

Bridging Youth and the Back Country Horsemen





What does it mean to be the bridge?

- Purpose of a bridge:
- It connects two unfamiliar objects together.
- This allows us to teach practical skills and bridge it with Back Country Horsemen.



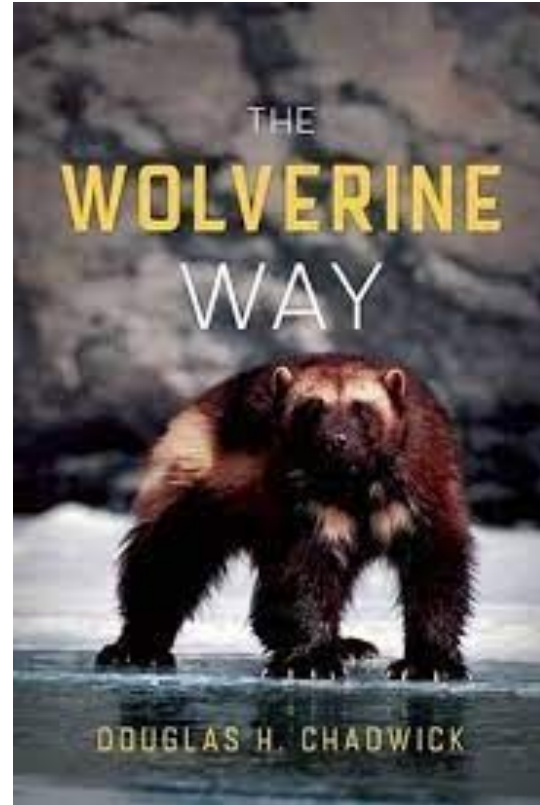
How is this applicable with youth?

- Youth need a push sometimes to find the connection.
- We have to show them the way, and they take it from there.
- “They don't love what they don't know.” Jacque Cousteau.
- We can take the opportunity to teach them things to know, so they can then love and cherish it.
- examples:
 - squirrels and urban kids, skipping rocks vs geo lesson



Excerpt from the Wolverine Way

- Doug Chadwick, pg 46-47.



Thoughts

- What does everyone gather from this passage?
- What he is saying vs how it makes people feel.
- Very clear with his wording, talking about the tangible aspect of a landscape (something we can all grasp).
- But he goes to the next level and makes an emotional appeal that is much longer lasting.
- This should be the goal of all programs.



Tools

- What tools did this author use to elicit these reactions?
- We can use the same tools with today's youth.
- We are just the bridge, the conduit that allows these reactions to occur.



Open the Door

- We are not teaching them anything new.
- We are simply asking them to look at something they may find mundane and normal, to perhaps take a closer look. Capture that moment, you'll find yourself connecting not only with today's youth but people of all ages.
- Naturalist



The do's and don'ts

- Ineffective youth education= don't assume anything about your participants
- Don't water down your education. You could have the next Albert Einstein
- “Interpretation addressed to children should not be a dilution of the presentation to adults, but should follow a fundamentally different approach. To be at its best will require a separate program.” Tilden.



Ineffective Programs

- Don't give them a bland long powerpoint.
- Don't treat them like they are all like small children.
- Don't have a concrete itinerary; it will certainly change.



Effective Programs

- Draw from relatable information.
- Example:
 - Teach students how to live “Light on the Land” during a BCH youth camp
 - Don’t teach them about accounting when they are in the middle of a packing camp
- This is what Tilden is referring to as a new approach.
- Find out your students learning styles.
- Slow down.



VARK Learning styles

<https://vark-learn.com/>

- Visual
- Aural
- Reading/writing
- Kinesthetic



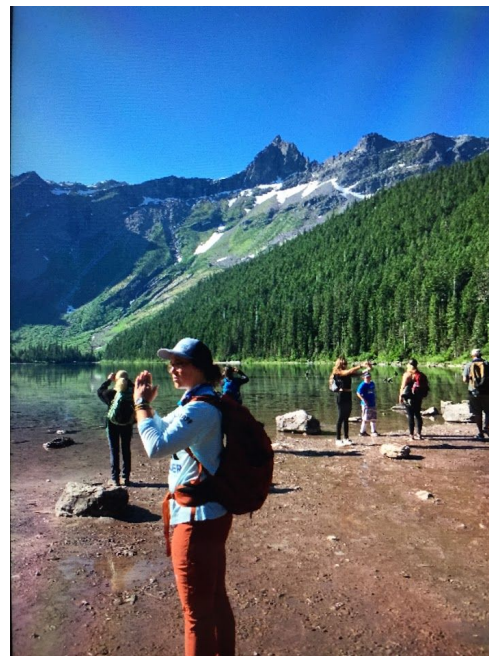
Effective Programs



- Use props, exercises, silly dances, games.
- Make it fun!
- Make it memorable.

