

Outdoor Explorers Mentoring Program: A Program Replication Guide



Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center
Missoula, Montana

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Introduction

Thank you for your interest in the Outdoor Explorers Mentoring Program (OEMP). With a focus on use of local outdoor spaces, public lands and community partnerships, OEMP is grassroots in nature and adaptable to a wide-range of community needs and available resources. The ultimate goal of OEMP is to have federal agency staff across the nation develop similar programs and partnerships within their communities for the benefit of children and nature. This replication guide will highlight current program management best practices and serve as a resource to help federal agency staff create their local Outdoor Explorers Mentoring Program chapter.



Program Description



OEMP fosters **life-long engagement with nature, stewardship, and community**, and inspires the next generation of natural resource professionals by **connecting youth with the wild places** in their backyard through **intergenerational place-based outdoor adventures and service learning projects**. In 2011, OEMP launched in Missoula, Montana to provide outdoor learning and recreation experiences for young people and their adult mentors participating in Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Missoula. This initial program was made possible through leadership from the Arthur

Carhart National Wilderness Training Center, University of Montana students, Montana Wilderness Association, BIG Brothers/Big Sisters of Missoula, and other federal agencies and nonprofit organizations. Examples of outdoor trips included: snowshoeing, whitewater rafting, participation in a river cleanup, overnight camping in a national park, and a tribal wilderness workshop (see Appendix A for more examples).

In addition to building outdoor skills and confidence, an important aspect of the program is relationship building while providing positive role models who emulate outdoor stewardship behavior for youth participants. The combination of adult and university student mentors provides a wide array of perspectives for young people. Activities also provide valuable experience to university students interested in pursuing outdoor education or natural resource careers. To learn more about specific activities and view pictures, visit blogs from several OEMP locations at:

<http://outdoorexplorers.wordpress.com>,

<http://bozemanoutdoorexplorers.wordpress.com/2014/11/12/when-the-moon-hits-your-eyes/>

<http://helenaoutdoorexplorers.wordpress.com/>.

Program Goals

- Improved awareness, pride, and sense of stewardship for public lands, natural landscapes, and wild places among mentors and youth
- Empowerment for continued pursuit of outdoor experiences through transferrable habits and skills
- Encouragement of youth participants to pursue higher education and to explore careers in natural resources through their experience with positive university student role models

- Enhanced knowledge and leadership growth among university students making them more competitive for careers in natural resource, environmental education, and interpretation fields
- Enrichment of relationships between generations forming lasting networks of community
- Facilitation of community/public lands/wilderness service opportunities

Current Program Structure

- One outdoor activity per month (most months)
- Activities focused on outdoor recreation skill building, informal learning about the natural world, relationship building with adult mentors, and exposure to local public lands
- Participants, to date, have been “Matches” (“Littles” and “Bigs”) in the Big Brothers Big Sisters program (but OEMP is easily adapted to other groups offering programs to underserved youth)
- Activities occur on weekday evenings, weekend days or nights, with overnight options depending on partner regulations
- All trips planned and led by aspiring outdoor educators (typically college students like those associated with the University of MT Chapter of the MT Wilderness Association), with assistance from leaders working with underserved youth programs (i.e. Big Brothers Big Sisters), and a federal partner (BLM, FS, FWS, NPS) providing staff support
- Most outdoor activities take place in or near the *base community* and often on public lands
- Evaluations are completed by participants after each activity



Examples of Program Partners

The **Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center**, a federal interagency organization and founder of the Outdoor Explorers Mentoring Program, believes partnerships with local nonprofit organizations provide valuable resources and increase program potential for success. The Carhart Center has a history of working with various federal and nonprofit organizations, creating collaborative experiential programs and educational materials. The Carhart Center continues its support of OEMP by providing organizational materials, advice, and training for program partners in each location.

A **federal agency partner** from one of the wilderness management agencies (Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, Forest Service or National Park Service) is the partner who most often manages or helps manage program funds, participates in program planning, facilitates permits for use of public lands as needed, offers seasonal site advice, oversees program safety procedures, etc.

Big Brothers, Big Sisters (BBBS) has been a key partner in the first four OEMP replications. *BBBS* was founded in 1970 with the purpose of mentoring at-risk children ages six to fourteen. Their mission is to help children in need reach their potential through professionally-supported, one-on-one mentoring relationships. According to the organization's statistics collected from Missoula County, 63% of current matches involve children and youth who are living in families whose annual household incomes are at or below the federal poverty level; 75% are from single parent households; 25% have a parent who is incarcerated; 12% are of Native American, Hispanic, or Asian Pacific Islander descent. As a best practice organization, *Big Brothers, Big Sisters* has been scientifically evaluated and proven to be effective in achieving their mission. The Missoula chapter staff was eager and excited at the idea of providing more outdoor experiences for their matches of Bigs and Littles -- adult mentors paired with at-risk children. **OEMP is open to non-BBBS partners who work with underserved youth.**

The Montana Wilderness Association (MWA) and its student chapters are an example of an OEMP **conservation non-profit partner**. This group of dedicated wilderness stewards became an instrumental part of the Outdoor Explorers Mentoring Program. Founded in 1958, MWA works with communities to protect Montana's wilderness heritage, quiet beauty, and outdoor traditions, now and for future generations. In each of the first four OEMP chapters, MWA supervises a college student or "youth" intern who serves as a part-time, paid OEMP Coordinator, managing trip planning logistics and serving as a point person for the program. Each coordinator is an individual who is passionate about environmental education. MWA provides regional expertise and relationships to help guide trip planning, and assists with volunteer recruitment, especially through its student chapters. MWA, and their student interns and volunteers, are an outstanding example of the kind of OEMP partner representing **college-aged youth with a passion for outdoor activities and support of wild landscapes.**

Funding

The primary costs of the Outdoor Explorers Mentoring Program are transportation, food, and program materials. Materials may include items such as rental equipment for recreational activities or fees for subject matter experts. The original OEMP in Missoula, MT was primarily funded through the *Forest Service* “More Kids in the Woods” (MKIW) program. MKIW was an internal competitive funding opportunity with the mission of reaching kids where ever they are and connecting them with nature. The *Society for Wilderness Stewardship* also made a generous donation to the Outdoor Explorers Mentoring Program, supporting outdoor trips and program material costs. Other funds came from partner contributions and in-kind support. As the program matured and expanded, the Montana Wilderness Association provided financial support through grants and individual fund raising which helped fund college-age students in four locations to head-up student involvement, planning, and blog updates as well as other regular activity costs. Non-profit partner staffs, volunteers and students have donated countless hours to planning and conducting outdoor trips for program participants. In addition, partners have shared numerous established relationships with local outdoor enthusiasts, outdoor retailers, and the overall business community providing significant discounts and donation of rental equipment, outdoor guides (when required), food, etc.

Program Results



After compiling results from past activities, 93% of people surveyed agree or strongly agree that through OEMP they, “Found an appreciation (new or renewed) for the world of nature and learning opportunities in a natural setting.” Survey results also indicate that 93% of participants would recommend OEMP to others. Survey results from adult mentors indicated that 78% of child participants showed improved awareness of outdoor surroundings; 55% showed confidence in participating in outdoor activities; and 67% showed an interest in learning about the outdoors. The

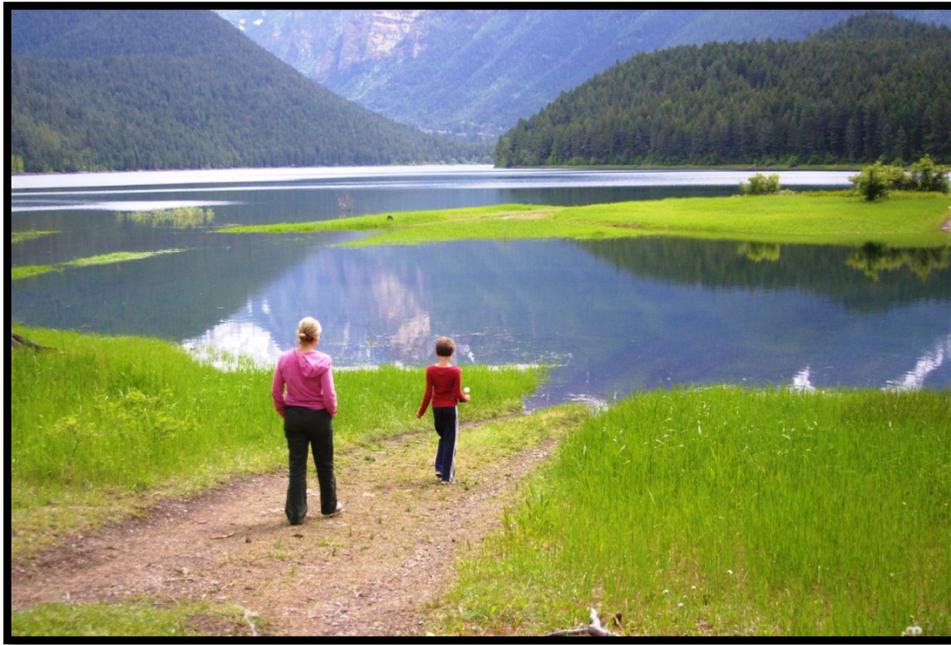
following are statements from adult mentors concerning their involvement with the Outdoor Explorers Mentoring Program:

“Participating in the Outdoor Explorers Mentoring Program has strengthened the relationship with me and my ‘Little.’ It’s a great opportunity for all of us to meet other matches and get to know everyone better. My little really enjoys hanging out with other little’s and experiencing things that are difficult to do with just one match.”

