficiency (2 hours)
- Station Management Practice up and down on 1 – 2 pitch climbs (2 hours)

### Day 3 (10 hours in total)

- Guides Meeting – Instructor Demonstration (.5 hour)
- Client Care Discussion (.5 hour)
- Considerations in Descending (2 hours)
- Short Roping and Short Pitching (3 hours)
- Short Roping Transitions and Guide Security (2 hours)
- Time Management Discussion (1.5 hours)
- End of Day Debrief (.5 hour)

### Day 4 (10 hours in total)

- Guides Meeting (1 hour)

- Instructor Demonstration Climb (1 hour)
- Guided Climb/s by Participants (7 hours)
- End of Day Debrief (1 hour)

Day 5 (10 hours in total)

- Guides Meeting (1 hour)
- Pedagogy Discussion/Instructional Techniques for Climbing (2 hours)
- Guided Climbs by Participants (6 hours)
- End of Day Debrief (1 hour)

Day 6 (10 hours in total)

- Guides Meeting (1 hour)
- Overview of Rescue Skills (1.5 hours)
- Knots and Hitches (1 hour)
- Knot Pass while Lowering (1 hour)
- Belay Escapes (1 hour)
- Mechanical Advantage Raises (1 hour)
- Rope Ascending Techniques (1.5 hours)
- Rescue Problem-Solving Practicum (1 hour)
- Demonstration and Practice Exam Rescue Skills Test (1 hour)

Day 7 (10 hours in total)

- Guides Meeting (1 hour)
- Multiple Client Guiding with Simul Belay Techniques (2 hours)
- Guided Climbs by Participants (6 hours)
- End of Day Debrief (1 hour)

Day 8 (10 hours in total)

- Guides Meeting (1 hour)
- Guided Climbs by Participants (7 hours)
- End of Day Debrief (1 hour)
- Review of Exam Testing Procedures / Mock Exam Day (1 hour)

Day 9 (10 hours in total)

- Guides Meeting (1 hour)
- Guided Climbs by Participants / Mock Exam Opportunity (8 hours)
- Mock Exam – End of Day Debrief (1 hour)

Day 10 (10 hours in total)

- Review Session (3 hours)
- Course Group Debrief (3 hours)
- Individual Interviews and Debrief (4 hours)

PREREQUISITES:

- Current AMGA member
- Current CPR Certification
- Current Wilderness First Responder (WFR) Certification or higher that meets the [Minimum Guidelines and Scope of Practice for a WFR](#)
- Five years personal rock climbing experience
- Confidence leading traditional and sport routes up to 5.9, at the time of the course
- Familiar with basic knots, including: figure 8, bowline, clove hitch, munter hitch, mule hitch, prusik, flat overhand, double fisherman's and klemheist

- Familiar with multiple types of mechanical and non-mechanical belay devices
- Familiar with a variety of rappel devices on multi-pitch rappels
- Familiar with LNT Practices
- You have led 10 traditional climbs rated 5.10a or harder on various rock types (single or multi-pitch)
- You have led or shared lead on 50 multi-pitch rock routes (10 of which are Grade III or longer)
- Successful completion of AMTL I, AMTL II, AMTL III, AMTL IV, or equivalent experience
- Successful completion of Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue or equivalent experience
- Successful completion of the AMGA Single Pitch Instructor Course or equivalent experience

#### EMPLOYMENT TRACK & NEXT STEPS

Employment after successful completion of this course includes advanced level rock guide or instructor. This program is also seen as continuing education for current rock guides or instructors. The AMGA Rock Guide Course also serves as a prerequisite for the AMGA Alpine Guide Course. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options.

#### **AMGA Ski Guides Course (100 Hours)**

The Ski Guide Course (SGC) is designed for skiers who wish to learn the skills and techniques used while guiding multi-day ski tours in a non-glaciated, yet possible high-mountain backcountry setting. It covers management of 3rd and 4th class terrain, technical ascents and descents, and management of multiple clients and small team rescues. Emphasis is placed on effectively managing risks and maximizing client rewards. Glacier travel, crevasse hazards and sustained technical mountaineering challenges are generally not covered in this course.

#### CURRICULUM AND ITINERARY

##### Day 1: (10 hours in total)

- Introductions and Course Overview (.5 hour)
- Risk Management (.5 hour)
- Professionalism (1 hour)
- Guide's Pack (1 hour)
- Downhill Guiding (1 hour)
- Mechanized Guiding and Touring Guiding (1 hour)
- Client Orientation and Hazard and Risk Briefings (1 hour)
- Avalanche Rescue Training (1 hour)
- AM Guides' Meeting (.5 hour)
- Field Weather, Snowpack and Avalanche Observation (1 hour)
- Run Lists (1 hour)
- PM Guides' Meeting (.5 hour)

##### Day 2: (10 hours in total)

- AM Guides' Meeting (1 hour)
- 1/2 Day Instructor Demo Mechanized Guiding (3 hours)
- Student Led Downhill Guiding (5 hours)
- PM Guides' Meeting (1 hour)

##### Day 3: (10 hours in total)

- AM Guides' Meeting (1 hour)
- Student Led Downhill Guiding (8 hours)
- PM Guides' Meeting (1 hour)

Day 4: (10 hours in total)

- Track Setting and Pacing (.5 hour)
- AM Guides' Meeting (.5 hour)
- Instructor Demo 1/2 Day Guided Ski Tour (4 hours)
- Uphill Kick Turns (1.5 hour)
- Spotting and Bracing (1.5 hour)
- PM Guides' Meeting (1 hour)
- Navigation and Time/Route Planning (1 hour)

Day 5: (10 hours in total)

- Standard Morning and Evening Weather Observations (1 hour)
- AM Guides' Meeting (1 hour)
- Student Led Guided Ski Tours (7 hours)
- PM Guides' Meeting (1 hour)

Day 6: (10 hours in total)

- AM Guides' Meeting (1 hour)
- Student Led Guided Ski Tours (8 hours)
- PM Guides' Meeting (1 hour)

Day 7: (10 hours in total)

- AM Guides' Meeting (1 hour)
- Emergency Shelter Construction (2 hour)
- Sled Construction and Use (2 hour)
- Technical Sled Lower (2 hour)
- Introduction to Rope Work for the Ski /Splitboard Guide (2 hours)
- PM Guides' Meeting (1 hour)

Day 8: (10 hours in total)

- AM Guides' Meeting (1 hour)
- Student Led Guided Ski Tours (8 hours)
- PM Guides' Meeting (1 hour)

Day 9: (10 hours in total)

- AM Guides' Meeting (1 hour)
- Student Led Guided Ski Tours (8 hours)
- PM Guides' Meeting (1 hour)

Day 10: (10 hours in total)

- Review Session (3 hours)
- Group Debrief (3 hours)
- What's Next After the SGC? (1 hour)
- Individual Interviews and Debriefs (3 hours)

PREREQUISITES:

- Current AMGA member
- Current CPR Certification
- Current Wilderness First Responder (WFR) Certification or higher that meets the [Minimum Guidelines and Scope of Practice for a WFR](#)
- Successful completion of an AMGA approved or Pro 1, or Level II
- For details on the updated avalanche education framework introduced in the 2017/18 season, please click [here](#).



