

Steps into Wilderness

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Why should my organization invest time in taking youth hiking?

Getting youth comfortable with hiking is a fantastic way to build self-confidence through outdoor exploration and healthy exercise. By being exposed to hiking at an early age, youth are more likely to continue hiking as adults and have a greater investment in the outdoors.

Q. What type of organizations can participate in this program?

Whether you are a school group, scout troop, or community center chances are Steps into Wilderness has something for you. The program is geared toward any leaders who work with youth ages 13-18 who desire to hike but who have little to no experience. If you already hike and want help with your hiking program, WTA will provide resources and collaborate on hikes and outdoor leadership training.

Q. I would like to take part in the Steps into Wilderness program, how many participants are required?

Clinics and hiking groups require eight to twenty participants. Special arrangements may be made for groups who do not meet the minimum or exceed the maximum number of participants.

Q. When are workshops and hikes available for participants?

Workshops and weekend hikes are available September through May. Afterschool hikes are available September-October and March-May. During the summer, the Steps into Wilderness program is not available due to our youth trail maintenance program.

Steps into Wilderness

Timeline:

- Contact WTA eight weeks prior to your ideal workshop and hike dates with your group size estimate and program needs.
- WTA will send you program details as soon as the date is confirmed.
- WTA prefers confirmation of the total number of participants two weeks prior to the workshops and hikes. The earlier we know about a groups' interest the better we can accommodate your request with our schedule.
- WTA facilitates the Steps into Wilderness workshop(s) and hike(s) requested by your organization for your youth or adult leaders.
- WTA shifts to a support role and collaborates with teen leaders to build their outdoor competency and help plan future hikes.
- Within one year, sign up for a Day of Service with our youth volunteer trail maintenance program.
- More workshops and hikes for youth and adult leaders are available if desired!

What we need you to do:

Your organization is responsible for getting commitments from youth participants and adult leaders who are interested in workshops. If you run into obstacles in the process, contact WTA for assistance. Participants under the age of 18 must have a signed Parental Release form to participate in a hike.

contact: email chrisw@wta.org or call WTA 206.625.1367

an adventure begins
with a single step



Steps into Wilderness

a community-based program to
hook youth on hiking and the outdoors

www.wta.org

Steps into Wilderness

Are you a school or youth organization that would like to take youth ages 13-18 hiking? If you already hike, would you like help on overcoming obstacles you face in getting youth on trail? Are you interested in increasing outdoor leadership skills for your staff or youth?



Washington Trails Association offers a new program to help schools and youth organizations get more youth hiking!

The Steps into Wilderness

program provides schools and youth organizations in the greater Seattle-area with basic and advanced day hiking workshops, hiking opportunities, and outdoor leadership trainings. WTA also offers Steps into Wilderness clinics to assist adult and youth leaders in developing hiking experiences within their own organization. WTA will share its knowledge and resources to help you get youth outside and hiking in a safe and supportive environment!

Steps into Wilderness provides:

- hiking knowledge & experience
- encouragement to make hiking a life-long activity
- outdoor ethics & Leave No Trace principles
- engaging games & activities
- leadership opportunities & workshops
- an affordable & enjoyable way to get youth outside
- stewardship & volunteer opportunities

**Getting youth outdoors
one step at a time**

Steps into Wilderness Program Offerings

Day-hiking

- Intro to Hiking (joys of hiking, hike types, hiking ethics)
- How to Plan & Prepare (organize for a hike, gear needs, and logistics)
- Natural History (resources / activities about a trail's cultural & ecological history)
- Leave-No-Trace (how to reduce your impact when hiking)

Advanced day-hiking

- Navigation (learn to navigate and use maps & compass)
- Leadership (how to lead on the trail)
- Physical Hiking Skills (how to hike, carry a pack, and hike preparation exercises)
- Risk Management & Safety (how to reduce the risk of danger and hike safely)

Trail Leadership

- Making Outdoor Adventure Fun (themes, activities, roles, and adding adventure)
- Group Management (effective ways to lead a hiking group)
- Logistics (transportation, how to plan and prepare for a hike)
- Equipment (gear needs, how to pack, tips)
- Risk Management & Safety (how to reduce the risk of danger and hike safely)
- Leave-No-Trace (how to reduce your impact when hiking)

Service Exchange:

There is no fee for this program. Washington Trails Association's only requirement is that within one year your organization signs up for a Day of Service doing trail maintenance. This opportunity earns students service hours which are often required to graduate.

For more information
visit www.wta.org,
call WTA @ 206.625.1367,
or email chrisw@wta.org



Photo by Trevor Anderson

Hiking provides a great way to get exercise, explore the natural world and build self-confidence!