“Because my little had minimal exposure to the outdoors, she was always hesitant to try outdoor activities. She has really blossomed and become much more open minded about the outdoors after the summer experiences with the Outdoor Explores program. It was a great gift to have this opportunity.”

“The program was so valuable and amazing. It was heart-warming to see the Littles and their Bigs experience the wonders of our natural environment. Kudos to the program!”

Before You Replicate



- **Identify Local Needs:** Before replicating OEMP, research and identify the need for a program like this in your area. Are there underserved youth that would benefit from this program? Is your community aware of the local outdoor spaces available for their use and enjoyment? Is your agency and supervisor aware and supportive of this program? Is there a general interest or need among community members for a program such as OEMP? Ask these questions and answer them honestly before moving forward with the replication process.
- **Identify Partners:** Research nonprofit organizations in your area and set-up meetings with them. Propose the idea of starting an OEMP chapter and assess interest and commitment abilities. Partner only with organizations that can make a commitment to this program for at least one year. It is advised to choose partners who are willing to take on additional program management responsibilities over time, ensuring program longevity despite potential lack of federal funding and staff capacity in the future.
- **Decide to Replicate:** Once program partners have been secured it is time to seek funding, recruit youth volunteers, and start planning trip details. The federal agency representative will act as the program manager for OEMP. Their primary responsibilities include adherence to OEMP goals, outdoor activity oversight, funding development, support for volunteer recruitment, daylighting program evaluation results, promotion and support of youth volunteers and other partners. After securing program partners and funding, plan monthly trips 3-4 months in advance. Provide leadership training for the young land steward volunteers. Ensure they are comfortable with their ability to work with children and lead groups in the outdoors. Keep in regular contact with partners and hold them accountable to their program commitments. Be prepared for plans to change. Most importantly – be flexible and be safe!

Replication Check-list

The following check-list is designed to help assess your ability to implement the Outdoor Explorers Mentoring Program in your community. Black text indicates questions to ask and answer of you, agency leadership, and program partners. Orange text indicates action items necessary to complete for program success.

Need/Interest

- Does this program correspond with agency goals? _____
- Are their local nonprofits and mentoring organizations interested in this program?

- Do you have support from your supervisor to implement this program?

- Can you dedicate time needed to successfully implement a new program?

- Do you need a new program and would your resources be better spent working on adding value to an existing program? _____
- Write project proposal. What are the basic elements of this program and what are your goals?

- Meet with potential partners individually to gauge interest and establish roles.

- Meet with partners as a group if there is interest individually. What is the group consensus on starting this program? Any reservations or questions?

Commitment from All Partners

- Can everyone involved commit time and support for this program?

- Discuss the following issues: insurance/liability, agreements, funding, program manager, roles, program structure

Funding & Agreements

- Are you able to secure federal funds for this program?

- If not, can you secure grant funding through your nonprofit partners?

- Who will be responsible for securing funding? _____
- Who will be responsible for making program purchases? _____

- Talk to your agency Grants & Agreements Specialist. Consult with them to determine the most appropriate agreement to use for this program.
-

- Have all partners sign an agreement that defines roles and allows funds to be allocated to this program.

IMPORTANT: If you are not able or confident in your ability to successfully complete the above steps, do not move forward in the program replication process. The three components listed above are essential for program success and sustainability.

Program Structure

- How often will trips occur? _____
- Where will trips take place? _____
- What will you do on these activities? What type of activities will you coordinate?

- What are the goals of each activity? Are their learning objectives or are the activities strictly recreational in nature?

- Will you bring in outside experts to consult or provide expertise about a certain topic or activity? If yes, who?

- What is the budget for each activity? How will money be spent? Transportation? Supplies? What kinds of things will you need to conduct activities and run the program?

- How will you evaluate your effectiveness? And how often?

- Create a program guide with the answers to the above questions.
- Create an evaluation plan and evaluation worksheets.

Sustainability Plan

- How long will the program last? Months? Years? Is there a specific end date or not?

- How will you fund the program in the future? Who will be responsible for funding?

- What happens when staff turnover occurs? _____
- How often will partners meet to determine needs of the program? Will partners have the ability to terminate their role in the program after a certain period of time?

Activity Planning

- Who is the main person responsible for planning activities?
-

- Who will participate in activities? Define their specific roles.
-

- Recruit volunteers. What are your methods for recruitment?
-

- See “Activity Planning at a Glance” (p. 13) for additional tips on logistics of planning an activity.

Marketing

- How will you promote this program and share information with interested parties?
-

- Create materials such as brochures and fliers to distribute target audiences. These are great resources for partners to use in recruitment of participants.

- Create a website or blog to document trips, display pictures/videos, and share results. This also acts as a record of the program over time.

Reporting Results

- What methods will you use to share program results with others?
-

- Gather evaluation results after 1 year of program implementation and write a report.

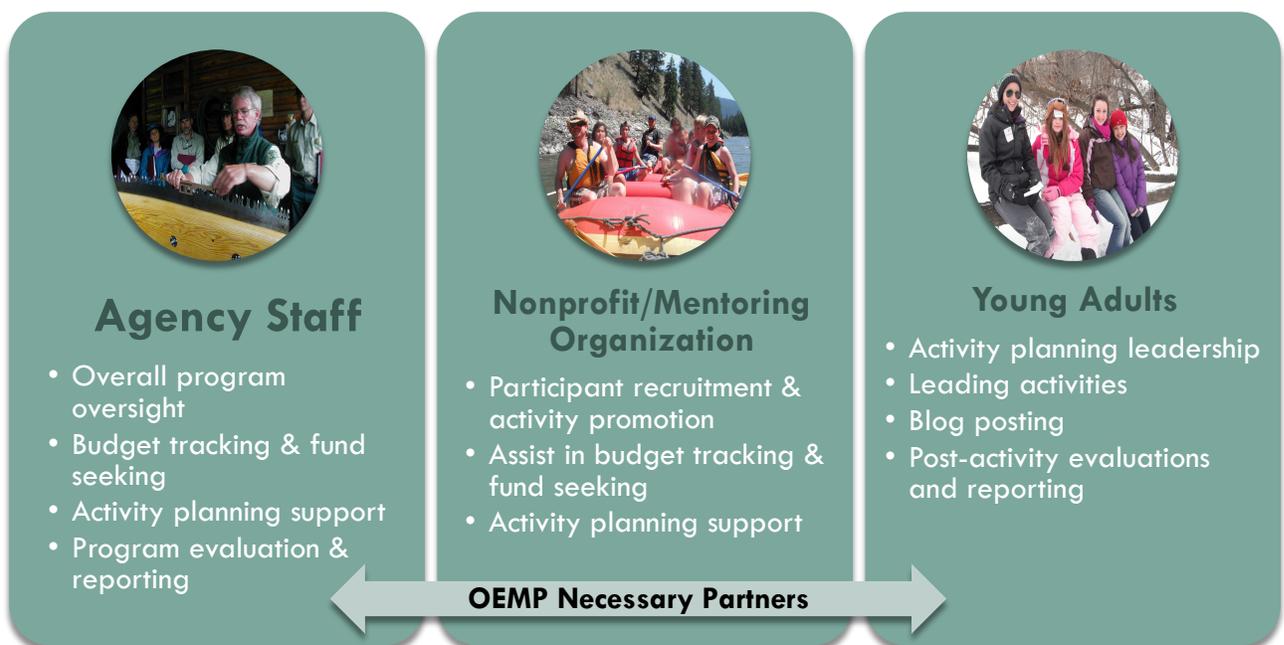
- Send through agency channels.

- Help others replicate who have an interest.