- Successful completion of the Alpine Skills Course or Rock Guide Course
- Four years personal ski touring experience, including multi-day tours and peak ascents
- Confidence skiing black and double-black diamond terrain, at the time of the course
- Ability to smoothly link turns in all terrain and conditions in un-groomed backcountry snow
- Ability to ascend and descend on skis an average of 4500' - 6000' + vertical feet per day
- Ability to adjust technique to ski in diverse terrain, including sustained descents of up to 50 degrees
- Experience snow climbing with ice axe and crampons
- Comfortable with self-arrest and belay
- Ability to choose appropriate belay and rappel methods for rock and snow
- Ability to navigate in whiteout conditions
- Proficiency with multiple burial avalanche rescue (ability to consistently locate 3 buried avalanche transceivers in under 10 minutes)
- Experience with winter camping and shelter construction
- Experience with basic short roping and pitching on snow and rock
- Experience with map and compass
- Familiar with LNT practices
- You have completed 20 different ski tours (5 of which are on terrain 40 degrees or steeper, 5 of which are day tours that include at least 4500 vertical feet of ascent and descent, and 5 of which are multi-day tours using huts or ski camping) - this will be documented in your submitted resume with your application.
- **You have submitted a movement video showing your skiing/riding abilities meet the prerequisite level required**
- Movement video submission is **required for 2020 SGC** applications
- For full details and what to put in your video, please read the [SGC Video Submission Document](#) and view:
- [AMGA SGC Movement Video | Example & Tips](#)
- Student Submission Example: [AMGA SGC Movement Video | S. Schmitt](#)
- [AMGA Splitboard Standard](#) | 2016 Video
- Successful completion of AMTL IV Ski option or equivalent experience

## EMPLOYMENT TRACK & NEXT STEPS

Employment options after successful completion of this course includes advanced level ski guide. This program is also seen as continuing education for current ski guides or expedition leaders. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options.

## REMEDIAL COURSES:

Veteran students may elect to take one or more of the following courses to meet the requirements for the courses included in the MIPTP. However, these courses are remedial in nature and are not covered by VA Education Benefits.

### **Backpacking and Wilderness Skills Course (18-Hours)**

An introductory weekend backpacking trip designed for people with little or no overnight camping experience in the wilderness. Set in the North Cascades of Washington, this course covers equipment selection, navigation, meal planning and cooking, and campsite selection.

## CURRICULUM AND ITINERARY

Day 1: (10 hours in total)

- Equipment selection and packing (1 hour)
- Fundamentals of land navigation, map, and compass (1 hour)

- Packing a backpack (0.5 hour)
- Meal planning and open air cooking (1 hour)
- Water treatment and approaches to hydration (0.5 hour)
- Selection and safe operation of backpacking stoves (0.5 hour)
- Knots and hitches for securing tents and food bags (1 hour)
- Food storage and caching strategies (0.5 hour)
- Construction of a comfortable, low-impact campsite (1 hour)
- How to go to the bathroom in the outdoors (0.5 hour)
- Movement and technique while hiking to camp (2.5 hours)

Day 2: (8 hours in total)

- Leave No Trace principles (2.5 hours)
- Deconstruction of camp and minimizing campsite impacts (2 hours)
- Movement and technique while hiking (2.5 hours)
- Debrief (1 hour)

#### PREREQUISITES:

- Day hiking experience in the mountains
- Good general physical fitness

#### COURSE PROGRESSION:

This program can be used as continuing education for current outdoor professionals. This course also serves as a prerequisite for higher-level programs such as the AMTL I, Alpine Ice, Alpinism 1 and Leave No Trace.

#### **Outdoor Rock Climbing - Intensive Introduction (40-Hours)**

A four-day intensive course that provides beginners and indoor climbers with a foundation in outdoor climbing techniques and the principals of rock climbing technical systems. By the end of the program, climbers will be able to belay, rappel, and set-up their own single-pitch top-rope systems to enable them to climb independently.

#### CURRICULUM AND ITINERARY

Day 1: (10 hours in total)

- Selection, use and care of climbing gear (2 hours)
- Introduction to basic knots and hitches. Knots to be covered will include but not be limited to the figure-eight follow-through and the clove-hitch (2 hours)
- Introduction to climbing commands and belay technique (2 hours)
- Develop an understanding of climbing grades (2 hours)
- Develop techniques for climbing beginner and intermediate rock climbs (2 hours)

Day 2: (10 hours in total)

- Review knots from the previous day and then continue the development of your 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 (1 hour)
- Introduction to climbing guidebooks and route topos (0.5 hour)
- Learn how to place and remove both passive and active rock protection (1 hour)
- Introduction to the concept of SRENE and 12-point anchors (0.5 hour)
- Develop the skills to build both pre-equalized and self-equalizing anchors (1 hour)
- Learn how to set up simple top-ropes using bolts (1 hour)
- Practice and discuss bouldering technique in an outdoor environment (2 hours)
- Introduction to basic rappelling technique (1 hour)
- Continue the development of movement skills for intermediate rock climbs (2 hour)

Day 3: (10 hours in total)

- Review knots from the previous days and then continue the development of your knowledge of knots with the double-bowline, the double-fisherman's knot, the mule-hitch, the klemheist, and the prusik-hitch (1 hour)
- Learn how to use traditional climbing gear to set up a simple top-rope anchor (2 hours)
- Develop the skills to belay a lead climber (2 hours)
- Learn how to follow a route that has been lead with traditional gear and clean the equipment off the route as you climb (2 hours)
- Develop advanced techniques for rappelling (1 hour)
- Continue the development of movement skills for intermediate rock climbs (2 hours)

Day 4: (10 hours in total)

- Review all of the knots and hitches from the previous days (1 hour)
- Use traditional climbing gear to set up a complex top-rope anchor (2 hours)
- Learn how to use a static rope or webbing to set up a multipart top-rope anchor (2 hours)
- Practice the rappel techniques that have been developed over the preceding days (2 hours)
- Continue the development of movement skills for intermediate rock climbs (3 hours)

PREREQUISITES:

- None

COURSE PROGRESSION:

This program can be used as continuing education for current outdoor professionals. This course also serves as a prerequisite for higher-level programs such as Learn to Lead, Technical Rope Rescue Comprehensive and Technical Self Rescue for Climbers.

**Learn to Lead - Trad Rock Climbing Leadership (40-Hours)**

The objective of the Learn to Lead program is to introduce climbers to the techniques required for leading single-pitch traditional rock climbing routes, while advancing technical and movement skills.

CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS

Day 1: (10 hours in total)

- Selection, use and care of traditional gear (2 hours)
- Discuss traditional racking techniques (1 hour)
- Practical applications of both passive and active protection (2 hours)
- Introduction to traditional anchors for leaders (1 hour)
- Practical applications of different lead belays (2 hours)
- Introduction to the autoblocking device (1 hour)
- Introduction to simple rescue techniques (1 hour)

Day 2: (10 hours in total)

- Introduction to multi-directional anchors (2 hours)
- Development of movement skills making anchors (2 hours)
- Introduction to anchor and rope management (2 hours)
- Introduction to leading procedures (2 hours)
- Development of lead movement skills (2 hours)

Day 3: (10 hours in total)

- Cleaning anchors and rappelling (2 hours)
- Techniques for rappelling multi-pitch lines (2 hours)
- Discussion of lead climbing strategies, both physical and mental (2 hours)
- Guided example of a short multi-pitch line (2 hours)
- Mock single-pitch leading practice (2 hours)

Day 4: (10 hours in total)

- Discussion of falling, fall factors, and how they apply to the leader (2 hours)
- Continued mock single-pitch and potentially multi-pitch leading practice (3 hours)
- Falling practice on gear and/or bolted anchors (2 hours)
- Student-led climbs in single-pitch setting (3 hours)

#### PREREQUISITES:

- Completion of Outdoor Rock Climbing - Intensive Introduction course, and/or meet the following prerequisites:
  - Ability to follow 5.8 (indoors or outdoors) and have some experience in outdoor top-roped climbing

#### COURSE PROGRESSION:

This program can be used as continuing education for current outdoor professionals. This course also serves as a prerequisite for higher-level programs such as Technical Rope Rescue Comprehensive and Technical Self Rescue for Climbers.

#### **Technical Self Rescue For Climbers (20-Hours)**

The Technical Self-Rescue for Climbers program is an intensive one to two-day seminar on improvised multi-pitch rock rescue techniques. Participants study a series of haul, lower, rappel and rope-climbing systems and then apply them to a variety of practical scenarios. Individuals who complete this rock-rescue program should be able to apply these skills to a wide array of complex high-angle problems.

#### CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS

Day 1 (10 hours in total)

- Ground school techniques:
  - self-rescue knot pass (1 hour)
  - belay escapes (1 hour)
  - hauling systems (3:1, 5:1, 6:1) (2 hours)
  - lowering systems (munter, tube-style device, assisted breaking device) (2 hours)
  - rope climbing systems (1 hour)
  - rappel systems (extended rappel, tandem rappel, counterbalance rappel) (2 hours)
  - multi-pitch transitions (1 hour)

Day 2 (10 hours in total)

- practical application in a high angle setting:
  - self-rescue knot pass (1 hour)
  - belay escapes (1 hour)
  - hauling systems (3:1, 5:1, 6:1) (2 hours)
  - lowering systems (munter, tube-style device, assisted breaking device) (2 hours)
  - rope climbing systems (1 hour)
  - rappel systems (extended rappel, tandem rappel, counterbalance rappel) (2 hours)
  - multi-pitch transitions (1 hour)

#### PREREQUISITES:

- Completion of Learn to Lead - Trad Rock Climbing Leadership course, and/or meet the following prerequisites:
  - Multi-pitch climbing experience

**COURSE PROGRESSION:**

This program can be used as continuing education for current outdoor professionals. This course also serves as a prerequisite for higher-level programs such as AMTL III.

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**NOTE ON MIPTP COURSE PROGRESSION AND SCHEDULING:**

As these are stand-alone programs, there is no course flow or sequence in which they need to be completed. As long as the prerequisites are met, students can take these programs as needed for job requirements and are valuable programs for continuing education for outdoor professionals.

## **About the American Mountain Guides Association**



The American Mountain Guides Association (AMGA) has been dedicated to supporting the guiding community through excellence in education, standards and certification since 1979. As a group, the AMGA presents a strong, unified voice for the high standards of professionalism in guiding and climbing instruction in the United States. The AMGA is an organization grounded in a powerful tradition that continues to evolve with the ever-changing arena of mountain guiding and climbing instruction. The AMGA offers a series of training courses and exams designed to certify guides and climbing instructors to the highly respected, internationally recognized, standards of the AMGA.

The AMGA is our nation's sole representative to the 25-member International Federation of Mountain Guides Associations (IFMGA), the international governing body responsible for guiding standards and education around the world.

The heart of the American Mountain Guides Association (AMGA) is its membership. Spread across the country, AMGA members represent an incredible variety of educators, outdoor enthusiasts, and environmental stewards. Just about every aspect of mountain guiding and instruction is represented through the AMGA's vast member base: from the glaciated high-altitude peaks of the Alaska Range to the big walls of Yosemite, from the diverse climbing areas in the Rockies to the world class ice and rock climbing of the East Coast. These professionals could work in any part of the industry from instructors who teach on climbing walls and single-pitch cliffs to guides guiding long rock routes, alpine climbs, and ski mountaineering trips. As a collective group, the AMGA is closely connected to almost every issue that faces the industry and our treasured crags, peaks, powder covered slopes, and frozen waterfalls.

Guiding in the mountains has been a profession in the U.S. that spans back to the start of the nation. Only in 1979 did a group of 12 guides decide that it was time to formalize an organization to represent the greater guiding community. As a result, the American Professional Mountain Guides Association was born. Over the next few years the "P" was dropped and the AMGA developed and grew throughout the United States.

The organization sharpened its focus of supporting the guiding profession by providing representation for land use access, education, training, and examination based on international standards for guiding. In 1997, the AMGA achieved one of its most notable accomplishments with acceptance into the International Federation of Mountain Guides Associations, IFMGA/UIAGM. As a member of the IFMGA, the organization's educational and certification programs meet the international standards recognized by more than 20 nations worldwide.

Today the AMGA continues to develop its programs to meet changing standards and support the growing community of guides and climbing instructors in the United States. In addition, the organization has become a resource for land managers and outdoor industry leaders by promoting land stewardship, world-class training, and sustainable practices to protect our natural resources.

The AMGA is the post-graduate school of guiding and it is where professional climbing guides go to develop their skills in order to attain the highest level of certification.

There are three disciplines of certification in the AMGA. They are Rock, Alpine and Ski. Some of the disciplines have multiple levels of certification. For example, in the rock discipline one can be certified at the Single Pitch Instructor level, the Rock Instructor level or the Guide level. In each of the disciplines, the guide level is the highest level of certification. If an individual obtains AMGA certification at the guide level in Rock, Alpine and Ski, that person will be granted the International Federation of Mountain Guides Associations (IFMGA) certification, which is the highest level of certification available for a guide.

### **Steps to IFMGA Certification**

The American Alpine Institute does not provide all programs required for IFMGA certification. As an AMGA contractor AAI can only provide the Single Pitch Instructor Course, the AMGA Alpine Skills Course, the AMGA Alpine Guides Course, the AMGA Rock Guides Course and the AMGA Ski Guides Course.

Following are the courses that one must take to achieve IFMGA status:

#### Rock Guide

1. Single Pitch Instructor Course
2. Single Pitch Instructor Exam
3. Rock Guide Course
4. Advanced Rock Guides Course and Aspirant Exam
5. Rock Guide Exam

#### Alpine Guide

1. Alpine Skills Course (Could take the Rock Instructor Course instead)
2. Alpine Guides Course (Or a combination of the Alpine Rock Module and Alpine Snow and Glacier Module)
3. Ice Instructor Course
4. Advanced Alpine Guides Course and Aspirant Exam
5. AIARE Avalanche Pro Level II
6. Alpine Guide Exam

#### Ski Mountaineering Guide

1. Ski Guides Course
2. Ski Mountaineering Guides Course and Aspirant Exam
3. AIARE Avalanche Pro level II
4. Ski Mountaineering Guides Exam

After you reach the guide level in each of the disciplines you will be deemed an IFMGA Certified Mountain Guide.

