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Outdoor Program
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Check us out on Facebook

Trip Locations

Olympic NP, WA
North Cascades NP, WA
Mt Hood, OR
Mt Baker, WA
Mt St Helens NM, WA
Joshua Tree NP, CA
Wallowa Mountains, OR
Salmon River, ID
Wenatchee River, WA
Smith Rock State Park, OR
City of Rocks, ID
San Juan Islands, WA
Loreto, BCS, MX
Grand Gulch, UT
Robbers Roost, UT
Strawberry Mountains, OR
Umatilla NF, WA
Grand Ronde River, OR

Student Run Outdoor Clubs

Backcountry Ski and
Snowboarding
Climbing
Whitewater
Climbing Team
Hiking

Training Opportunities

AMGA Climbing Wall Instructor
Wilderness First Responder
ACA Whitewater Kayak
Instructor
Swift water rescue
Sea Kayak Guide Leadership
River Guide Leadership
Outdoor Leadership
AMGA Single Pitch Instructor
Winter Instructor

Outdoor Program

Mission Statement: *The Outdoor Program (OP) fosters personal growth, facilitates learning and creates recreational opportunities through skills and risk management training, leadership development, and environmentally sound trips in a supportive community.*

Recreation Opportunities The OP facilitates recreation opportunities through the optional wilderness orientation program known as Scrambles, a trips program, climbing center, rental shop, outdoor clubs, climbing team and a speakers and events program.

Scrambles: The Scrambles program runs about 20 trips averaging 6-9 days in length and serving almost half of the incoming student body. There are often backpacking, rock climbing, whitewater rafting, whitewater kayaking, sea kayaking and canoe/backpacking combo trips.

Trips Program: The OP offers trips in a variety of skill areas and averages roughly 2-4 trips per weekend. Activities include outdoor climbing, whitewater kayaking and rafting, backpacking, sea kayaking, mountaineering, snow-shoeing, cross-country skiing, alpine touring, ice climbing, stand-up paddle boarding, day hiking and more. Almost all of our trips are led by student leaders and are geared toward beginner and intermediate levels.

Climbing Center: The climbing wall is a custom built structure with a total climbable surface of over 7,000 square feet. The main wall is 104 feet long and 39 feet tall at its highest point. It is open seven days a week and is free to all students and welcomes all experience levels. We offer regular clinics and roughly 15 classes per semester and special events in the facility.

Rental Shop: Located in the Reid Campus Center, the Rental Shop is the central gear storage location for the Outdoor Program, as well as the social and logistical hub for all OP activities. At the Rental Shop you can sign up for OP Trips, rent equipment for your personal adventures, purchase new and used outdoor gear, and access our library of books, maps, and DVD's on outdoor activities.

Outdoor Clubs: The climbing club, backcountry ski and snowboarding club and whitewater club are student run and organized ASWC clubs that the OP supports. The climbing team is one of the recognized club sports teams at Whitman College. It receives funding from the club's sports budget and is student run and organized with staff oversight. The Whitman college climbing team participates in the NC3 (Northwest Collegiate Climbing Circuit).

Personal Growth Whitman's outdoor program supports personal growth in students by providing opportunities to develop relationships with peers in the tranquility and beauty of the scenic landscapes of the Northwest. Open communication, supportive interactions and great leadership are hallmarks of all of the offerings that the Outdoor Program supports.

Environmentally Sound Trips The Outdoor Program facilitates human powered recreational opportunities. All trips and classes run by the Outdoor Program use the Leave No Trace principles to guide our practices. Respect for and appreciation of the wild places that we visit drives us to use the very best methods to leave nothing but foot prints and take nothing but pictures.

Special Events

Banff Mountain Film Festival
Backcountry Film Festival
Sweet Onion Crank climbing
competition

Activities Supported

Rock climbing, whitewater
kayaking, whitewater rafting,
backpacking, sea kayaking,
mountaineering, snow-shoeing,
cross-country skiing, alpine
touring, ice climbing, stand-up
paddle boarding, day hiking

Alumni Accomplishments

Rob Lesser '67 – Whitewater Hall
of Fame. Numerous first descents

Phil Ershler '74 – Everest via north
and south sides, 7 summits;
co-owner IMG, Rainier (400+
ascents), Mt. McKinley (25+
ascents)

Jason Tanguay '98 – Everest
2004 and American Alpine Club
David A. Sowles award for Everest
rescue in 2001 on North ridge.