Building Partnerships

The following program partners are necessary for a successful replication of the Outdoor Explorers Mentoring Program:

- **Federal Agency Champion:** At least **one dedicated staff person** must have sufficient time and interest in running the program. They will act as program manager, keeping all partners and volunteers informed, updated, and accountable. Other duties of the federal agency champion include management of the overall budget, evaluating post-activity surveys, daylighting survey results, and seeking funds (with other program partners) for the program.
- **Non-Profit Mentorship Organization:** The nonprofit organization partner should have an established mentoring program for community children and adults. The Missoula chapter partner organization, *Big Brothers, Big Sisters* is a widely-recognized organization with a track record of fostering successful mentor relationships. *Big Brothers, Big Sisters* staff interest and commitment as a formal partner may differ among various communities. However, the mentor relationship is an essential component of the program. Your nonprofit partner should provide support for recruiting activity participants, helping manage the overall budget, securing program materials, and promotion of the program among their audience. As mentioned before, an increase of non-profit mentorship organization responsibilities may occur over time in order to ensure longevity of the program.
- **Committed Group of Young Land Stewards:** The primary duties of the young people you recruit will be trip planning and leading groups of participants on outdoor activities. Finding the right group of students or young adults may be the most challenging part of program replications. The goal is to have a small group of young land stewards (ages 18 to 26) who continually participate in outdoor activities and build relationships with program participants while gaining experience in informal outdoor education. **Choose a few individuals with a strong interest in the program and empower them to take ownership via their involvement and contributions.**



Activity Planning at a Glance

PLAN ACTIVITY LOGISTICS

- Choose student activity leaders
 - Decide activity, location, date, and time
 - Give "Activity Planning Sheet" to student leader(s) to use
 - Make sure teaching opportunities and equipment needs are identified
- 

COORDINATE WITH PARTNERS

- Send activity summary to nonprofit partner
 - Include date, time, meeting location, and items participants need to bring
 - Coordinate transportation and purchase program materials
- 

CONDUCT YOUR ACTIVITY

- Meet and travel to activity location
 - Have group safety talk before activity begins
 - Complete "Post-Activity" evaluation form at the end of each activity
- 

FOLLOW-UP

- Return any gear rented
- Write activity summary and post on blog/website with pictures
- Give update to program partners

Financial Resources

Program funding is a valid concern for agency staff looking to start their own Outdoor Explorers Mentoring Program chapter. Through effective partnerships many program costs can be reduced or eliminated, such as additional staff salary. Your partners will bring an enormous amount of support in the form of in-kind contributions. However, some financial resources will be needed for program materials and transportation costs. Below are a few resource examples for obtaining funding, creating financial agreements and tracking your program budget.

Grants

Grant funding can help alleviate program material and transportation costs associated with the Outdoor Explorers Mentoring Program. Work with your nonprofit partners to identify and apply for grants to support your program. Grant funding sources and availability may differ each year. Listed below are several examples federal and nonprofit grant funding sources:

- [Grants.gov](#): Grants.gov was established as a governmental resource named the E-Grants Initiative, part of the President's 2002 Fiscal Year Management Agenda to improve government services to the public. The concept has its origins in the Federal Financial Assistance Management Improvement Act of 1999, also known as Public Law 106-107. Public Law 106-107 has since sunset and is now known as the Grants Policy Committee (GPC). Grants.gov is a central storehouse for information on over 1,000 grant programs and provides access to approximately \$500 billion in annual awards.
- [More Kids in the Woods](#): The More Kids in the Woods (MKIW) challenge cost-share opportunity is an important component of the Forest Service's long-standing Kids in the Woods efforts that reach more than four million Americans each year, and engage more than a thousand partners that contribute time, energy and resources to help connect people with the natural world. Since 2007, the Forest Service has invested \$2 million in diverse, partnership-based MKIW projects that get "more kids in the woods" to learn about and experience the natural environment.
- [North Face Explore Fund](#): The North Face Explore Fund is a grant-giving program committed to supporting nonprofit, community organizations that break down the barriers to getting youth outdoors. Up to \$2,500.00 can be awarded.
- [REI Grants](#): REI supports some non-profit partners that focus on both environmental conservation and promoting active volunteerism through grant funding. The process begins with nominations from store teams, who select the nonprofits with whom they've forged meaningful partnerships. Nominated partners are invited to submit applications for grant funding. Work with your local REI store to learn more about these grant funding opportunities.
- [Outdoor Nation](#): Through Outdoor Nation, the Outdoor Foundation and its partners provide seed grants to young leaders as well as organizations that are working to get youth outside. From starting an outdoor club, to

organizing a service project, to filming an outdoor documentary, Outdoor Nation is investing in the most innovative, youth-inspired ideas that make a lasting difference. The Outdoor Foundation works with organizations to develop, manage, and evaluate customized grant programs.

Donations & Discounts

Many of the nonprofit organizations you form partnerships with will have established relationships with local retailers and community members. Seek donations and/or discounts for program materials through these partnerships. Donations and discounts are valuable partner financial contributions which keep program costs down. Local chapters of conservation groups such as the Sierra Club, National Wildlife Federation, or American Hiking Society may be willing to donate funds to your program. Demonstrate the value of your program and the benefits it will provide to the community when seeking funds from local organizations.

Agreements

The Outdoor Explorers Mentoring Program (Missoula Chapter) uses a Challenge Cost Share Agreement between the US Forest and partners to document cooperation and facilitate financial plans. This agreement lists all responsibilities for each partner and documents financial obligations. Learn more about Forest Service Challenge Cost Share Agreements [here](#). Each federal agency uses different but similar agreements. Consult your local grants and agreements specialist for more information about agreements and financial plans.

Budget Tracking

Tracking your budget is important for the purpose of trip planning and solicitation of future grant funds. Proper accounting of your funds will keep you and your partners accountable. Keep the following steps in mind when creating your initial program budget:

- Calculate total budget
- Decide on potential outdoor trips and estimate costs
- Create a “per trip” budget based on your estimates
- Track and adjust as necessary after a few months of implementation
- Remember to track in-kind contributions as well

The Missoula chapter of the Outdoor Explorers Mentoring Program currently uses a budget tracking form to track program expenditures (See Appendix K).

Promotional Tools

Promoting your chapter of the Outdoor Explorers Mentoring Program is a valuable way to recruit volunteers, connect with the community, and ensure longevity of the program. Documenting program success may also help secure additional grant funding in the future. The ultimate success of the Outdoor Explorers Mentoring Program will depend on the community support you receive which makes promotion especially important. The following are recommended promotion and communication tools for your program:

- **Blog:** A blog is a quick, inexpensive way to share stories, pictures, and videos of your program with people around the world. Online platforms such as [WordPress](#) and [Blogger](#) offer free services and user-friendly applications.
- **Social Media:** Use your agency's existing social media accounts such as Facebook and Twitter to promote your program. Encourage your partners to promote the program through their social media sites as well.
- **Print Materials:** Create brochures and fliers about your program. Attend local events to distribute these materials. Send out quarterly or yearly reports to donor and supportive community leaders. Monthly program status reports should also be sent out to all program partner leaders.
- **Media Outreach:** Invite local media to attend one of your outdoor trip events. A television spot or newspaper story is a great way to inform your community about the Outdoor Explorers Mentoring Program. Remember that television reporters look for stories that will look compelling on screen. Invite them to an activity that will be outdoors with action and movement to capture.



Program Management Resources



The Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center has created numerous materials for program management, planning, and evaluation purposes:

1. Activity Ideas and Objectives: A sampler for activity planners (See Appendix A)
2. Activity Planning Sheet: A resource for trip leaders to use for planning purposes (See Appendix B)
3. Safety Meeting Log (REQUIRED for every activity; See Appendix C)
4. Program Policies (See Appendix D)
5. OPTIONAL Student Volunteer Application (See Appendix E)
6. Teachable Moments Handout: An educational resource for university or young adult mentors who will be co-leading activities (See Appendix F)
7. Tips to Help Mentors Facilitate Successful Outdoor Experiences for OEMP Participants (Appendix G)
8. Post-Activity Evaluation (Long Form Sample; See Appendix H)
9. Post-Activity Evaluation (Short Form Sample; See Appendix I)
10. Long-Term Survey: An evaluation tool to be completed by Big Brother, Big Sisters participants who have participated in at least three Outdoor Explorers trips (See Appendix J)
11. Sample Budget Tracking Form (See Appendix K)
12. Equipment/Gear Ideas (See Appendix L)

All materials have designed specifically for early replications Outdoor Explorers Mentoring Program. Adapt these materials to your specific program and needs.

APPENDIX

Appendix A



OUTDOOR EXPLORERS

mentoring program

Activity Ideas and Objectives

Think back to your favorite field trips during your elementary and middle school years. Chances are, the best experiences were fun, didn't feel like going to school, but still left you wiser and inspired. The Outdoor Explorers Mentoring Program seeks to recreate those "favorite field trip" experiences.

The OEMP Replication Guide describes the mission of the program as follows:

OEMP fosters life-long engagement with nature, stewardship, and community, and inspires the next generation of natural resource professionals by connecting underprivileged youth with the wild places in their backyard through intergenerational place-based outdoor adventures and service learning projects.

What does that look like in practice? While OEMP thrives on the creativity of its participant organizations, and while no list can capture all possible activities, we have attempted to share some of the outings that have consistently proven to be effective at connecting youth with the natural world, sharing essential outdoor skills, and inspiring a new generation to pursue additional knowledge – or perhaps a career – in natural resource management or advocacy.