### **Aren't all guides AMGA certified?**

No, guiding is both a career and a lifestyle. Some people only work as a guide for a short period of time, whereas others make their career in the mountains. The result is that those who are career driven are the ones that jump through the hoops to become certified.

### **Why should I try to get guide level certification?**

Guide level certification comes with a number of benefits. First and foremost, one has been tested by his or her peers and has met the national standards within the industry. As a result, it is very easy to get a job.

Second, wages are higher for those who have attained guide level certification.

Third, it is easier to market yourself to prospective guests.

And fourth, it is a mark of professionalism. It shows that you take your career professionally.



## **American Alpine Institute Program Policies and Admission**

### **Admission Standards**

Students will be admitted to their desired vocational program if they meet the prerequisites outlined under that specific program's description. See Course Descriptions page 29-63.

Prior education and training will be reviewed for all students and VA education benefits recipients entering any vocational program.

Note: Applicants who are entitled to educational assistance under Chapter 31 Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment or Ch. 33 Benefits must submit a Certificate of Eligibility for entitlement to educational assistance no later than the first day of a course of education.

Please see page 69 for Title 38 United State Code Section 3679(e) explaining our school's policy.

The American Alpine Institute does not currently accept Financial Aid.

### **Full Time Attendance**

A student is considered full-time if he or she takes a minimum of 22 hours per week.

Note: Students who are using VA education benefits for more than one program in a short timeframe should note that they will not be paid their Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) during breaks between programs as these are stand-alone programs.

### **Grading Policies and Program Graduation Requirements**

All vocational programs have the potential for three distinct grades:

- **Pass:** Students who pass cleanly may graduate from their training and receive their certificate.
- **Conditional Pass:** Students who receive a conditional pass at the end of a program often had difficulties in one or two areas. The student will have to show proficiency in the area of weakness before moving on. The instructor will determine a time to reassess the student's weakness. The time needed to assess the weakness will be determined by the instructor and could require anywhere from one to four days. A student who receives a conditional pass will have to pay the private instructional rate during the reassessment. The private rate is \$595 per day.
- **Failure:** If a student fails a program or assessment, he or she will need to retake the course or assessment until they receive a passing grade.

### **Method Used to Report Grades**

Students will be assessed throughout the course. The instructor working with the student will make note of advances in technical and movement skills throughout the program if applicable.

Students are expected to meet the program objective. At the end of each program, the guide will share specific notes about areas where the student has excelled and on areas where the student needs work. If a student does not meet the program objective, he or she will receive a Conditional Pass or a Failure. If they meet the objective, they will receive a passing grade and complete their training or receive their certificate.

All instructor notes on the students will be archived at the AAI administrative office.

Students are evaluated on the following every day of each technical program:

- **Course Objective:** Does the student comprehend the course objective? Would he or she be comfortable meeting the objective without oversight?
- **Risk Management:** Is the student aware of the dangers (both objective and subjective) in his or her surroundings. Does he or she take the appropriate actions to mitigate the danger?
- **Technical Systems:** Does the student have an acceptable understanding of the technical systems at this level? Does he or she know where and when the systems should be applied?
- **Navigational Skills:** Is the student navigating appropriately? Does the student use the map, compass, altimeter, GPS, route topo or guidebook appropriately? Did the student apply acceptable route-finding skills at this level of training?
- **Movement Skills:** Are the student's movement skills improving? Do his or her movement skills represent what is expected at this level of training?
- **Judgment/Mountain Sense:** Does the student demonstrate good judgment?
- **Environmental Awareness:** Does the student show an understanding of Leave No Trace climbing and travel at this level of training?
- **Expedition/Program Behavior:** Does the student present himself or herself as a mature individual? Does the student understand actions and comments that can be perceived as arrogant? Does the student present him or herself as a mountain professional?

Some programs have additional categories that are specific to the program.

Students will receive one of the following grades at the end of the program.

- **Pass:** The student understood the material. The student understands the concepts and how to effectively employ them in a mountain environment. This will result in completion of the training and they will receive their certificate.
- **Marginal:** The student's understanding of the material is weak. The student sometimes grasps the concepts, but it is inconsistent.
- **No Pass:** The student does not understand the material and cannot grasp the concepts.
- **N/A:** Not applicable. This would indicate that a certain skill was not observed on a given day.

A No Pass is equal to two Marginals. The length of the course determines the number of Marginals and No Passes allowed.

Following is a breakdown of the amount allowed:

- Two-Day Course – 4 or more Marginal scores or 2 or more No Pass Scores
- Three-Day Course – 5 or more Marginal scores or 3 or more No Pass Scores
- Four-Day Course – 6 or more Marginal Scores or 3 or more No Pass Scores
- Six-Day Course – 7 or more Marginal Scores or 4 or more No Pass Scores
- Twelve to Fifteen-Day Course – 10 or more Marginal Scores or 5 or more No Pass Scores

During the final evaluation at the end of each course during the student debrief, the students will be provided with their scoring cards for the course. At that point, the instructor will speak to the student about each item that needs work and develop a plan for improvement.

### **Incomplete Grades**

Incomplete grades are given when a student is unable to complete a course because of illness, injury or another serious problem. Students who have an incomplete grade must work with a program coordinator to get into a course that will satisfy the requirements to pass the program or they must figure out how to retake the program.

## **Student Dismissal**

Students will be dismissed from any vocational program for six possible reasons:

### **1. Disregard for Student or Instructor Safety**

Students who purposefully disregard safety procedures and put themselves, other students or the instructor at risk, will be asked to leave the course. The student will receive a warning before being released from the course.

### **2. Inability to Grasp Core Concepts**

If it becomes clear to the administrators and the instructors in the field that a student is incapable of fully grasping the material – e.g. the student can't pass assessments, is incapable of applying technical systems appropriately, etc. – the student may be dismissed.

### **3. Inability to Meet Physical Requirements**

If a student is incapable of meeting the physical requirements for the course, he/she may be dismissed. Students should have the ability to walk uphill with a backpack for 6-8 hours, and they should have the ability to climb 5.7 rock without difficulty. Students who don't meet the physical requirements may be dismissed.

All students have the option of having their physical fitness assessed prior to the start of their program. Assessments will be made on a private daily rate of \$595 per day.

### **4. Disregard for the AMGA Code of Ethics and Conduct**

Individuals who are enrolled in any American Mountain Guides Association program will become members of the AMGA. Following is the AMGA Code of Ethics:

The American Mountain Guides Association ("AMGA") requires all of its members to be ethical and professional in the conduct of their business and personal lives. This Code of Ethics applies to all of us who are members of the AMGA, including certified guides, instructors, accredited guide services, aspirants and students ("Members"). Any violation of this Code of Ethics and Conduct may result in disciplinary action as set forth herein.

1. The safety and care of our clients must be our prime concern at all times. All personal objectives and the objectives of our clients must be subordinate to this concern.
2. The safety of the public is also our concern and we must, where possible and practical, provide assistance to those having difficulty by offering help, which is appropriate under the circumstances. This, however, we can do only if it does not compromise the safety of our clients.
3. Our clients have the right to expect us to be up-to-date on methods and techniques and to use appropriate and well-functioning equipment.
4. We must always be aware of our own physical, technical and experiential limitations. We must use routes and terrain which are within our expertise and capabilities.

