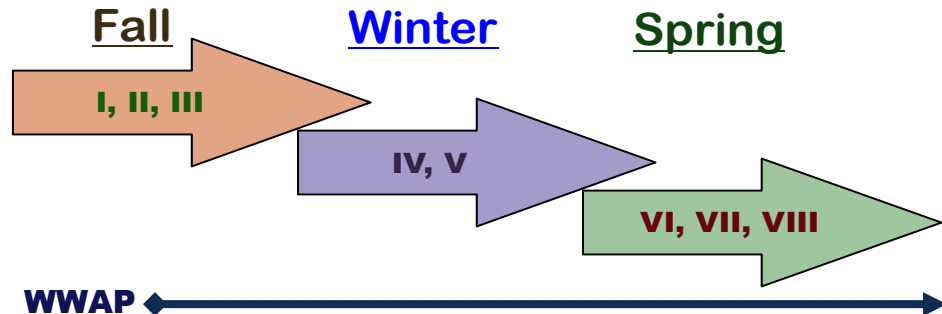


# **TO TEACHERS:**

## **WILDLINK EXPEDITION GUIDE**

### **PROGRAM ITINERARY & APPROACH**



#### **Fall – School Starts**

- I. First Expeditions to Yosemite NP and Sequoia NP begin
- II. WildLink Teacher Development Workshop, place TBA

#### **Winter – End 1<sup>st</sup> Semester, Begin 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester**

- III. Ambassador Program & Spring WildLink Program recruitment begins
- IV. Youth Quest Leadership Camp

#### **Spring – 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester to End of Year**

- V. Expeditions continue through June
- VI. Family Weekend
- VII. NPS/WildLink Bridge Program

#### **EXPEDITION SCHEDULE**

##### **6-8 Weeks before your Expedition Dates:**

- ✓ You'll be sent a packet of WildLink paperwork to give to prospective students.
- ✓ Have an informational meeting (a WildLink staff member can help if you're unsure of how to do this!) and give out the paperwork. Start with a big group and narrow it down as you see who's the best fit and who is most committed. Have at least two alternates ready to roll with completed paperwork for last minute dropouts.
- ✓ Set up a date and time for prospective students and parents to attend a pre-trip visit at your school site. Coordinate this with the WildLink Program Assistant, Cynthia Ramaciotti; she will conduct the meeting.

##### **2-3 Weeks before your Expedition Dates:**

- ✓ Return all the completed expedition paperwork (including for chaperones) to Cynthia or Mandy. You must be on time!

- ✓ **Pre-trip Visit:** WildLink Expedition Coordinator, Cynthia will work with the WildLink Teacher (our contact/organizer based in the school) to set up an evening visit at the school amongst participating students and their parents. At this time, Cynthia will collect paperwork, answer questions, explain what will happen on the expedition, and talk about clothing and gear students will need for the expedition (WildLink will provide nearly all of it). It's mostly a chance to ease parents and students' worries, talk about safety & regulations and provide a question-answer session for everyone. Generally, both parents and students get the opportunity to know Cynthia before the expedition. This meeting takes approximately an hour, but is absolutely necessary for optimum success and continuity.

### **Expedition Week**

- ✓ Get your students to Yosemite National Park and provide chaperone coverage for them, as explained to you by Cynthia or Mandy. There will be an orientation and gear check, and students will get a chance to mingle and discuss their Ambassador Project ideas.

### **One Week after Expedition**

- ✓ Meet with the students and get their general impressions of the trip. What did they learn? What went right/wrong? This is a chance for students to talk about what happened in a controlled and comfortable setting.
- ✓ Plan for a WildLink staff member to meet with students. We would like to get honest feedback about what students learned, liked/disliked and what they took away from the experience. This should be a very informal and fun meeting, even if there are complaints, we would like to speak frankly and constructively about their experience.
- ✓ Begin to identify possible Wilderness Ambassador Projects, and relay these ideas to David, the WildLink Community Coordinator. Students may need focus on this project; support them and follow their progress. Utilize David and resources and contacts available to him.

