

American Wilderness Leadership School 2019

Marissa Nolan

I would like to thank the Adirondack-Catskill Chapter of Safari Club International for sponsoring me to attend the American Wilderness Leadership School (AWLS) this June. It was a wonderful experience! I had never been to Wyoming and discovered photos do not do it justice. The Grand Tetons and surrounding valleys are truly majestic. I also fulfilled a lifelong dream of seeing moose in the wild! I enjoyed spotting other wildlife and wildflowers as well, such as pronghorn antelope, hummingbirds, larkspur, and fairy slipper orchids.



The postcard perfect surroundings were only the backdrop to the amazing educational instruction and experiences. The teachers were knowledgeable and passionate about their topics. They all had friendly demeanors that made the trainings fun and exciting. I was especially grateful for the patience from the firearm teachers since this was my first experience shooting handguns.



One of my favorite classes was archery. I had not picked up a bow since I was in middle school. The archery certification was interesting and useful. We will not be building a firearms range at Rogers Center anytime soon, but archery is a possibility! It would be a great addition to our Adventure Camp.

I learned from my fellow participants as well. They were mostly schoolteachers from across the country. Interacting with people from various types of school districts, urban to rural and public to private, was enlightening. Seeing outdoor education from the teacher's perspectives will help me to better cater to their needs.

Just two days after I returned from Wyoming my AWLS training came in handy! We were certified in the Project WILD environmental education curriculum. When the materials for our insect program could not be found, I was able to do one of the Project WILD activities we had practiced at AWLS. They also gave us the updated Project WILD book and the new layout will make finding the perfect activity much easier.



Thank you again for giving me this momentous opportunity! The knowledge I gained and relationships I made will have long lasting impacts on my work at Rogers Environmental Education Center.

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