5. As AMGA guides, whether certified, aspirant, or student, and as instructors and Members, we are expected to teach and practice Leave No Trace principles at all times and to be knowledgeable of local natural history.
6. As professionals, we must be culturally competent. We must treat clients, the public, and our fellow guides with respect. The AMGA assumes that all human beings, regardless of race, religion, gender, sexuality, or creed, are entitled to enjoy the mountains without threat of discrimination, diminution of their values and customs, or disrespect. An AMGA professional is expected to be an ambassador of human compassion and understanding.
7. At all times, we are representatives of the AMGA and should conduct ourselves in a manner that reflects well on the AMGA. This applies not only on AMGA courses, but anytime we are interacting with clients, the public, or others including government agencies. We must always strive to work within the framework of the AMGA Scope of Practice as defined by the Training and Certification Program Handbook and by Accreditation Contracts. This includes accurately and unambiguously representing the level of our certification to clients, government agencies, the public and others.
8. As AMGA guides, whether certified, aspirant or student, and as instructors and Members, we are expected to work within the permit, certification and aspirant requirements of the country and/or land agency in or under which we intend to work. We are also required to obey all laws, rules and regulations applicable to our guiding or other activities. AMGA Members should represent themselves fairly and adequately.

#### **5. Inability to Meet the Financial Obligations of the Program**

Students are required to pay all appropriate fees on time.

#### **6. Excessive Absences**

Students who miss more than 20% of their coursework may be dismissed.

The Director of Field Operations will notify the student in writing should it become necessary to dismiss the student. The dismissal letter will contain the date and the reason for dismissal. Prepaid tuition will be refunded according to the school's refund policy.

#### **Re-entry after Student Dismissal**

A student who has been dismissed for any of the reasons above or outlined under our Code of Conduct, the student may reapply two-years after the date of his or her dismissal. The student will be required to participate in a Placement Assessment prior to continuing on with a vocational program.

During the Placement Assessment, the instructor who evaluates the student will address the reason for the student's dismissal and ensure that there will not be a reoccurrence. There is no probationary period. Upon re-admittance, the student is expected to operate as if they had not left the program.

If the student was dismissed due to unsatisfactory grades (the inability to grasp core concepts) or the inability to meet physical requirements, the student may reapply six months after the date of his or her dismissal. There is no probationary period.

The student will be required to participate in a Placement Assessment prior to continuing on with a vocational program. During the Placement Assessment, the instructor who evaluates the student will address the reason for the student's dismissal and ensure that there will not be a reoccurrence. Upon re-admittance, the student is expected to operate as if they had not left the program.

If there is a second incident, the student will not be allowed reentry.

### **Code of Conduct**

The following conduct is also unacceptable, will not be tolerated, and will result in dismissal:

1. Disregard for student or instructor safety.
2. All forms of bias including race, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexuality, national origin, and creed as demonstrated through verbal and/or written communication and/or physical acts.
3. All types of proven dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, knowingly furnishing false information to the institution, etc.
4. Intentional disruption or obstruction of teaching, administration, disciplinary proceedings, public meetings and programs, or other program activities.
5. Theft or damage to school or student property.
6. Violation of law during coursework on public lands or on school property. This includes, but is not limited to, the abuse of alcoholic beverages or controlled dangerous substances.

### **Student Complaint/Appeal Process**

Students who have a complaint or who would like to appeal a dismissal must request in writing an appointment for an interview with the Director of Field Operations. The request should include the following:

1. Student's full name and current address
2. A statement of the concern including dates, times, instructors, and if applicable, other students involved
3. Date of complaint letter and signature of the student
4. Three dates in which the student would be available for a meeting with the Director.

The Director will notify the student in writing of the appointment date in which the concerns or appeal will be addressed. Every effort will be made to bring an amicable closure to the concern. Should it be necessary, a panel of instructors will hear the concerns and will be asked to assist in bringing a resolution to concerns and/or appeals. The student will be notified in writing within five business days of the outcome of the meetings. Should the contract be canceled by either the student or the school, the last day of attendance will be used as the date to calculate any refund in accordance with the school's refund policy. Nothing prevents the student from contacting the Workforce Board (the state licensing agency) at 360-753-5662 at any time with a concern or a complaint.

### **Student Records**

Student records are maintained for fifty years. To obtain a copy of one's records, students should contact the American Alpine Institute administrative office.

### **Tardiness, Absences, Make-Up Work, Interruptions for Unsatisfactory Attendance**

Student tardiness will not be tolerated, as it will have a significant impact on the day. Being on time is a "core concept" to being an outdoor professional. If an instructor says that the team needs to be ready to leave camp by 1am, then the students should be ready. A great deal has gone into that decision and being late may compromise the group's safety and may mean not succeeding on the climb. Running late may result in a "No Pass" on the daily scoring card in the Risk Management or Judgment section.

Tardiness at the start of a course may also result in an unsatisfactory mark on the scorecard.

If a student misses a day or a series of days due to illness or tragedy, the time may be made up on private days at the private rate.

Being on time and showing up are “core concepts.” Students must not have unexplained absences.

It is strongly suggested that all students obtain travel insurance. If you are injured training for a course or while on a program, you may not be able to continue. It is unlikely that the airlines or other travel related fees will be able to be reimbursed without such insurance.

Administrators at AAI can provide assistance in obtaining travel insurance.

### **Leave of Absence**

Students may be granted a leave of absence upon request. The following guidelines must be used:

1. The request for a leave of absence must be submitted to the school in writing.
2. The request must have the date that the student will begin the leave and the expected date of return to coursework.
3. Should a leave request take a student beyond the contracted completion date, the student may be subject to re-entry under an amended contract. If the student does not reenter within the contracted schedule and does not arrange for a contract amendment, then his or her contract will be terminated. The student may be entitled to a refund in accordance with the school’s refund policy.

### **Academic Advising**

Academic advising is available from the Executive Director, Director of Operations, School Certifying Official, or the Pacific Northwest Program Coordinator.

### **Counseling Services**

The American Alpine Institute does not provide counseling services.

### **Placement Services**

The American Alpine Institute does not provide job placement assistance. But we do offer employment resources. See pages 82-85.

### **Compliance with VA’s 85/15 Rule**

As per USC 360A(d)(1), the American Alpine Institute must limit student enrollment to 85% veteran enrollment per cohort. In the event that a veteran wishes to enroll in a class that has already reached the 85% cap, he or she may do that, but will not be eligible for VA funding. Chapter 35 and 31 students may still enroll even if the 85 percent has been realized.

### **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords eligible students certain rights with respect to their education records. These rights include:

- The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days after the day the American Alpine Institute receives a request for access. A student should submit a written request that identifies the record(s) the student wishes to inspect to the Director or the Northwest Program

Coordinator. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

- The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the student believes is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.  
A student who wishes to ask the school to amend a record should write the school and clearly identify the part of the record the student wants changed, and specify why it should be changed.  
If the school decides not to amend the record as requested, the school will notify the student in writing of the decision and the student's right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the student when notified of the right to a hearing.
- The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.  
The school discloses education records without a student's prior written consent under the FERPA exception for disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the American Alpine Institute in an administrative or instructional role. A school official may also include a volunteer or contractor outside of the American Alpine Institute who performs an institutional service. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibilities for the American Alpine Institute.
- Parents and spouses of students are advised that information contained in education records, with the exception of directory information, will not be disclosed to them without the prior written consent of the student.