Ingrid Backstrom '00 –
Professional big mountain skier

Justin Merle '01 – Everest 6x,
Ama Dablam 6x, Cho Oyu, 120+
ascents of Rainier, IMG guide

Tom Wier '02 – Olympic wildwater
kayaker

Gabe Coler '03 – AMGA Rock
Guide, Smith Rock, OR

Holly Brooks '04 – US Olympic
ski team 2010 and 2014 Winter
Games, Whitman Scramble
coordinator

Sam Hennesey '12 – El Capitan in
a day, 1st Ascent of Chugimago
West Face in Nepal 6259m (Oct
2014) Alpine Ascents Guide,
Vinson, Denali

Jasmine Campell '15 – US
Olympic ski team in 2014 Sochi
Winter games

Outward Bound Instructors:
Gram Stansberry '06, Heather
Domonoske '13, Molly Hayes '14,
Sky Pauly '15, Katie Lei '12

NOLS instructors: Andy Altepeter
'06, Kaitlan Cloud '12, Fiona
Brown '10, Sarah Lee Lawrence
'04, Kris Fade '08

Leadership Development The Outdoor Program employs over 100 students per year and students receive authentic and meaningful hands-on leadership opportunities through positions with significant responsibility. All of our Scramble Leaders are upperclassmen who have received a four- to five-day field training prior to leading our 8-day wilderness trips. Our weekend trip leaders have taken leadership and first aid courses and worked their way through our on the job training program. Our climbing center and rental shop are both staffed by student workers and our best student instructors teach many of the classes supported by the program.

Facilitating Learning There are more than 35 classes per year ranging from introductory level skills classes to advanced techniques in guiding, risk management and rescue. In addition to the class offerings there are numerous training opportunities for students. The program supports certification courses from the American Mountain Guides Association, The Wilderness Medical Institute, the American Canoe Association and other organizations to ensure that our students get the very best training curriculum and nationally recognized certifications.

Here is what some Whitties have said about the Outdoor Program:

"I came to Whitman with no backcountry experience. My first year I went on a Scramble, signed up for every OP trip I could, and took several SSRA classes. Now in my senior year I am teaching rock climbing and whitewater kayaking classes and leading OP trips every weekend. These experiences have allowed me to develop my technical skills but more importantly, I have had the opportunity to take on leadership positions that will translate to future career paths."
-Adam Michel '12

"Being OP Trips Coordinator this semester has been one of the best learning opportunities that I have had at Whitman. It has broadened my horizons in terms of leadership, management, organization, as well as outdoor trip planning and sport-specific details. These are invaluable skills that I can transfer to both indoor- and outdoor-related jobs in the future." -Skye Pauley '15

"I have rafted through thundering waters, snow-shoed in the darkness, sea kayaked beneath a rising moon, climbed towering monoliths, and gazed upwards at the infinite stars of the Milky Way. The responsibility that comes with leading a group of people through a remote wilderness bestows a kind of maturity that my parents could only have dreamed of when sending their 18 year old daughter off to college."
-Claire Snyder '12

"The climbing program was fantastic. In particular, the Advanced Climbing and Systems Management course was tremendously valuable in improving my knowledge and safety as a climber." -Ryan Leary

"The Program empowers outdoor enthusiasts while building leadership and hard outdoor skills!" -Amy Strauss

AWARDS:

2013 - The Outdoor Program was granted the prestigious David J. Webb program Excellence award by the Association of Outdoor Recreation and Education. (Only 1 program is chosen nationwide each year and Whitman is the smallest school to have ever received the award.)

2006 - Whitman was named the #1 Outdoor Program in the State of Washington by the Tacoma News Tribune

The Outdoor Program is not a club. There are no dues; anyone, regardless of ability or skill level, may participate. Through the Outdoor Program, all students interested in noncompetitive, non-motorized pursuits may share adventures.