In general, the trips on the following list:

- Are staged in the outdoors as much as possible, to match with the mission of the Outdoor Explorers Mentoring Program. Of course, fantastic educational opportunities for exploring natural history and outdoor skills exist in indoor settings, as well (nature centers, museums, planetariums, wildlife rehabilitation centers, etc...). As much as possible, however, we encourage Outdoor Explorers outings to be focused on outdoor spaces that children can return to at a later date.
- Should have clearly defined educational outcomes. This isn't to say that the outings should feel like school or should emphasize education over fun. Instead, outings should educate through "teachable moments" that are woven into the chosen activities (i.e. stopping to examine a track in the snow during a snowshoe outing, pausing on a hike to peer through binoculars at a colorful bird, or learning how to stay safe while recreating on a whitewater river trip).
- Frequently incorporate experts from our own organizations/agencies, or partners, who add value to OEMP outings. Many of the best OEMP trips involve the help of entities beyond the OEMP partners, including, for example: state fish and game departments, watershed education groups, outfitters or guides, etc...
- Are replicable by the Bigs and Littles on their own time, as much as possible. Although it is inevitable that some outings will be easier to replicate than others, OEMP outings should strive to introduce Bigs and Little to activities they can enjoy again in the future on their own time, and in landscapes that they can easily access.

Finally, all OEMP programs must put safety before all other goals. Without a safe space to learn and grow, all other benefits of OEMP are lost. For each outing, make an emergency plan, devise a foul-weather Plan B, host a tailgate safety talk, and don't be afraid to call things off if conditions are not appropriate for the day's events. Remember, we want OEMP participants to come back a second time! **What follows is a sampling of outings and objectives to help you plan your next OEMP adventure. By no means is this a comprehensive list – but we hope you will use these examples as inspiration.**

ACTIVITY: Float trips

Objectives/goals/areas of focus:

- Introduce floating on local water resources as a potential recreation activity that is accessible and fun.
- Participants gain new skills related to the activity (paddling, steering, reacting to new situations, team work, etc.).
- Safety issues, responses, and equipment related to the activity are introduced, taught and modeled.
- EDUCATION: Hydrology, water-quality, map reading, navigation, micro/macro invertebrates, fish/aquatic biology, etc.

ACTIVITY: Cross-country skiing

Objectives/goals/areas of focus:

- There are fun and relatively inexpensive ways to recreate outdoors in winter!
- Ski mechanics: Putting on/taking off, getting up after falling, simple turns, going uphill, etc.
- Ski safety: Knowing your limitations, knowing what your gear can and cannot do, defensive ski behavior (watching out for the other person), how to help others
- EDUCATION: Ski physics, respectful outdoor behavior, snow science, winter adaptations of plants and animals, dressing properly and safely for winter activities (layers, no cotton, etc.)

ACTIVITY: Snowshoeing

Objectives/goals/areas of focus:

- There are many ways to get outside for exercise, exploration and fun – snowshoeing is a great option that many are able to enjoy.
- How do snowshoes work? What is their history? How have they changed over time?
- Choose the right gear for every winter activity. Snowshoes allow access to landscapes that other gear does not.
- Snowshoeing can be hard work so be sure to dress in layers!
- EDUCATION: Animal tracks and signs exploration; snowshoe physics (wide vs. long; aluminum vs. wood; etc.); winter plant identification; winter photography – snowshoes make a great platform for the photographer.

ACTIVITY: Animal tracks and signs

Objectives/goals/areas of focus:

- Groups of young people often don't see wildlife up close because animals move away – Studying tracks and signs left by wildlife help introduce participants to who is around and what they're doing.
- It's fun to learn more about our wild neighbors.
- EDUCATION: Basic natural history, observation skill development, making inferences, using field guides, recording data.

ACTIVITY: Fishing

Objectives/goals/areas of focus:

- Fishing can be fun and is an inexpensive way to spend time outdoors.
- What are the rules, regulations and ethical considerations associated with fishing?
- Basic fishing skill acquisition: fishing gear set-up, baiting a hook, casting, getting a hook unstuck, bringing in a fish, catch and release, etc.

- To keep or not to keep – What do you do with a fish if you decide to keep it? Preparing fish to eat.
- EDUCATION: The healthy water/healthy fish connection; native and non-native fish species; identifying fish species; measurement/estimation.

ACTIVITY: Bird watching

Objectives/goals/areas of focus:

- Using the tools of a naturalist (field guides, binoculars, spotting scopes, etc.)
- Is feeding birds a good idea? If so, when is it okay and when should I take the feeders down?
- EDUCATION: Developing and exercising observation and identification skills; habitat and species location; migration and habitat health—What’s the connection?; recognizing bird vocalizations; bird terminology (i.e. birds of prey, shore birds, wing bars, beak structure, etc.)

ACTIVITY: Night

Objectives/goals/areas of focus:

- Nighttime is a wonderful time to be outdoors if you’re prepared and have planned ahead.
- Our ancestors spent a lot of time outdoors at night and learned valuable things from observing the night sky and paying attention to what goes on with animals, etc.
- Storytelling can be especially effective and fun at night!
- EDUCATION: Constellations; moon phases; astronomy; traditional stories related to the night, nocturnal animals, constellations, etc.

ACTIVITY: Stream/water ecology

Objectives/goals/areas of focus:

- There are ways to determine water-quality by studying what’s in the water and what’s not.
- Aquatic micro and macro invertebrate identification, collection, and ethics.
- The “upstream/downstream connection”
- There are people who make a living studying water and water-related things.
- We can help improve water quality by our actions (from trash clean-up to behavioral changes)
- EDUCATION: water cycles; aquatic life; terminology (i.e. riparian, aquatic, biotic/abiotic, etc.); connecting water quality to habitat quality, ecosystem health, human health, etc.

ACTIVITY: Hiking (w/themes)

Objectives/goals/areas of focus:

- Being prepared (gear, water, maps) can make hiking more fun and safe.
- First aid: be prepared to deal with hiking-related issues (i.e. blisters, sun burns, etc.).
- Hiking is a way to transport yourself into new worlds where you can experience amazing things.
- EDUCATION: The science of moving (uphill vs. downhill, stride, step choice); stream/water crossing; trail ethics (i.e. cutting switchbacks, when off-trail is a good choice, confronting other trail users, dogs on trails, dealing with wildlife, etc.); backpacking skills.

ACTIVITY: Horseback riding

Objectives/goals/areas of focus:

- Horses require attention, tools, awareness, and skills.
- Riding safety and gear.
- Caring for your horse’s needs.
- Horseback riding ethics, riding behavior, guidelines
- EDUCATION: Horses and wilderness; the history of horses and humans; horse tack – an inventor’s paradise!

ACTIVITY: Kayaking/canoeing

Objectives/goals/areas of focus:

- Kayaks and canoes are a great way to enjoy a lake or river and get up-close and personal with a watery world.

- How to use/maneuver a canoe/kayak and how to stay safe on the water.
- EDUCATION: freshwater or saltwater ecology; riparian habitat for plants and animals; water safety and skills; the impacts of dams on river ecology; etc.

ACTIVITY: Science-focused

Objectives/goals/areas of focus:

- Many communities are fortunate to have businesses or non-profits dedicated to science or natural history. These trips are a great way to introduce youth to careers in science, resources in their community, and fun things to do indoors when the weather isn't cooperating!
- Activities could include a visit to a wildlife rescue/rehabilitation center, a science museum, a planetarium, etc...
- EDUCATION: careers in science and natural history; health, safety, and rehabilitation issues for wild animals; human-wildlife conflict and mitigation.

ACTIVITY: Outdoor winter activities

Objectives/goals/areas of focus:

- Snow-caving or shelter building, avalanche awareness, and tracking are just a few of many ways to enjoy a day outdoors during the winter months.
- How to stay safe in cold and often wet weather conditions; interpreting the safety of the snowpack and staying safe in avalanche terrain.
- How do animals and plants adapt to the winter months?
- EDUCATION: cold-weather preparedness and safe travel in snow; winter ecology; etc.

ACTIVITY: Bicycle

Objectives/goals/areas of focus:

- Gain a new perspective on your community by exploring it on a bike!
- Learn how bikes are a safe and efficient way to travel and commute, while getting exercise and keeping the air clean and clear!
- Introduce Bigs and Littles to rail-trails in your area and surrounding natural areas. How was this rail-trail created? What is a conservation easement?
- Use bikes to connect popular parks or other destinations in your community.
- EDUCATION: bike safety and maintenance; benefits of human-powered commuting or mass-transit; exposure to a new activity and new areas and trails to explore

ACTIVITY: Overnights

Objectives/goals/areas of focus:

- Overnight trips are a great way to explore farther-flung destinations or experience a unique natural area close to town.
- Overnight trips allow Bigs and Littles to build stronger bonds with one-another and share a night under the stars.
- EDUCATION: The basics of choosing a campsite, setting up a tent, building a campfire, cooking on a camp stove, and staying safe in a campground. Storytelling, outdoor games, and star-gazing can be a great component of an overnight, as well.

