

2017 AWLS Educator Program

By Lisa Aiello

This past summer I attended the American Wilderness Leadership School (AWLS) in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. This is a week long training offered to educators from all educational levels and experiences. It is designed to educate teachers about the environmental impact of hunting, fishing, and wildlife management. The school provides speakers and real-world experiences to illustrate this impact. It also provides opportunities for educators to become certified Archery instructors, and to experience the use of firearms in a very supportive environment.



When leaving for my week at AWLS, I was nervous and unsure of what I was going to be doing. Being a second-grade teacher, I was unsure of how to incorporate the curriculum into my classroom, but I had nothing to worry about. After the first night, I was already on overload with the vast amount of information we were getting as well as the knowledge of all the instructors. Some of the most memorable experiences during the week would be: a speaker from Yellowstone National Park that spoke for three hours and fully engaged us the entire time, learning to shoot a pistol and rifle for the first time, hiking into the mountains to a waterfall, going to Teton National Park and the Elk Preserve as a field trip, and lastly whitewater rafting down the Snake River. This week filled with learning invaluable information, outstanding instructors, excellent food, new connections throughout the country all took place in the incredible setting of the Rocky Mountains.



I would like to thank the Adirondack-Catskill Chapter of Safari Club International for sponsoring my trip to AWLS. This was such an incredible opportunity. I would certainly recommend it to educators. The knowledge and experience I gained was invaluable.