# Increasing Access & Equity On OC Excursions

## Overview

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**Summary of proposal:** Grant of \$14,000 to create free and reduced cost excursions for students, clubs, and departments. This grant will allow the Outdoor Center to reach as many students as possible by decreasing the fiscal burden of trips through the subsidization of student Trip Leader wages. The direct outcomes of this grant should be improved Mental, Physical and Social wellbeing for an increased amount of the WWU student body.

Total fiscal impact: \$14,000

**Duration:** one-time expense for FY 2022

#### Information

Grant Objectives: In order to reach more individuals that could benefit from time outdoors (all of WWU Community) we seek to reduce all Excursions programming for the FY 2022 to a nominal cost to students. Based on trends seen in other Outdoor programs, this cost (ranging between \$5 for day trips and \$10 for weekend trips) will be to ensure accountability and follow through on trip commitments while still reducing overall cost to students. We are asking for support to serve the Western community in a time when 'community' is an increasingly hard word to find. This grant acknowledges that the financial impacts of our current pandemic will be felt by students long after things begin to return to "normal" and recognizes that in order to make outdoor recreation more equitable, just and accessible to the diverse student body the Outdoor Center must work towards greatly reducing the cost of trips.

We strive to develop students sense of place, give them the resources to maintain a healthy lifestyle, and improve their Physical, Mental, Emotional, Spiritual, Environmental and Social Well-being. Our programs are closely tied to Social Justice work through our evolving DEI canvas course, Our Land Acknowledgment, and our ability to reach a wider audience of students. We are also developing our sustainable goals and practices by attempting to make our programing free, partnering with black owned/locally sourced restaurants, and by reducing our use of carbon emitting transportation. Outdoor recreation as an industry and the WWU Outdoor Center within that space still has considerable room to expand in a more equitable manner. Removing the financial barrier in order to increase student access will be a step in the right direction and will move us towards that goal.



**Details:** This grant would allow the OC to run the following programs free or of low cost to all students.

**Outdoor Wellness Trips**: In partnership with the Counseling, Health and Wellness Center we have run weekly Wellness Wednesday trips that focus on mental health topics and community building. These activities are local, geared towards accessibility and are intended to re-shape the master narrative of what outdoor recreation has historically been. Going forward we hope to expand our Outdoor Wellness programing to continue changing what Outdoor Recreation has traditionally looked like.

**Department Partnerships**: Collaborating with the ESC, SOS, DOC, Men's Resilience, Western Success Scholars and various other groups on campus in support of getting their students outside, engaged in recreation and building community. We have partnered with these offices based on their desire and mission to better serve underrepresented students across campus. To this end, the Outdoor Center provides our leaders and any assistance needed to create an experience that is tailored to students of these different identities.

**ViQueen Trips**: Reducing the cost of students to visit and explore the rustic lodge on Sinclair Island which has historically had a high cost associated with visitation. ViQueen lodge is supported and paid for by fee paying students and increasing access is part of the Outdoor Centers mission.

**Standard Excursions**: These are the traditional excursions that the Outdoor Center has been running since its inception (Kayaking, Climbing, Skiing, Rafting etc.). Our goal will be to continue providing these opportunities to students from the demonstrated need and interest from the student body.

# Fiscal Impact

Over the last five years the OC has had an average ~\$18,000 spent on salary and wages as well as an additional ~6,000 for general expenditures (travel, food, etc.). With the cost of trips pulling in around ~\$18,000 a year plus \$10,000 allocated from the AS we seek and additional \$14,000 to offset the fixed cost of wages. Please see attached Figure 1.1 & 1.2 for a detailed description of how trips are priced.

- 1. \$14,000 will allow us to offer all trips free or for a nominal cost for upcoming academic year. This will let us grow our program to reach students in a more equitable way.
- 2. \$10,000 will let us pay our staff and keep trips running, we will have a ceiling to our growth for the year and we will have to make decisions around where we should invest money and what trips can be created.
- 3. \$7,000 The Outdoor Center would be able to offer all trips at half cost to students for the upcoming academic year. This is a reduction in the total ask, however trips would still be inaccessible and would fail to achieve our ultimate goal of reducing barriers to student participation in Outdoor Recreation.



## **Justification**

• How does the grant fulfill a demonstrated need?