ACTIVITY: Lead-ups to local community events

Objectives/goals/areas of focus:

- Some communities have events/festivals throughout the year that may focus (at least in part) on river cleanups, outdoor activities (hiking, biking, kayaking, ice climbing, etc...), or natural phenomena (bird migrations, flowering trees or plants, etc...).
- These events/festivals are a fantastic way to expose Bigs and Littles in existing community resources/opportunities, and encourage awareness of the connections between your town and the natural world.

- EDUCATION: Show how communities are deeply connected to their surroundings (bird migrations, river corridors, changes in the seasons, etc...); service projects are a great way to give back to your community, gain a better understanding of issues in your area.

ACTIVITY: Climbing

Objectives/goals/areas of focus:

- Climbing is an exhilarating way to experience your surroundings.
- Climbing pushes your comfort level and challenges your physical abilities, resulting in improved confidence and a sense of accomplishment.
- What types of plants and animals make their home on cliffs? How do they have to adapt to their surroundings? What is the unique geology of the place you are climbing/how did this cliff get here?
- EDUCATION: Trust-building and growing self-confidence; climbing safety; geology.

ACTIVITY: Caving

Objectives/goals/areas of focus:

- There's a whole different world down there! Caving introduces Bigs and Littles to a world they may have never experienced before.
- How did the caves come to be? What strange animals or plants make a home in a dark cave?
- EDUCATION: safe travel in a cave; geology of caves; plants and animals that have adapted to caves.

ACTIVITY: Service

Objectives/goals/areas of focus:

- Service trips are a way to have fun while giving back to your community, and learning the value of helping your neighbors.
- Service trips could include a river or park cleanup, planting trees, volunteering at a local event or festival, or helping to gather citizen science information such as taking stream health measurements or doing wildlife surveys.
- EDUCATION: The value of altruism; learning why it's important to keep the environment clean and healthy; and more.

ACTIVITY: Archery

Objectives/goals/areas of focus:

- Archery is an ancient skill and one that requires practice and patience.
- Although OEMP recommends
- Many communities have archery clubs that can support an afternoon of target practice with bows that they rent out.
- EDUCATION: Archery skills and safety (including hunter safety tips); game animals and their habitats; hunting history and ethics; and more.

ACTIVITY: Traditional skills

Objectives/goals/areas of focus:

- Learning traditional skills is a fun way to connect with your natural surroundings while learning techniques for survival, crafting, and foraging.
- EDUCATION: Traditional skills education could encompass cordage, basket weaving, fire starting, tanning hides, identifying edible plants, etc.; Native American history and use of traditional skills; and more.



OUTDOOR EXPLORERS

mentoring program

Outdoor Activity Planning Sheet

Note: Use this sheet to plan *Outdoor Explorers* events two to four weeks before the activity date. Revisit the plan approximately one week before the event to make adjustments due to changes in weather conditions, participant numbers, mentor needs and so forth.

ACTIVITY LEADERS: _____

WHEN: Deciding Date and Time of Your Activity

Possible activity date(s) _____ FINAL activity date(s): _____

Time: _____ Estimated activity time length: _____

WHERE: Decide Your Activity Location & Contact the Site

Possible activity location(s): _____

FINAL activity location: _____

Human impact concerns and plan to minimize: _____

WHAT: Decide Your Activity Focus

Possible outdoor activities (i.e. hiking, snowshoeing, etc.) _____

Who can provide training in skills and/or equipment before activity? _____

TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES

Possible teaching opportunities/topics: _____

Resources for improving topic background (books, website, person): _____

OUTDOOR EQUIPMENT

Special outdoor gear needs: _____

- Possible sources for rental or borrowing: _____

SAFETY HEADS-UP (Use *Safety Meeting Log*; Appendix C)

Special safety concerns: _____

Specific safety training required for volunteers (if any): _____

TASKS

(Not all activities will include all outlined tasks; add or delete as needed.)

What: _____ **Who:** _____ **Completed (✓)**

Facilities _____

Snacks _____

Meals _____

Gear _____

Access (road conditions, maps, etc.) _____

Fees, permits, permission, etc. _____

Communication w/OEMP partners _____

First-aid kit(s) _____

Emergency plan _____

Training _____

Publicity: _____

BEFORE	BEFORE	AFTER
<input type="checkbox"/> Decide on activity leaders	<input type="checkbox"/> Make sure someone is CPR/First Aid certified and you have a first aid kit for the activity. Prepare <i>Safety Meeting Log</i> and be ready for tailgate meeting with mentors and, later, all participants.	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete "Post-Activity" Evaluations
<input type="checkbox"/> When is the activity going to take place?	<input type="checkbox"/> Gather any gear, maps, or other equipment needed	<input type="checkbox"/> Return any borrowed or rented gear
<input type="checkbox"/> Where will the activity take place?	<input type="checkbox"/> Confirm logistics with everyone involved, one week prior to the activity	<input type="checkbox"/> Write a summary of how the activity went on the blog. Post pictures if you have any but pay attention to partner organizational policies.
<input type="checkbox"/> What will you be doing?		<input type="checkbox"/> Give update to partners about how it went, lessons learned, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/> Contact site to get permission, find out if there are any fees, and collaborate on activity		
<input type="checkbox"/> Budget: Gear, Transportation, food, etc.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Write trip overview for OEMP partners. Include activity meeting time, location, methods of transportation (carpool or do they need to get there by themselves?), what you'll be doing, estimated length of the activity, and what they need to bring/wear (including water and snacks). Share information w/partners.		



Safety Meeting Log

Use the information listed here, and gathered prior to every OEMP activity, as the basis of a Tailgate Safety Meeting/Heads-up for leaders and, at the start of every activity, with all participants.

SUPERVISOR/LEADER: _____ DATE: _____

ATTENDANCE (at Tailgate Safety Meetings): _____

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY: _____

HAZARDS IDENTIFIED: _____

Personal Protective Equipment REQUIRED: _____

OTHER MITIGATION MEASURES: _____



Program Policies

- Eligibility Policy
 - Determine if youth coordinators/leaders are required to have background checks according to the OEMP partner that hosts youth participants.
 - Check to see that all youth coordinators/leaders/volunteers are covered by one of the OEMP partner's liability policy.
- Screening Policy
 - All OEMP Coordinator Interns will complete an application form before *leading* any outdoor activities. This application form should be kept on file by one of the OEMP partners.
- Safety Policy
 - At least one student leader will be currently certified in First Aid and CPR prior to activity departure. First aid, safety, and outdoor education training may occur during each semester, dependent upon availability and need.
- Record-Keeping Policy
 - Student leaders will write and post a summary of their outdoor activity once the event is completed, typically using a Wordpress blog. Check OEMP partner policies regarding posting photos showing young people.
- Confidentiality Policy
 - All information about program participants will be kept confidential. Check on partner policies related to using photos of youth in OEMP marketing, blogs, etc.
- Transportation Policy
 - Student leaders should generally not transport program participants to OEMP-sponsored activities.
- Overnight Visits and Out-of-Town Travel Policy
 - Overnight trips must be approved by OEMP partners and meet all organizational policies.
- Use of Alcohol, Drugs, Tobacco, and Firearms Policy
 - No use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco, or firearms will be permitted during trips or any time while in contact with program participants. Student leaders who violate this policy will be permanently expelled from the program.
- Unacceptable Behavior Policy
 - Foul language and rude behavior will not be tolerated. Student leaders who exhibit this behavior may be expelled from the program.



OUTDOOR EXPLORERS

mentoring program

OPTIONAL Student Volunteer Application

Thank you for your interest in becoming a volunteer in the *Outdoor Explorers* program. Please complete the following information and return to: _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Street (or Apartment/unit #)

City

State

Zip Code

Phone #(s): _____ Email: _____

Are you currently a student? Full Time , Part Time , No Year: _____

What college, university or training program? _____

Major/Minor: _____

Will you be available to lead trips this summer? _____ Yes _____ No

Current certified first aid status (choose all that apply or add as needed):

BASIC

WFA

WFR

WEMT

EMT

Other: _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT:

Name: _____ Phone#: _____

Relationship to applicant: _____

Please list any special skills or areas of expertise that would be helpful if leading future outdoor trips:

Experience and Background Information:

(Check the level that best applies to your previous and/or current experience)

<i>Category</i>	<i>Levels</i>		
	NONE	SOME	A LOT
<hr/>			
This is my experience or background...			
Part 1			
Being mentored	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Acting as a mentor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Describe: _____			
<hr/>			
Part 2			
Recreating in the outdoors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being an outdoor leader	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Describe: _____			
<hr/>			
Part 3			
Teaching in outdoor settings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teaching in classroom settings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Describe: _____			
<hr/>			
Part 4			
Working with children (ages 6 - 10)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working with young people (ages 10 - 15)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working as leader/teacher of adults	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Describe: _____			
<hr/>			

I have read and agree to adhere to the established policies of the Outdoor Explorers Mentoring Program.

I certify that all of the above statements made by me are true, complete and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief, and are made in good faith.