### **Religious Accommodation**

The American Alpine Institute will make good faith efforts to provide reasonable religious accommodations to students who have sincerely held religious practices or beliefs that conflict with a scheduled course/program requirement. Students requesting a religious accommodation should make the request, in writing, directly to their instructor with as much advance notice as possible. Being absent from class or other educational responsibilities does not excuse students from keeping up with any information shared or expectations set during the missed class. Students are responsible for obtaining materials and information provided during any class missed. The student shall work with the instructor to determine a schedule for making up missed work.

Examples of religious accommodations may include: rescheduling of an exam or giving a make-up exam for the student in question; altering the time of a student's presentation; allowing extra-credit assignments to substitute for missed class work or arranging for an increased flexibility in assignment due dates; and releasing a graduate assistant from teaching or research responsibilities on a given day.

### **American Alpine Institute May Not Discriminate**

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, American Alpine Institute is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, and reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible State or local Agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information is also available in languages other than English.

### **Financial Considerations**

Effective January 1, 2025, the costs of the vocational programs are as follows:

<b>Course</b>	<b>2025 Tuition Cost</b>	<b>Additional Required Fees</b>
Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part I	\$3,880	none
Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part II	\$3,650	none
Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part III	\$4,200	none
Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part IV - Ptarmigan Traverse	\$4,275	none
Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part IV - Ski Mountaineering	\$4,475	none
Wilderness First Responder	\$715	none
Technical Rope Rescue Comprehensive	\$3,995	none
Professionalism for the Outdoor Educator	\$815	none
Leave No Trace Level 1 Instructor	\$350	none
Leave No Trace Level 2 Instructor	\$895	none
AIARE Avalanche Level I	\$725	none
AIARE Avalanche Rescue Skills Course	\$295	none
AMGA Single Pitch Instructor Course	\$750	\$120 AMGA Annual Membership Fee*
Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue	\$925	none
Alpinism 1: Introduction to Mountaineering	\$1,995	none
Alpinism 2: Intermediate Mountaineering	\$2,195	none
Alpine Ice Climbing: Introduction	\$2,225	none
Avalanche Pro Level I	\$1849	none
AMGA Alpine Skills Course	\$2400	\$120 AMGA Annual Membership Fee*
AMGA Alpine Guide Course	\$4400	\$120 AMGA Annual Membership Fee*
AMGA Alpine Rock Module	\$3150	\$120 AMGA Annual Membership Fee
AMGA Alpine Snow and Glacier Module	\$2700	\$120 AMGA Annual Membership Fee*
AMGA Rock Guide Course	\$3825	\$120 AMGA Annual Membership Fee*
AMGA Ski Guide Course	\$3825	\$120 AMGA Annual Membership Fee*

\*NOTE for VA Education Benefits Students – Membership in the American Mountain Guides Association is not covered by VA Education Benefits.

Group equipment is included in all programs. However, students will be required to provide their own personal equipment (see Appendix B). Food is not provided on any of the courses.



Some courses cover both camping fees and transportation. On others, these things are excluded. Please see the chart above to see where these exclusions apply.

Additional exclusions include: lodging before and after a program, travel insurance, transportation to and from a program starting point, AMGA membership, textbooks and guide gratuities.

### **Financial Aid**

The American Alpine Institute does not currently have a financial aid or financial assistance plan.

### **Scholarships**

AAI currently provides scholarship opportunities to members of the [Association for Outdoor Recreation and Education \(AORE\)](#). Individuals interested in applying for a scholarship should do so through that organization.

Women interested in a guide career may apply for the Guide Like Liz scholarship at the [AAI website](#).

### **Credit for Previous Training**

Every student will need to meet the prerequisites of any course they wish to enroll in and will need to provide an outdoor resume that outlines previous training, experience, and certifications. Prior education and training will be reviewed for all students and VA education benefits recipients entering any vocational program.

### **Refund Policy**

Following is a breakdown of the policies concerning student refunds:

#### Vocational Programs

Most AAI courses range in size from seven to ten participants down to just a few students depending on the course and student to instructor ratios. With such small groups, individual cancellations and withdrawals can seriously affect the finances of the program, and the below policy has been established to protect the students from the cancellation of their course because of late withdrawals by others and to cover the planning, administration, logistical, and other costs experienced by AAI.

1. AAI will refund all monies if an applicant is not accepted.
2. If a program does not run, all monies will be refunded.
3. A registration fee of \$500 is due within 7 days of registration. A "registration fee" is any fee charged by a school to process student applications and establish a student records system.
4. If an applicant cancels within 7 business days (excluding Sundays and holidays) after the day the contract is signed or an initial payment is made, all monies will be refunded – unless the student has begun training.
5. AAI will retain a registration fee of \$500 if the applicant cancels after the 7th business day after signing the contract or making an initial payment.
6. If the applicant registers for more than one vocational program, this registration fee acts as a floating registration fee. The applicant needs to pay only one registration fee of \$500. Once the first course is completed, the same \$500 is applied to the second course's registration fee and so on. Once the training is complete or the applicant has finished their desired courses for training, the floating registration fee of \$500 will be refunded to the applicant.
7. If the applicant cancels with written notice more than 150 days prior to the start date of the course, AAI will refund the applicant the full tuition, minus the registration fee.

8. If the applicant cancels with written notice 150 – 120 days prior to the start date of the course, half the course tuition is forfeited.
9. If the applicant cancels with written notice less than 120 days prior to the course start date, the full course tuition is forfeited.
10. If the applicant cancels with less than 120 days and AAI is able to fill the applicant's spot, AAI will refund the applicant the full tuition, minus the registration fee.
11. When calculating refunds, the official date of a student's termination is the last date of recorded attendance. This may be as follows:
  - When the school receives notice of the student's intention to discontinue the training programs.
  - When the student is terminated for a violation of a published school policy, which provides for termination.
  - When a student, without notice, fails to attend courses for thirty calendar days.

## Refund Policy for VA Students

The American Alpine Institute agrees that if a veteran student fails to enter the course, withdraws, or is discontinued at any time prior to completion of the course, the unused portion of paid tuition, fees, and other charges will be refunded or the debt for such tuition, fees, and other charges will be canceled on a prorated basis, as follows:

**(1) Registration fee.** An established registration fee in an amount not to exceed \$10 need not be subject to proration. Where the established registration fee is more than \$10, the amount in excess of \$10 will be subject to proration.

**(2) Breakage fee.** Where the school has a breakage fee, it may provide for the retention of only the exact amount of the breakage, with the remaining part, if any, to be refunded.

**(3) Consumable instructional supplies.** Where the school makes a separate charge for consumable instructional supplies, as distinguished from laboratory fees, the exact amount of the charges for supplies consumed may be retained but any remaining part must be refunded.