Students have consistently voiced that cost of trips are a significant barrier to individual and group participation within Outdoor Recreation. Students already pay fees supporting the Outdoor Center and then are asked to pay more (cost of trip) for any specific participation within the OC. Reducing overall cost to students is paramount, particularly in association with programs and opportunities that directly contribute to student well-being and community building. As it currently stands the fixed cost of wages for student leaders restricts the Outdoor Centers ability to reduce cost of trips across the board. Simply put, our hands are tied in that we can't pay our students an equitable wage whilst also reducing the cost to participants. This grant removes that barrier by subsidizing the cost of student wages (the biggest expense related to trips) and allows participation from the broader WWU student body at a greatly reduced cost. Of note, the Outdoor Center consistently serves populations that accurately reflect the Western population (Outdoor Center Excursions Participants 2014-2019). However, by reducing costs of trips we believe we can go above and beyond to better serve students who have historically been unable to participate in Outdoor Recreation. Furthermore, community development is a cornerstone of the AS and WWU as a whole. This grant bolsters the demonstrated need for community and access to recreation as we transition into the future. The Outdoor Center is further working towards equity and increased access with our inclusive trips in partnership with the counseling center, SOS, DOC and other campus groups. This grant will better position the Outdoor Center to create campus community and increase access through recreation and leisure activities with a safe and outdoors oriented approach.

• How will the grant be successful at achieving its objectives?

The objective of this grant is to reduce the financial barrier of participation in Outdoor Recreation at WWU. Cost of trips has historically made them available only to a certain socio-economic demographics and thus inaccessible to a portion of the student body. This objective will be achieved by reducing the cost of participation on Excursions to a nominal fee (\$5-\$10) which will increase access to the student body. Looking at experiences this academic year and greater trends in college Outdoor Recreation we have seen less accountability and trip commitment when programs are fully subsidized. Charging a nominal fee ensures accountability whilst removing financial barriers. This increased access will be measured in a wider selection of WWU students participating on and within our trips.

• How will the grant benefit general WWU students?

Increasing outdoor activity by about 20 minutes a day has been significantly linked to "decreased heart rate, salivary cortisol, blood pressure, and sympathetic nervous system activity, and increased



parasympathetic nervous system activity"¹ and "less anger-hostility, confusion-bewilderment, depression-dejection, fatigue-inertia, tension-anxiety; more vigor-activity: lower anxiety; greater sense of comfort, being soothed, feeling natural; positive affect; and increased self-reported feelings of calm, comfort, and being refreshed."²

Creating healthy bodies, brains, and spirits are incredibly important for healthy living. An active lifestyle and natural settings have been strongly linked to faster recovery times and stronger immune systems<sup>3,4</sup>. The benefit to our health system of getting outside and enjoying natural settings is conservatively estimated to be about 4 trillion dollars a year for the U.S.<sup>5</sup> Having a quantifiable number matters even when these types of statistical magic can never be fully linked to the effects of an event or environment and are subject to the statisticians' biases. We know that there is a large benefit to collective wellbeing when the outdoors is more easily accessible for individuals so making that a priority as a university can have huge ramifications.

• How is the grant aligned with the WWU mission, AS mission, and AS office mission?

This grant aligns with the second and fourth goal of WWU's 2018-2025 Strategic Plan: "Western will advance a deeper understanding of and engagement with place" and "Western will pursue justice and equity in its policies, practices, and impacts". Specifically sustainable Outdoor Recreation enhances student's connection and understanding of place and the local environment. By recreating and existing on un-ceded land students gain land-based perspective on the surrounding environment, creating more critical awareness of one's place within it. Furthermore, this grant centers Justice and Equity by increasing student access to services funded by student fees and removes the financial barrier to participation in Outdoor Recreation.



<sup>1. &</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Meredith, G. R., Rakow, D. A., Eldermire, E. R., Madsen, C. G., Shelley, S. P., & Sachs, N. A. (2020). Minimum Time Dose in Nature to Positively Impact the Mental Health of College-Aged Students, and How to Measure It: A Scoping Review. *Frontiers in Psychology, 10*.

<sup>2. &</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Meredith, G. R., Rakow, D. A., Eldermire, E. R., Madsen, C. G., Shelley, S. P., & Sachs, N. A. (2020). Minimum Time Dose in Nature to Positively Impact the Mental Health of College-Aged Students, and How to Measure It: A Scoping Review. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10.

<sup>3.</sup> Park, S., & Mattson, R. H. (2009). Therapeutic Influences of Plants in Hospital Rooms on Surgical Recovery. HortScience, 44(1), 102-105.

<sup>4.</sup> Fairey, A. S., Courneya, K. S., Field, C. J., & Mackey, J. R. (2002). Physical exercise and immune system function in cancer survivors. *Cancer*, 94(2), 539-551. doi:10.1002/cncr.10244

<sup>5.</sup> Buckley RC and Brough P (2017) Economic Value of Parks via Human Mental Health: An Analytical Framework. Front. Ecol. Evol. 5:16.doi: 10.3389/fevo.2017.00016

<sup>6. &</sup>lt;u>2018-2025 Strategic Plan</u>

This grant directly aligns with Section II Article two of the AS Program Standards which states: "All Associated Students Programs are open to every student identity including race, color, creed, religious and/or ethical beliefs, national origin, sex, disability, age, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, marital status, genetic information, political beliefs, size, socioeconomic background, general life experiences and more." Specifically this grant addresses and supports the AS mission of providing programing and opportunities to all students regardless of socioeconomic background.