Effective Programs

- Be adaptable.
- Be ready to roll up your sleeves and skip rocks with the kid who has been drawing away. I promise you that kid will remember this moment for the rest of his life.



Effective Programs



- Make it you!
- Invest in what you are teaching
- If you believe in what you are teaching, you will inspire everyone around you. This is the ultimate goal.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

- Must make sure that the kids base needs are met first
 - Make sure everyone knows where the restroom is located, where to fill up their water, where the snacks are, bring extra warm layers you can give out if students are not prepared
- Safety needs
 - Make sure they feel safe with you
 - Stress that you know the area very well and talk of your experience
- Love and belonging
 - Establish a friendship with your students
- Esteem
 - Encourage your students, lift them up
- Self actualization
 - Encourage them to be the best version of themselves



Tools for educating youth

- I notice, I wonder, it reminds me of
- Soundscapes
- Nature names
- Journal exercises



Have a theme

- Draw back to this theme throughout the day
- Examples:
 - The smallest bird is the mightiest bird
 - Outdoor education is the bridge for youth and the Back Country Horsemen
 - A compass is the difference between being lost and found in the Back Country Horsemen
 - Youth are the key to saving the world
 - Glacier is wilder now than it was 100 years ago



Themes continued

- Themes are thought provoking.
- They can be controversial.
- They elicit a reaction.



How to organize a presentation

- Have established curricula divided into categories based on the topic:
 - orienteering, native wildlife, plant identification, indigenous culture, horse packing, horsemanship, trail obstacles, wildland camping, etc.
- For each of these topics, they can then be broken down by age range and time allotment
- This allows for a streamlined and organized presentation, especially if you have multiple people educating on the same topics.



Orienteering

- Objective: give youth tools to navigate themselves confidently in the wilderness.
- Age range: 12-14
- Time range: 4 hours
- Theme: a compass is the difference between being lost and found.



Outline

- Introductions- nature names
- What is the definition of orienteering
- Why is orienteering important
- History of orienteering
- Discuss tools for orienteering
 - Compass
 - Map
 - Supplies
 - GPS
 - OnX
- Discuss north, south, east and west
- Students practice using a compass
 - Red fred in the shed



Outline continued

- Practice identifying places on a map when given coordinates
- Scavenger hunt
 - Use a compass to locate various items throughout the course based on clues and coordinates
- Lunch break
- Discuss how to navigate with your phone
- Discuss what to do when lost in the backcountry
- Discuss why orienteering is important
- Circle up and have students share key points they learned
- Give students a challenge as they head back home
- Closing activity- rock, stick and leaf

Successful programs

- Draw from intangibles (feelings, emotions, reactions)
- Use tangible items to create these feelings of love, warmth, joy, respect, reveration, etc.