Sign: _____ Date: _____



Teachable Moments and Outdoor Activities

Introduction

Mentors in the *Outdoor Explorers Mentoring Program* (OEMP) have the good fortune to lead young people into outdoor settings where everyone can enjoy beautiful landscapes, exhilarating physical activity, new friends, and good times. In addition to leading safe and enjoyable experiences, OEMP mentors look for ways to introduce and teach about natural history and public lands/wilderness topics that can be observed and enjoyed along the way. During the planning process, OEMP mentors look ahead to teaching opportunities they should expect. Mentor preparation allows them to tackle big picture topics like *the value of wilderness* to smaller yet complex topics like *differences in north/south facing slopes*.

The Opportunity

It is important for the OEMP mentor to remember that OEMP activities are not school! These are activities designed to support OEMP partner goals, facilitating fun and memorable experiences for young people and their adult partners, and involving everyone in interactions with natural landscapes. That said, OEMP mentors have many chances to teach if they are prepared and choose to take them. For ideas about planning and facilitating, see *Tips to Help Facilitate Successful Outdoor Experiences for OEMP Participants* (Appendix G).

The Challenge

One challenge many outdoor educators come up against has to do with the inability to take advantage of truly teachable or magical moments as they arise. In addition (and not clear in the following story) are instructor concerns that they lack sufficient knowledge about possible topics and frustration with the physical challenges presented to participants.

My new field instructors had just completed their first week of intense training on topics and procedures related to taking young people into outdoor settings for the purpose of learning in a fun and real-world way. The instructors knew the place they would teach, had studied natural history topics carefully, and had written detailed and well thought out plans. All that remained was for students to arrive and field teams to be organized.

The big day finally arrived and everyone was excited. I chose to go along with one particularly well-prepared instructor. It was exciting to watch her interact with her new students and to see them respond to her enthusiasm and knowledge.

At one point the group was posed to begin sampling water quality along a medium-sized creek. The instructor, because she was so well prepared, did an outstanding job warning students of safety concerns, teaching them how to use field tools, and getting them ready for a successful research experience.

Just as students were crouching down to take their first samples, a cow moose and her young calf stepped out of thick willows that covered the opposite creek bank. The animals were at a safe distance from the students but close enough to clearly observe and enjoy. The students froze; their attention riveted on the moose family.

At this point the instructor made a common rookie mistake. Rather than reminding her students of safety issues and then enjoying the sight, she attempted to focus students on water sampling instead of moose. Needless to say, she was unsuccessful in her attempt! No way were the students going to focus on macro-invertebrates when there were very large mammals to watch. Not until the moose were gone did she gain some semblance of water-quality focus.

Later, while debriefing her lesson, the subject of the moose incident came up first thing. What had gone wrong?

The Solutions

Potential Problem #1

The instructor in the story was so focused on her goals that she was unable or unwilling to let go of them, if even for a moment, when a magical moment presented itself.

Solution #1

If you're well prepared then suspend your plan for a bit when something especially exciting or interesting comes up. More often than not the instructor that knows their plan backwards and forwards can do so easily, enjoy the moment and then return to what they had hoped to do. Note: Those who are *winging it* often can't let go to enjoy magical moments because they're too focused on trying to remember what they should be doing.

Potential Problem #2

Many outdoor instructors or leaders become flustered when a topic comes up that they know little or nothing about.

Solution #2

Don't be flustered. Share what you may know and then start asking questions so that you and your charges can learn together. Young people love it when their leaders don't know something. It levels the playing field! It's okay to say, "I don't know." Follow it up with, "...but let's see what we can learn together."

Potential Problem #3

Because your outings will consist of physical and sometimes strenuous activity that may be foreign to some participants, missteps, minor accidents, challenges, and even failure will occur. These can be frustrating but they may be present teachable moments.

Solution #3

As a leader you will need to control your emotional response to challenges that present themselves. Attend to the challenge or problem, make sure everyone is safe physically and emotionally, and then look for a teaching opportunity. If it's there, go with it if it feels right. Share personal challenges that you have had doing the same thing. Almost everyone loves to hear that they're not alone in their challenging experience. Explain gently how they might improve and learn. A calm voice, a pat on the back, even a wink or a smile can help ease the stress and move one along to greater success.



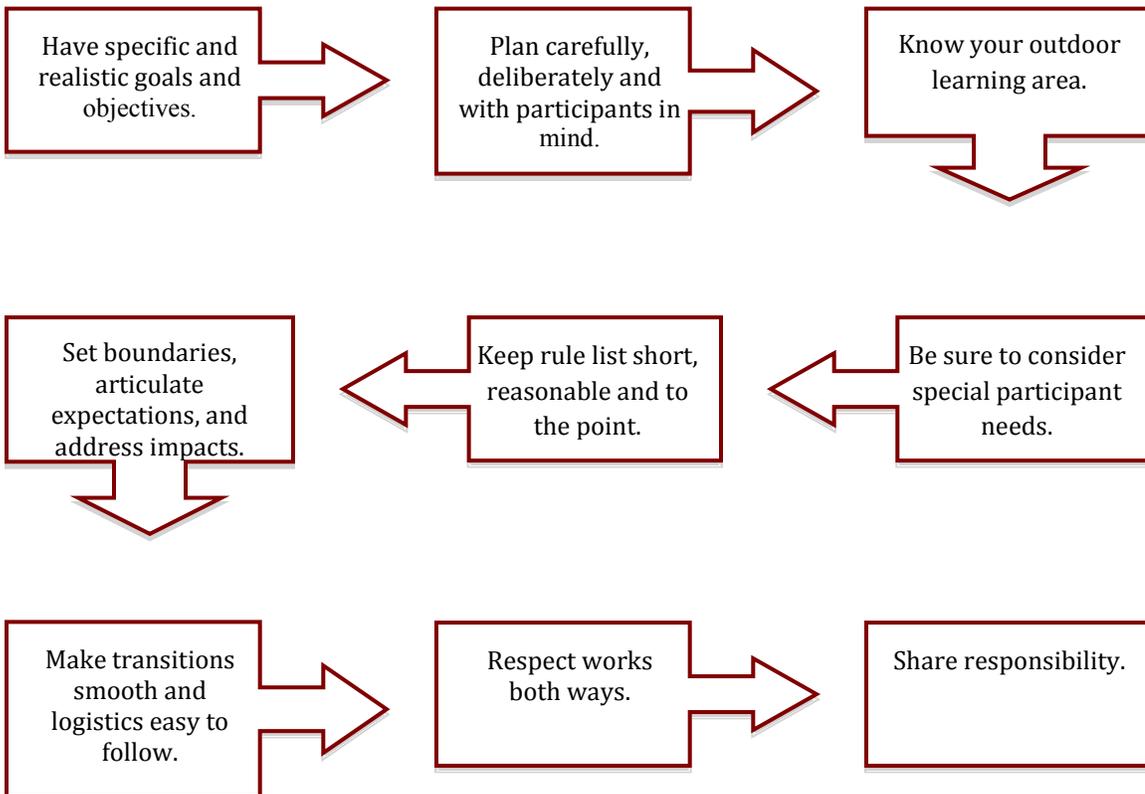
Tips to Help Mentors Facilitate Successful Outdoor Experiences for OEMP Participants

Introduction

Participant leadership, organizational strategies, and safety concerns are somewhat different when mentors expand learning into outdoor settings. There are, however, several considerations that, if used, may insure a more productive and enjoyable experience for participants and mentors.

The following guidelines will help mentors meet their educational, leadership and safety objectives. Not every guideline is applicable to every outdoor teaching situation. Use the following *Guidelines* as a checklist to help you prepare for and facilitate your next *OEMP* experience.

Guideline Flow Chart



Guideline Details

Guideline #1: Have specific and realistic goals and objectives

OEMP experiences should have well thought out goals (both physical and educational) so that participant time is well spent and use of the outdoor setting can be seen as the best possible use of time and energy. If you know your participants you will be able to set specific goals suited to the needs of both young people and adults.

NOTES:

Guideline #2: Plan carefully, deliberately and always with participants in mind

Mentors who *wing it* often fail to meet their goals and are less apt to be able to take full advantage of unexpected teaching/leadership opportunities that may arise in outdoor settings. Be deliberate about your planning and then let go when something better/interesting/magical comes up. If you have planned well you will return more easily when the time is right. Good planning includes consideration of the needs of young participants and how to involve adults. When planning as a team, be respectful of one another's ideas, strengths, and insights and incorporate as many as possible.

NOTES:

Guideline #3: Know your outdoor learning area

Mentors who lead activities in outdoor settings need to visit the outdoor location well in advance of the activity so that they understand special circumstances and opportunities presented by the place (safety, noise, travel time, etc.) and are able to address and utilize them.

NOTES:

Guideline #4: Be sure to consider special participant needs

Many participants (young people and adults) have special needs. Some are obvious and some less so. Consider these special needs (physical, behavioral, learning, etc.) as you consider where to go and what to do. These needs change from group-to-group, year-to-year and place-to-place. Don't base current outdoor activity plans on previous experiences only.

