

Outdoor Leaders in the Making

March 2016

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Well, it's official, Outdoor Pursuits has had its doors open for a whole year. A lot of change has accompanied our beginnings, but one thing has remained constant; our amazing, hardworking, unique and talented first class of trip leaders. From our very first trip to Letchworth State Park, to our Spring Break trip to Zion National Park in Utah, they've been there for everything in between.

This group of 23 dedicated students volunteer hours of their time each week to make our program spectacular. To be clear, they do not get paid for the trips they lead, the time it takes to plan those trips, or the additional time each week for meetings, lessons and discussions. They simply get paid in valuable field experience and a sense of belonging to a strong community that only comes with the unique outdoor setting that is our classroom.

The spring semester welcomed a new class of apprentice trip leaders, each of whom was paired with an existing trip leader to "show them the ropes". At the end of January, all trip leaders, apprentices, graduate assistants, and the assistant director headed out to the Finger Lakes Trail for a weekend of winter

camping and hiking. Our survival skills were truly put to the test, as temperatures sank to nearly 15 degrees during the evenings.

Groups focused on several different lessons including risk management, group travel, cooking and decision making. Trip Leaders who were comfortable in certain areas were given the opportunity to co-teach or lead the various lessons.

A recurring theme during the weekend was that of diversity and inclusion. Evening programming, activities and discussion were focused on the idea that each individual has something unique to bring to the table despite their differing backgrounds and ability levels. Sitting around the fire each night and truly appreciating the community you are with is an experience and atmosphere all students should have the opportunity to be a part of.

All in all, it was a great weekend that brought our Outdoor Pursuits community closer together, tightened up our risk management systems, and allowed us to move forward down nature's path with our best boot forward.



Climbing Competition: Cortland Crux

OP's first ever climbing competition, the Cortland Crux, was held in December at the SUNY Cortland climbing wall in the Student Life Center. A total of 15 climbers participated and the energy was high as climbers competed to win prizes made available by Harris Outdoors.

system" meaning that each climb was allotted a specific amount of points. Each climber was given unlimited attempts to complete the climb, if they completed it; they earned the respective amount of points. All ability levels were welcome to compete.

The competition was rated on a "red point

Keep your eyes open for our next competition! We hope to host another this coming April.



Outdoor Pursuits takes on ADK Trailblazers

It is with much excitement that we announce the takeover of the Adirondack Trail Blazers wilderness transition program! For the last two years, ADK Trail Blazers has been overseen by Dr. Amy Shellman through the Recreation, Parks and Leisure Studies Department. The program has now been passed on to Recreational Sports under the direction of Mr. Jason Harcum, our Assistant Director for Outdoor Pursuits.

In the past, Adirondack Trail Blazers has hosted around 30-40 students, both incoming and transfer. We hope to keep those numbers in the coming years, with the opportunity to grow.

Outdoor Pursuits will serve as an excellent launch pad for the program, as many previous participants are now involved with leading current trips. No outdoor experience is necessary to be on Adirondack Trail Blazers and we encourage those with little outdoor background to take part.

"Your deepest roots are in nature. No matter who you are, where you live, or what kind of life you lead, you remain irrevocably linked with the rest of creation. - Charles Cook

Adirondack Trail Blazers is a week long, outdoor based orientation program which takes place at the Raquette Lake property owned by SUNY Cortland. With a focus on community and engagement, the program revolves around a five day canoe trip around the surrounding lakes.

If you are interested in the program or would like additional information, please contact Mr. Harcum at Jason.harcum@cortland.edu or 607-753-5810



Inclusion with Allison Gipple

A quick look at the workshop schedule for Outdoor Pursuits will show several of this semester's workshops focused on inclusion. We've teamed up with Graduate Assistant Allison Gipple from Disability Services to create several workshops and clinics that promote inclusive recreation. She has been

nothing but a wealth of knowledge and help and we cannot thank her enough for her contributions to our program. Our next inclusive workshop will be held on April 12 at 7 p.m. and will be focused on biking for various populations.

Outdoor Pursuits Heads to Zion



The first ever Outdoor Pursuits Spring break trip went to Zion National Park in Utah. The trip was 10 days in length, and explored multiple trails throughout the park. The group, consisting of 10 participants and 2 trip leaders camped at Watchman Campground within park boundaries (a photo of the camp may be seen above). It was an adventure to get there, as the group drove from campus to JFK international airport. From JFK, the group took a direct flight into Las Vegas where they rented a van and drove the last three hours to Zion.

Each day was scheduled around one main hike. The group was able to do “The Narrows”, “Angel’s landing”, “The Hidden Canyon Trail”, “Emerald Pools” and several others. The Narrows hike required the use of dry suits and special water shoes, as its primary course goes

through the Virgin River.

“It was a truly special experience to get students outside somewhere far from the normal campus environment. Feeling small in the face of Mother Nature is a powerful experience, and one I feel blessed to have shared with our students,” said Erica Behler, Graduate Assistant for Outdoor Pursuits.

Participant Josh Wray said, “I had an amazing trip thanks to SUNY Cortland Outdoor Pursuits. They led an amazing trip and I was so happy to go on their first spring break trip ever. It was an amazing experience that I will treasure forever.”

Parts of the trip remained semi-unstructured due to the relaxed nature of the trip.

Students had time to explore parts of the park on their own, take advantage of the park shuttle system, and grab a gift and a bite to eat in the surrounding town of Springdale.

The Spring Break trip is a tradition that Outdoor Pursuits wants to establish and keep alive. Ideas and dreams of California and Yosemite are already in the works.



Want to be a trip leader?

Want to gain valuable leadership skills? Interested in becoming a volunteer trip leader? We are now accepting applications! To apply, stop into Outdoor Pursuits in the Student Life Center and ask for an application.