**(4) Books, supplies and equipment.**

a. The school will make a refund in full for the amount of the charge for unissued books, supplies and equipment when:

- The school furnishes the books, supplies and equipment,
- The school includes their cost in the total charge payable to the school for the course,
- The veteran or eligible person withdraws or is discontinued before completing the course.

b. The veteran or eligible person may dispose of issued items at his or her discretion even if they were included in the total charges payable to the school for the course.

**(5) Tuition and other charges.** Where the school either has or adopts an established policy for the refund of the unused portion of tuition, fees, and other charges subject to proration, which is more favorable to the veteran or eligible person than the approximate pro rata basis as provided in this paragraph, such established policy will be applicable. Otherwise, the school may charge a sum which does not vary more than 10 percent from the exact pro rata portion of such tuition, fees, and other charges that the length of the completed portion of the course bears to its total length. The exact pro-rata will be determined on the ratio of the number of days of instruction completed by the student to the total number of instructional days in the course.

**(6) Prompt refund.** In the event that the veteran, spouse, surviving spouse or child fails to enter the course, or withdraws, or is discontinued there from at any time prior to completion of the course, the unused portion of the tuition, fees and other charges paid by the individual shall be refunded promptly. Any institution which fails to forward any refund due within 40 days after such a change in status, shall be deemed, prima facie, to have failed to make a prompt refund, as required by this subparagraph.

## Discontinued Programs

1. If instruction in any program is discontinued or if a program area is changed in such a way that it provides financial hardship on the student, AAI will:
  - Provide pro rata refunds of all tuition and fees paid; or
  - Arrange for a comparable training at another public or private vocational school. Students must accept comparable training in writing.
2. If AAI plans to discontinue a program, it will notify affected students and the Washington Workforce Board in advance. This will be done in writing and students will receive a reimbursement 90 days in advance of the cancellation.

## **Withdrawing from School**

Students must prepare written notification and submit it to a Program Coordinator. This document must contain the student's name, address, and date. All financial obligations on the part of the school and the student will be calculated using the last recorded date of attendance.

## **Academic Calendar and Program Planning**

Our vocational programs can be taken as needed. Some require a winter environment and some a summer environment while other programs with mostly classroom time can be taken year-round.

### **Administrative Offices and Operations**

AAI Administrative Offices are open Monday-Friday from 9am to 5:30pm, Pacific Time. The office is closed on weekends and on federal holidays.

AAI program are run throughout the year. Some programs are intentionally run over holidays in order to take advantage of time off. Most vocational programs have set program dates that can be found at the AAI website [www.alpineinstitute.com](http://www.alpineinstitute.com).

### **Enrollment**

Students may enroll in programs at any time. Program coordinators are available to assist you in enrollment during administrative business hours, Monday-Friday, 9am-5:30pm.

### **Program Offerings and Dates Offered**

Following is a seasonal breakdown of when programs are offered. To view the exact dates, please log onto the American Alpine Institute website at [www.alpineinstitute.com](http://www.alpineinstitute.com). Under the Programs tab on our home page, you can find all of our programs. We list the different categories of training offered under Courses. Each vocational program is listed under the specific type of training and each vocational program has its own site. On each course's site, we list the current dates available found under the tab labeled "Dates".

- Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part I – This program is offered every two weeks from early May through late September.
- Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part II – This program is offered eight times throughout the summer climbing season. It is offered every two weeks from late May through early September.
- Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part III – This program is offered several times throughout the summer season. The bulk of the courses are offered in July and August.
- Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part IV – This program is offered twice throughout the summer season and once in the winter season. The first option in April takes students on skis into the North Cascades. The second offering in July takes students to the Ptarmigan Traverse in the North Cascades.
- Wilderness First Responder – This program is slated to run twice a summer season in the Cascades. It is set-up in such a way that it could be taken in conjunction with an AMTL II or AMTL III course. Though this program runs twice in the Cascades, there are many additional dates all over the United States. Consult with an AAI program coordinator for more details.
- Technical Rope Rescue Comprehensive – This program is run twice a year, once in early summer and once in early fall.
- Professionalism for the Outdoor Educator – This program runs four times a year between April and October in the Pacific Northwest.
- Leave No Trace Level 1 Instructor Course – This program runs four times between May and October in the Cascades. Occasionally it runs in other ranges as well.
- Leave No Trace Level 2 Instructor Course – This program runs once a year in July or August in the Pacific Northwest.
- AIARE Avalanche Level I – These courses run every weekend from the first weekend of December through the first weekend of March.

- AIARE Avalanche Rescue Skills – These courses run every weekend from the first weekend of December through the first weekend of March.
- AMGA Single Pitch Instructor Course – These courses are run in both the Cascades of Washington State and in Red Rock Canyon just outside of Las Vegas. AAI runs four to six programs a year. If you would like to combine this with another program, inquire with a program coordinator and it will be set-up to accommodate your schedule.
- Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue Course – This course is offered about every other week from early May to late August.
- Alpinism 1: Introduction to Mountaineering – This course is offered every week starting in late early May to late September.
- Alpinism 2: Intermediate Mountaineering – This course is offered every two weeks from early May to mid-September.
- Alpine Ice Climbing: Introduction Course – This course is offered about every other week from mid-May to early September.
- Avalanche Pro Level I – These courses run once to twice a year depending on conditions. The first is in mid-December and the second is in mid-February if it does run twice.
- AMGA Alpine Skills Course, AMGA Rock Guide Course, AMGA Alpine Guide Course, AMGA Alpine Rock Module, AMGA Snow and Glacier Module and AMGA Ski Guide Course – These programs run year-round depending on where you take them.

### **Programs Offered by Month**

<u>January</u>	Avalanche Level I, Avalanche Rescue Skills, Wilderness First Responder, AMGA Ski Guide Course
<u>February</u>	Avalanche Level I, Avalanche Rescue Skills, Avalanche Pro Level I, Wilderness First Responder, AMTL IV, AMGA Ski Guide Course
<u>March</u>	Avalanche Level I, Avalanche Rescue Skills, Single Pitch Instructor Course, AMGA Rock Guides Course, AMGA Ski Guides Course
<u>April</u>	Single Pitch Instructor Course, Wilderness First Responder, AMTL IV, AMGA Rock Guides Course, Technical Rope Rescue Comprehensive
<u>May</u>	Professionalism for the Outdoor Educator, AMTL I, AMTL II, AMTL III, Leave No Trace Level 1 Instructor, Leave No Trace Level 2 Instructor, Wilderness First Responder, AMGA Rock Guide Course, AMGA Alpine Skills Course, Professionalism for the Outdoor Educator, Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue, Alpine Ice, Alpinism 1, Alpinism 2
<u>June</u>	AMTL I, AMTL II, AMTL III, Leave No Trace Level 1 Instructor, Leave No Trace Level 2 Instructor, Single Pitch Instructor Course, Technical Rope Rescue Comprehensive, Technical Self Rescue, Wilderness First Responder, AMGA Alpine Skills Course, Professionalism for the Outdoor Educator, Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue, Alpine Ice, Alpinism 1, Alpinism 2
<u>July</u>	AMTL I, AMTL II, AMTL III, AMTL IV, Leave No Trace Level 1 Instructor, Leave No Trace Level 2 Instructor, Wilderness First Responder, Professionalism for the Outdoor Educator, Leave No Trace Level 2 Instructor, Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue, Alpine Ice, Alpinism 1, Alpinism 2
<u>August</u>	AMTL I, AMTL II, AMTL III, Leave No Trace Level 1 Instructor, Leave No Trace Level 2 Instructor, Single Pitch Instructor Course, Wilderness First Responder, AMGA Alpine Skills Course, AMGA Alpine Guide Course, AMGA Alpine Rock Module, AMGA Snow and Glacier Module, Leave No Trace Level 2 Instructor, Professionalism for the Outdoor Educator, Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue, Alpine Ice, Alpinism 1, Alpinism 2
<u>September</u>	AMTL I, AMTL II, Leave No Trace Level 1 Instructor, Leave No Trace Level 2 Instructor, Technical Rope Rescue Comprehensive, Technical Self Rescue For Climbers, Wilderness First Responder, AMGA Alpine Guide Course, AMGA Alpine Rock Module, AMGA Snow and Glacier Module, AMGA Rock Guide Course, Professionalism for the Outdoor Educator, Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue, Alpine Ice, Alpinism 1, Alpinism 2