NOTES:

Guideline #5: Keep the outdoor rule list short, reasonable and to the point

You may feel uncomfortable even thinking about rules since these outdoor activities are meant to be fun. Call them rules, guidelines, or recommendations but have some ideas in mind at the very least. You won't need a lot them in the outdoor setting and they will only be meaningful if they really matter and are reasonable. Always be clear and respectful in rule presentations. Allow the other adults to help you with reminders or, sometimes, consequences. You will need fewer rules if you keep participants busy with meaningful tasks/activities and if you have planned carefully.

NOTES:

Guideline #6: Set boundaries, articulate expectations and address impacts

The following areas deserve special attention and communication with and to participants:

- It will sometimes be important for mentors to set physical and behavioral boundaries for participants (especially young people). By stating boundaries up front and explaining why (when appropriate) participants *can* be successful because they won't always have to second-guess where to go and how to act.
- The mentor who articulates just what they expect as behavioral and educational outcomes is much more likely to get what they need. The outdoor activity setting is, for some, a new learning atmosphere and one that requires a direct approach by mentors so that young participants can adapt their own learning paradigms.
- Be sure to address potential harmful impacts on the outdoor setting in your planning and then, based on your knowledge of the place, articulate appropriate behaviors so that negative impacts can be minimized.

NOTES:

Guideline #7: Make transitions smooth and logistical instructions easy to follow

Mentors sometimes get in trouble when transition times are not well thought out and logistical instructions are not explained in simple and easy-to-understand language. Visualize these important periods and be prepared to communicate directly and clearly with participants BEFORE the transition happens.

NOTES:

Guideline #8: Respect works both ways

Mentors who want their young (and older) participants to respect them, the outdoor experience, and the places where the outdoor activity takes place must always realize that if they show respect their charges are much more likely to do the same. Respect the participants by being well prepared, open to learning from them, and do the positive little things (picking up a dropped paper, avoiding negative behaviors) that they will notice and learn from.

NOTES:

Guideline #9: Share responsibility

Allow young people and adult helpers to share as much responsibility as possible. This may be as little as helping to carry equipment, motivating others during difficult times, or as big as teaching a concept. Take advantage of the skills others have. More often than not, the young person who sometimes challenges you can become an ally if they are allowed to contribute to the group's success. However, if you expect a participant (young or old) to teach, lead, use special equipment or skills, etc. be sure to train them so that they can be successful and have a positive experience.

NOTES:



**OUTDOOR
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**Post-Activity Evaluation
Long Form**

This evaluation is for OEMP participants to complete at the end of each outdoor activity.

Name(s):	Date:	Brief activity description:
Was this your first trip with the Outdoor Explorers Mentoring Program? YES NO	Location of activity:	Trip Leader(s):

Please respond to the following statements:	(Circle One)					
	Strongly disagree	Not really	No opinion	Mostly	Most definitely!	Does not apply to this activity
Trip leaders were helpful and attentive to your needs.	1	2	3	4	5	0
A specific example would be helpful:						
Trip leaders seemed knowledgeable and prepared.	1	2	3	4	5	0
Please explain or give examples:						
Equipment/gear provided was in good condition and participants were instructed how to use it properly.	1	2	3	4	5	0
List any equipment or gear provided:						
Trip leaders communicated special safety situations clearly before the activity started and demonstrated responsible group safety leadership.	1	2	3	4	5	0
Comments:						
Please continue:	(Circle One)					
	Strongly disagree	Not really	No opinion	Mostly	Most definitely!	Does not apply to this activity

I/we really enjoyed this experience.	1	2	3	4	5	0
Please explain:						
We were exposed to new skills and/or learned new concepts.	1	2	3	4	5	0
Please list any new skills or concepts:						
I/we may consider doing an activity like this by ourselves in the future.	1	2	3	4	5	0
Why or why not?						
I/we would recommend Outdoor Explorers to others.	1	2	3	4	5	0
Please explain:						

Now's your chance! Please share your suggestions for improving Outdoor Explorer activities in the future. You may want to include ideas for specific activities, locations, or new skills you would like to learn.

Thanks for your feedback!



Post-Activity Evaluation Short Form

This evaluation is for OEMP participants to complete at the end of each outdoor activity.

Name(s):	Date:	Brief activity description:
Was this your first trip with the Outdoor Explorers Mentoring Program? YES NO	Location of activity:	Trip Leader(s):

Please respond to the following statements:	(Circle One)					
	Strongly disagree	Not really	No opinion	Mostly	Most definitely!	Does not apply to this activity
Trip leaders seemed knowledgeable and prepared.	1	2	3	4	5	0
Please explain or give examples:						
Trip leaders communicated special safety situations clearly and demonstrated responsible leadership.	1	2	3	4	5	0
Comments:						
We were exposed to new skills and/or learned new concepts.	1	2	3	4	5	0
Please list any new skills or concepts:						
I/we may consider doing an activity like this by ourselves in the future.	1	2	3	4	5	0
Why or why not?						
I/we would recommend Outdoor Explorers to others.	1	2	3	4	5	0
Please explain:						

Now's your chance! On the lines below (continue on the back as needed), please share your suggestions for improving Outdoor Explorer activities in the future. You may want to include ideas for specific activities, locations, or new skills you would like to learn.

Thanks for your feedback!

Long-Term Participant Survey



OUTDOOR EXPLORERS

mentoring program

Please describe any changes you have observed ***over the past 5 months***, in your young OEMP participant, related to the statements listed below. It's okay to indicate "don't know" if you have no knowledge about change in a given area.

	Much Better	A Little Better	No Change	A Little Worse	Much Worse	Don't Know	Not A Problem
Shows interest in playing outside.							
Awareness of outdoor surroundings.							
Confidence in participating in outdoor activities.							
Physical ability in outdoor skills.							
Interest in learning about the outdoors.							

Please provide more observational details about any or all of the statements above:

How has participating in the Outdoor Explorers Mentoring Program affected "people relationships" for your young OEMP participant?

What is your overall view of the Outdoor Explorers Mentoring Program? Is it valuable to you and the young person/young people you work with?

Trip Name

Date:

Project Title:

Agreement No:

Invoice

No:

Performan

ce Period:

Box A FOREST SERVICE REIMBURSEMENT PORTION				
Cost Elements	Reimbursable Cooperator Expenses (Financial Plan C – Cash to Cooperator)	Amounts Previously Received	New Request Amount	Balance Remaining
Salaries/Labor	0	0	0	0
Travel	0	0	0	0
Equipment	0	0	0	0
Supplies/Materials	0	0	0	0
Printing	0	0	0	0
Contract Services	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	0	0	0	0
REQUESTED AMOUNT: \$ XXX.xx				
				0

Box B COOPERATOR & IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS/MATCH						
Cost Elements	NON-CASH CONTRIBUTIONS			IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS		
	Previous	Current	Cumulative To Date	Previou s	Curr ent	Cumulative To Date
Salaries/Labor	0	0	0	0	0	0
Travel	0	0	0	0	0	0
Equipment	0	0	0	0	0	0
Supplies/Materials	0	0	0	0	0	0
Printing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Contract Services	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	0	0	0	0	0	0



OUTDOOR EXPLORERS

mentoring program

Equipment/Gear Ideas

Explanation:

Individual OEMP chapters often find that they are able to operate programs/activities for much less than they originally thought. If available funds must be spent by a particular date, and if the funds can be spent on equipment as well as for activities, leaders may want to consider purchasing equipment/gear that is used often, borrowed occasionally, and that enhance program goals and participant safety. Before purchasing, here are some things to consider:

- What have we needed in the past?
- Realistically, what might we need going forward?
- Who will store and be accountable for OEMP equipment?
- How will you identify items as *belonging to* your OEMP chapter?

This list may help your OEMP leaders make decisions about what to purchase. Be creative with your spending. Look for discounts, sales, donations, etc. Buy from local supporters when possible and make sure they know that OEMP supports them through their spending. Finally, there is a fine-line between a *bargain* and a *piece of junk*. You don't always need top-of-the-line items but quality often equals longevity as well as usefulness.

OEMP WISH LIST

Binoculars

Description: We have all used these common tools defined as *a piece of equipment with two parts that you hold against your eyes and look through to see distant objects more clearly*. Heads-up on this purchase – Buy tools NOT toys.

OEMP uses: Wildlife viewing, citizen science activities, bird-watching, to name a few.



Spotting scope with tripod

Description: Sort of a *really* upgraded viewing tool described as *a small portable telescope with added optics to present an erect image, optimized for the observation of terrestrial objects*. Allows the OEMP mentor to find a more or less fixed image (i.e. a bear on a carcass) that others can, one-by-one, view up close without having to find, focus, etc. Spotting scopes can take some of the frustration out of the nature-viewing experience. Talk to local birdwatchers, nature centers, etc. for advice about reasonably priced and decent quality scopes.

OEMP uses: Wildlife viewing, citizen science activities, bird-watching, to name a few.