### **A Few Notes About....**

- **Student selection/recruitment:** Cynthia will send or show a video to help the teacher in the recruitment process. Another powerful tool is to use students from past expeditions (WildLink Ambassadors) and have them present their experience to the new crop of WildLink participants.

You will need to select between four and twelve students for the expedition, depending on WildLink scheduling needs (see Student Selection Criteria document). We recommend having two alternates with fully completed paperwork, just in case someone drops out at the last minute...this tends to happen occasionally. We want to make sure that we maximize opportunities for this expedition!

- **Arrival/Logistics/Chaperone coverage:** Your students will be scheduled to arrive in Curry Village, Yosemite Valley on a Sunday around 3 p.m., where you will be met by our Curry Village Site Coordinator. This person will assign you all to cabins and explain the details of food, schedule, facilities, and so on. Cynthia will join you for an evening program on Sunday night. A teacher/chaperone from your school will need to accompany the group on Sunday and stay with them in Curry Village Sunday and Monday evenings, on through 8 a.m. Tuesday morning. This teacher/chaperone will also need to be available Thursday afternoon through the Friday noon departure.

Occasionally we will conduct an aquatic bio-monitoring exercise with your students on Friday, which we hope you would be available to take part in. Your return will be scheduled for the Friday, between noon and 2 p.m. There is a possibility that the teacher can accompany the students in the backcountry if they wish; they can also elect to stay behind and rejoin the group when they come out of the backcountry on Thursday afternoon. Please be aware that during the winter months, tire chains may become mandatory for all vehicles on park roads. Please be prepared for this possibility, as we could get winter weather anytime in winter and spring. We will provide a **gate pass** that you will need to enter the park.

- **Teacher Development Program:** This program occurs annually, and typically lasts between one evening and two days, depending on the year. All participating WildLink schools are required to send at least one representative to this weekend each year. This is a great professional opportunity and a chance to share and inspire teachers from the WildLink team.
- **Family Weekend:** This is an opportunity for students to share wilderness ethics and values they've learned through Expeditions with their families! For one weekend, Ambassadors will be granted a FREE pass to Yosemite National Park with up to five guests. Families will sleep, eat and enjoy the Park's beautiful scenery. There will be a few WildLink-hosted short programs that families can enjoy. All Ambassadors are welcome and encouraged to attend. This year, **Family Weekend will occur April 4-6, 2008**. Publicize this among last year's alumni!
- **Wilderness Ambassador Program:** As part of the WildLink student's obligation to accepting a position on an expedition is to commit to a

Wilderness Ambassador Project. As Ambassadors, students will be offered a wide variety of experiences that incorporate a wilderness ethic closer to their home community. This could be educational, community stewardship, research or monitoring, professional development, and so on. This is facilitated through our Community Coordinator, David Kuhn. Although you will be the student's day-to-day support for this project, David is available to help coordinate with partner organizations in your community. Ambassadors receive top priority for the majority of our events both inside Yosemite National Park, and via our partners' projects, which include career-builder and internship opportunities across California. Contact David for more information about programs and resources in your area.

- **Bridge Program:** The National Park Service has teamed with WildLink to provide a fully-scholarshipped, interactive job-shadowing program in Yosemite National Park. For two weeks, interns will spend each day meeting and collaborating with a wide variety of professionals inside the Park. There is a resume-building workshop and step-by-step orientation to the Federal Service Application. But it's not all work – students will have the opportunity to hike, rock climb, canoe and socialize with each other, and network with Yosemite Institute and Parks staff. Students will also receive a \$750 grant to the school of their choice. The Bridge Program is a unique effort built out of WildLink's alliance with the National Park Service. **This year, the Bridge Program dates are June 15-27, 2008.**