<u>October</u>	Leave No Trace Level 1 Instructor, Leave No Trace Level 2 Instructor, Technical Rope Rescue Comprehensive, Technical Self Rescue, Wilderness First Responder, AMGA Rock Guide Course, Professionalism for the Outdoor Educator
<u>November</u>	Leave No Trace Level 1 Instructor, Leave No Trace Level 2 Instructor, Single Pitch Instructor Course, Wilderness First Responder
<u>December</u>	Avalanche Level I, Avalanche Rescue Skills, Avalanche Pro Level I, Single Pitch Instructor Course, Wilderness First Responder

### **Holiday Schedule**

Field programs are **not** interrupted by holidays.

The American Alpine Institute Office is closed on the following holidays:

- New Year's Day - January 1
- Memorial Day - May 28
- 4<sup>th</sup> of July - July 4
- Labor Day - September 3
- Thanksgiving - November 22 & 23
- Christmas Day - December 25

Title 38 United State Code Section 3679(e)

American Alpine Institute permits any individual who is entitled to educational assistance under Chapter 31 or Chapter 33 to attend or participate in the course of education during the period beginning on the date on which the individual provides to AAI a certificate of eligibility for entitlement to educational assistance under Chapter 31 or 33 and ending on the earlier of the following dates:

- The date on which payment from VA is made to AAI
- 90 days after the date AAI certified tuition and fees following the receipt of the certificate of eligibility.

AAI ensures that there will not be any imposed penalty, including the assessment of late fees, the denial of access to programs, or the requirement that those receiving Ch. 31 or 33 benefits borrow additional funds, on any Ch. 31 or Ch. 33 recipient because of the individual's inability to meet their financial obligations to AAI due to the delayed disbursement funding from VA under Ch. 31 or Ch. 33.

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## **Appendix A**

### **Outdoor Professional**

### **Employment Resources**

The American Alpine Institute does not provide placement assistance. However, we have prepared this list of job resources for those who have completed vocational programs:

#### **AAI Vocational Training Facebook Page**

AAI administrators update the AAI Vocational Training Facebook Page with current job openings around the country and the world that require skills and certifications obtained in our vocational programs.

#### **AMGA Newsletter**

After you complete your AMGA Single Pitch Instructor Course, you will be placed on the American Mountain Guides Association email list. The AMGA's monthly newsletter includes listings for mountain guide and climbing instructor jobs.

The AMGA jobs focus tends to lean heavily toward for-profit guide services.

#### **AMGA Professional Members Forum**

The AMGA has an active Facebook page for those who have completed courses beyond the Single Pitch level. Jobs are regularly posted in this forum.

#### **AMGA Single Pitch Instructor Facebook Page**

The AMGA has an active Facebook page for those who have completed their AMGA Single Pitch Instructor course. There are jobs regularly posted on the page.

#### **AORE Listserv**

The Association of Outdoor Recreation and Education was designed to bring together outdoor professionals in the college recreation, college outdoor pursuits programs, and military recreation programs for an annual conference. The yearly conference was designed for academic outdoor professionals to network and trade ideas.

The AORE has a listserv that has an academic focus, and many of the jobs are at universities or community colleges.

There is an annual fee to become a member of the AORE community.

[www.aore.org](http://www.aore.org)

#### **Backdoor Jobs**

The backdoor jobs website is devoted to adventure tourism jobs which includes climbing and mountaineering, but also covers raft guides, backpacking guides, and mountain biking guides.

[www.backdoorjobs.com/adventure.html](http://www.backdoorjobs.com/adventure.html)

## **Chronicle of Higher Education**

This is a university jobs board that focuses heavily on academic jobs.

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

## **Military Recreation Jobs**

As the military is extremely broad, so are the job resources. Following are a select few websites where you may find job outdoor recreation job opportunities:

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

[www.navy.mwr.org](http://www.navy.mwr.org)

[www.nafjobs.org](http://www.nafjobs.org)

[www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov)

## **NOLS Jobs Announcements**

The NOLS Jobs Announcements is a listserv designed for outdoor professionals. It provides information on some NOLS related jobs, but the majority of the listings are for adventure education jobs throughout the United States and Canada.

This listserv looks like it was designed with NOLS alumni in mind. However, it does not appear to discriminate against those who have not taken a NOLS course.

This is an extremely active jobs board, with dozens of new postings coming through almost every single day\.

<http://www.nols.edu/alumni/contact/listservservices.php>

## **Northwest Information Exchange**

The Northwest Information Exchange is a place where guides in the Pacific Northwest trade information about current conditions in the mountains. However, guide service owners and staffing managers regularly post open positions on the listserv.

You will need to be actively working as a guide or instructor somewhere in order to get access to the listserv.

<http://groups.google.com/group/nw-information-exchange?pli=1>

## **Outdoor Adventure Professional Network**

This particular site posts jobs in all of the outdoor disciplines:

<http://adventurejobs.co/>

## **Outdoor Ed**

The Outdoor Ed website is a job listing website that provides information on both seasonal and year-round adventure tourism jobs. Mountaineering and rock instruction jobs are regularly highlighted on the site.

<http://www.outdoored.com>

## **Outdoor Industry Jobs**

This website is a dumping ground of outdoor industry related jobs. There are some adventure educator and guide jobs on the site, but many of the jobs are retail and gear representation.

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

## **Rock Climbing Jobs**

This site focuses on rock climbing jobs at adventure summer camps.

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

## **San Juan Information Exchange**

This is a guide conditions listserv like the Northwest Information Exchange. However, the focus of this exchange is the Ouray/Telluride/Silverton/Durango area of Colorado. Occasionally employment requests are sent out through the listserv.

Like the Northwest Exchange, you must be an active guide to obtain access to the site.

<http://groups.google.com/group/San-Juan-information-exchange/sub?s=uxs8vhQAAAr2AL9fC1xjnnYN2CEvqYaF4EHo1NeLQyTtpbF12bO8g&hl=en>

**Appendix B**  
**Sample Equipment List**

**Appendix C**  
**Sample Shopping Sheet**