Field guides

Description: Really great to have a good collection of these on hand for many OEMP activities. Field guides might be described as *guidebooks describing natural objects of some type that might be encountered in the field*. It's a good idea, when identifying items in the field or lab with beginners (adults and young people), to use local field guides (i.e. "Mammals of Gallatin County") rather than something that contains hundreds or thousands of individuals making it more difficult to have identification success.

OEMP uses: Hikes, camping activities, science/natural history activities, nature-center visits to name a few.

Work gloves

Description: No need for much of a description here. The name says it all. Since service projects/activities should be one of the cornerstones for every OEMP program (not every activity but at least one or two a year) these might be worth having. Young people do not often have their own gloves. Purchase the right glove for the kinds of projects you might be engaged in (rubber gloves work great for picking up trash from a river's edge but would be inappropriate for removing fence posts). Be sure to get a variety of sizes with special attention given to children's sizes.

OEMP uses: Earth Day garbage pick-up, barbed-wire fence removal, trail construction/maintenance, community beautification days, etc.

Winter gloves

Description: Again, pretty obvious what we're talking about here. That said, there's a huge difference between those cheap, light weight knitted gloves (wonderful for an early fall walk but not so good for an all-day, below freezing winter snowshoe trip). Purchase good winter gloves, mark them well (i.e. "OEMP Helena") and be sure to collect them, dry them, and store them so that they're available for the next winter activity. NOTE: It may also be a good idea to get some light-weight gloves for the shoulder seasons and cool summer night activities.

OEMP uses: Cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, night sky viewing, winter ecology events, etc.

Rain gear



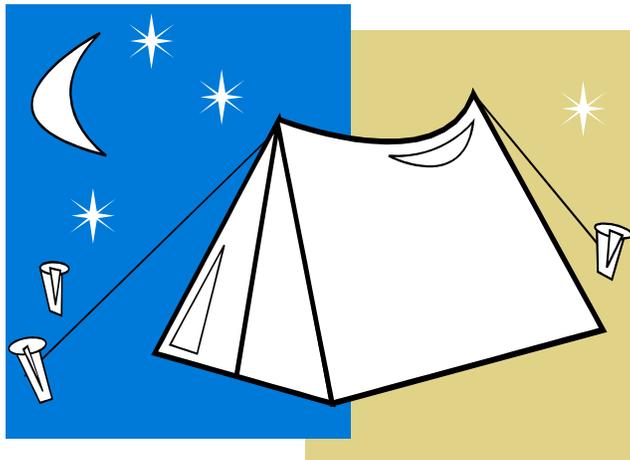
Description: There are all kinds and qualities of rain gear. From a carefully crafted *garbage bag poncho* to pricey water-repellent rain coats and rain pants, being able to safely recreate in the natural world during wet weather is a message OEMP wants to communicate. Pay attention when you shop. Are you purchasing rain gear for one-time use or are you hoping to use something over and over? Do your activities take place where the rain event comes and goes quickly and the environment is relatively dry (much of the Rocky Mountains as an example) or are you in a rain forest environment (better have rubberized gear)? How you answer these questions can help you determine your best choice.

OEMP uses: Potentially almost any OEMP outdoor activity. Even when it's not storming, if you're activity is in a damp meadow, during morning or evening hours of heavy condensation on plants, or after a storm has passed, rain gear can be a handy item to have. Rain gear can also serve as an effective windbreaker.

Tents

Description: As with most of the gear described here, tents (those portable shelters most kids love to spend time in) come in all kinds of shapes, sizes, and qualities. Post-trip care and storage are essential elements to longevity of all tents. More are spoiled by storing wet than almost any other outdoor item. If your OEMP chapter sponsors overnight activities you might consider purchasing tents since they can be difficult to borrow. Even if your group doesn't camp, you might consider portable sun/rain shelters for daytime activities. These can have screened sides to keep out insects, solid sides or just a roof covering.

OEMP uses: Camping trips, backpacking experiences, overnights at local parks, etc.



Winter boots/socks

Description: OEMP often supports underserved youth and these young people may not all have proper winter footwear. Safety and comfort dictate that we make sure every participant (don't forget the adults) have what they need. They often don't realize their own needs so educate them *before* the activity. "Cotton kills" is a well-used saying amongst those who recreate during winter. Having a supply of normal sized winter boots and socks (Be sure to wash socks after each use before storing!) may seem a little much but, depending on how much time your OEMP chapter spends in wet/cold environments, may be worth considering. Don't forget thrift stores as a source for winter boots as well as after-season sales at regular retail outlets.

OEMP uses: Ice-fishing, winter hikes, wildlife observation, winter tracking, snow play, snowshoeing, etc.

Day packs

Description: It seems that every kid has a day pack or book bag. Just drive by a school at the end of the day and watch even the youngest student struggle under the weight of... Who knows what's in there?! The difference between the bag they drag to school and one that you might wish they had at next Saturday's OEMP activity could be significant. For rugged outdoor activities be sure daypacks you purchase are constructed of high-quality materials, sewn in such a way as to not fall apart after one use, and are large enough to hold a reasonable amount of gear (including lunches, water bottles, etc.) but not so large as to be inappropriate for the user. Obviously, adjustable straps that distribute weight evenly are better than thin webbed or rope straps. As always, be reasonable about how much you spend since there is a point when what you purchase is well-beyond what you need.

OEMP uses: Hikes, rafting, fishing, camping, etc.

Water bottles

Description: Hydration is both a critical OEMP responsibility and an opportunity to educate participants about the importance of drinking water while in the outdoors. Water bottles come in all shapes and sizes and you may decide to simply bring some *disposable* water bottles as back-up. However, if you don't want to generate more plastic waste you may want to consider purchasing water bottles for prizes, gifts, participation awards, etc. If you distribute and collect water bottles after each activity be sure to wash and sterilize.



OEMP uses: ALL outdoor activities.

Science/Naturalist gear (hand lenses, GPS, water-testing gear, etc.)

Description: Field guides, binoculars and spotting scopes have already been discussed and certainly fit into this category. There are too many other *naturalist tools* to list but, depending on the kinds of outdoor activities your group facilitates, this could be a category to consider. Think mostly of items that are difficult to borrow or expensive to purchase over-and-over.

OEMP uses: Many field-based science-focused OEMP activities would benefit from having easy access to these tools. Usually buying quality items is the best way to go. If we offer junk tools we often get junk results in return!

Cross-country skis and/or snowshoes

Description: If you live in or near an area with a nice winter snow season and you find your group struggling to find enough ski or snowshoe gear to satisfy demand, you might consider starting a collection of these items. This can be an expensive endeavor unless you can get donations, utilize pre-season gear swaps, or find good deals post-season from retailers who rent gear. After price, getting the right sizes and then a place to store become major considerations. Still, wouldn't it be nice to have gear for activities AND for the youth you serve to borrow?

OEMP uses: Winter snow-related activities.

Life jackets

Description: One of OEMP's most eagerly anticipated activities continues to be those related to water (kayaking, float trips, canoeing, etc.). If your group likes to take advantage of the water resource in your area, perhaps having a collection of *U.S Coast Guard Approved* life jackets would be a good idea. There are five different classifications so do your homework and figure out which is best suited for the activities your group participates in. Like skis and snowshoes, you may find this item pricey so be creative as you seek donations, sales, etc.

OEMP uses: Many water-related outdoor activities (including, depending on the swimming ability of participants and water conditions, swimming or even fishing activities)

Helmets

Description: Helmets are a critical safety item for many potential OEMP activities. They may be difficult to borrow or rent, and because we serve some youth populations who may not have their own, considering helmets may be a good idea. One type does not generally fill every helmet need so do your homework, think about your most critical helmet need, and then see what you can find. Beware of junk items that really don't do what you would expect.

OEMP uses: Bicycle activities, climbing, horseback riding

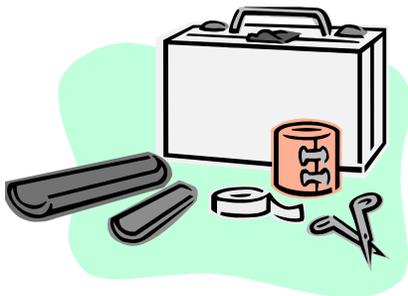
Always keep participant safety your #1 priority!



High-quality 1st aid kit(s)

Description: Every OEMP activity set of group gear should include a high quality first aid kit. It's a good idea if every leader has their own kit as well. Program partners may have kits to loan but if not your group should consider the purchase of a high quality kit for sure. Local doctors, clinics, first-aid trainers or other qualified individuals can help you decide what you need and where to purchase. NOTE: Be sure to have kits inventoried (and items replaced, refilled, etc.) at least yearly by a qualified individual.

OEMP uses: Every OEMP activity should have one or more high quality first aid kits on site.



Others:

About The Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center

This OEMP Replication Guide was created by the Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center in Missoula, Montana. Established in 1993, the Carhart Center preserves the values and benefits of wilderness for present and future generations by connecting agency employees and the public with their wilderness heritage through training, information, and education. To learn more about the Carhart Center visit, <http://carhart.wilderness.net>.



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