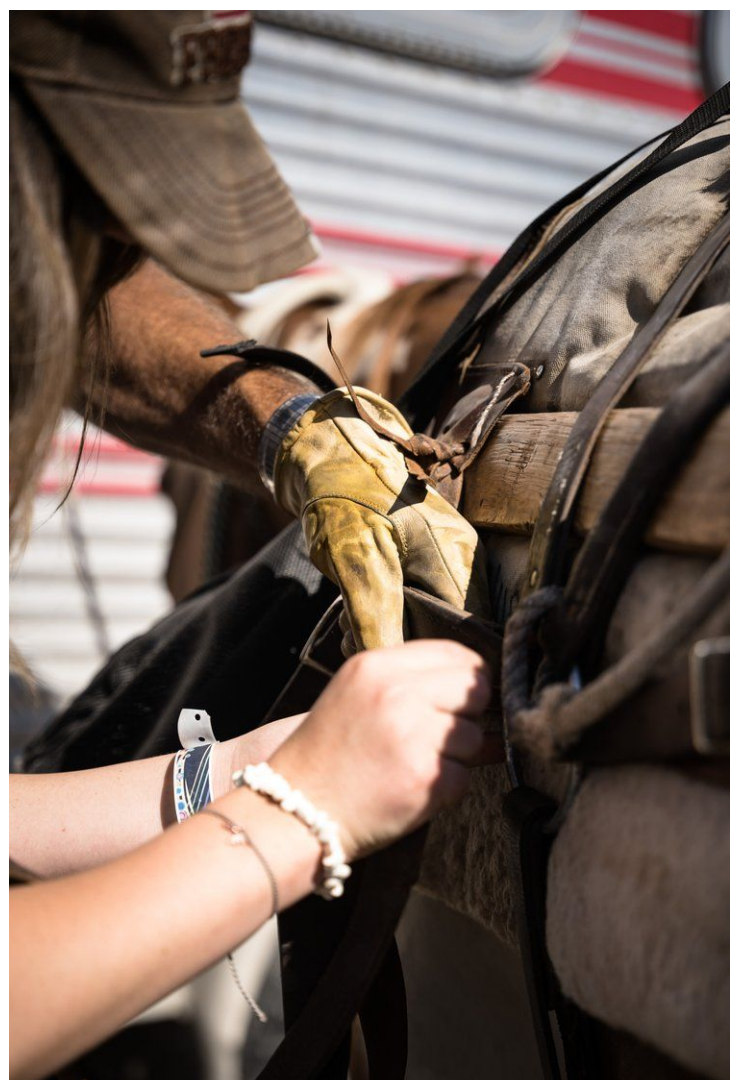
Closing thoughts

- Having lasting connections will get youth coming back to our programs year after year.
- Then they will bring their kids, and we will have generations of Back Country Horsemen.



Closing thoughts continued

- Youth are the key. They are how we save the word!
- We are the bridge, the conduit, the messenger. We are here to show them an object, where they figure out on their own why it is special. They come up with their own motivation of why they want to protect this place. Why they want to follow our legacy and our footsteps.



Encouragement from packers

- Doog White (Wilderness Lodge, Spotted Bear Ranch) “But really, he continues, it’s because “the mules and the horses and the art of it — the part that they’re trying to preserve — it’s just another part of the wilderness.”
- “It is wilderness ... The people that are back there keeping the trails open, outfitting trips, and allowing other people to have access to it, are just as much a part of that wilderness as the actual ground. One doesn’t exist without the other.”
- “Without that trade, or art, being protected,” White says, “the amount of access to the wilderness is going to become limited to people walking. To me, that would be a tragedy — the fact that so many fewer people would get to witness it or experience it. The only way [that’s not] going to happen is if it’s taught, if there’s people that want to learn.”

Encouragement from students

- "It's super relaxing out there," Melanie said. "Yeah, stuff happens, the horses can react differently than in 4-H, but we can handle it. We can handle anything that happens to us out there."
- "I'm not going to lie; we've started talking about next year," Seline said. "We've all decided we're quitting our jobs and we'll be back packing next summer."
- This "4-H program has done exactly what it was envisioned to do: ignite a passion in the younger generation and pass the packing torch forward."



The Key

- “On June 3, 18-year-old Dawson Chute graduated from Columbia Falls High School. He knows he’s going to become a packer. He’s wanted this since he took a 100-mile packing trip through the Bob Marshall Wilderness with the Boy Scouts in 2015. Still, disparate forces pull at him.”
- “People tell me that outfitting is fun and all, but [that I] have to look at the reality of the world,” Chute says. “I don’t want to live my life and pay bills. I want to do something I can look back on and say, ‘I lived my life to the fullest.’”
- These camps change kids lives.



Now get out there
and inspire!



Resources

- Wolverine Way by Douglas Chadwick
- <https://flatheadbeacon.com/2017/07/09/next-last-packers/>
- <https://vark-learn.com/>
- <https://www.arkansasonline.com/news/2021/oct/08/group-teaches-kids-about-horse-packing-in-montana/>
- <https://opi.mt.gov/Educators/Teaching-Learning/K-12-Content-Standards/Science-Standards>
- <https://www.montanapbs.org/programs/3MilesAnHour/>
- <https://www.kylestansburyphotography.com/horsepacking>