Staying active and experiencing the natural environment is extremely important for academic success. In fact "Experience of the natural world helps restore the mind from the mental fatigue of work or studies, thus office plants and views from windows help reduce stress, boost productivity, improve job satisfaction, and help workers stay more attentive." 8,9

Creating easy access to green and recreation spaces reflects our commitments to Environmental Sustainability and Justice. It is imperative that all students are given opportunities to experience Natural environments in order to grow connection to them and their benefits. Our wellness trips educate individuals on the well-being that outdoor spaces can provide while practicing important mental health skills. When we offer free/reduced trips we often also reduce our transportation requirements which directly reduces our carbon emissions.

We continue to reflect upon and discuss our diversity and inclusion practices, by reducing costs and promoting trips from other departments we believe we will be increasing the overall accessibility to the program. Furthermore, our efforts to increase inclusion are happening in our weekly DEI trainings with staff.

• How is the grant aligned with the AS's values (equity, environmental sustainability, etc.)?

We are working with multiple departments to create trips that are inclusive and exciting for those students. We are also continually reaching out to new and under-represented voices in order to expand the lenses we see our program through, and the possibilities contained within Outdoor Recreation.

Nature experiences are strongly linked to increased biophilia and environmental awareness.<sup>9</sup> As people love and find solace in the natural environment their dedication and desire to do well by that environment increases.



<sup>7. &</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> AS Program Standards

<sup>8.</sup> Shibata, S., and N. Suzuki. 2002. Effects of the Foliage Plant on Task Performance and Mood. Journal of Environmental Psychology 22, 3:265-272.

<sup>9.</sup> Tidball, K. G. (2012). Urgent Biophilia: Human-Nature Interactions and Biological Attractions in Disaster Resilience. Ecology and Society, 17(2). doi:10.5751/es-04596-170205

These types of programs are the only avenue for safe in-person meetings. I think we can all attest to the need for in-person interactions and the immense benefits that can come from talking to a friend or anyone face to face.

• What alternatives are available if funding is not awarded?

If funding is not awarded the Outdoor Center must continue charging for trips and various services in order to pay the fixed cost of staff wages. This would mean high prices for trips and less diversity in socio-economic background of the participants. Students that have accessed trips in the past will continue to do so and students who have faced financial barriers will continue to face these barriers. The Outdoor Center Excursions Coordinators will continue trying to reduce costs of trips by external partnerships, distributing costs on popular excursions to subsidize others and whatever else is within our purview.

See below for additional figures ↓



Figure: 1.1

Trip Name	Head Rate Per Day/Hou r	Hours / Days	Head Subtotal	Asst. Rate Per Day/Hour	Hours / Days	Asst. Subtotal	Asst. Rate Per Day/Hour	Hours / Days	Asst. Subtotal	App. Rate Per Day/Hour	Hours / Days	App. Subtotal	TL Subtotal	Miles	Rental Rate Per Mile (\$0.43)	Quantity of Vehicles	Vehicle Subtotal	Gear Item
Transitions Arb Hike	\$ 90.00	0.5	\$ 45.00	\$ 80.00	0.5	\$ 40.00	\$ 80.00		\$ -	\$ 70.00		\$ -	\$ 85.00		\$ 0.44		\$ -	
Transitions Sea Kayak	\$ 90.00	1	\$ 90.00	\$ 80.00	1	\$ 80.00	\$ 80.00		\$ -	\$ 70.00	1	\$ 70.00	\$ 240.00	10	\$ 0.44	1	\$ 4.40	Kayaks
Free Bham Bike Tour	\$ 12.00	4	\$ 48.00	\$ 80.00		\$ -	\$ 80.00		\$ -	\$ 70.00		\$ -	\$ 48.00		\$ 0.44		\$ -	
Learn to Bike	\$ 90.00	1	\$ 90.00	\$ 80.00	1	\$ 80.00	\$ 80.00		\$ -	\$ 70.00		s -	\$ 170.00		\$ 0.44		\$ -	Touring bikes
Slacklining	\$ 12.00	2	\$ 24.00	\$ 12.00	2	\$ 24.00	\$ 80.00		\$ -	\$ 70.00		\$ -	\$ 48.00		\$ 0.44		\$ -	
Sunset Sea Kayak	\$ 90.00	0.75	\$ 67.50	\$ 80.00	0.75	\$ 60.00	\$ 80.00		\$ -	\$ 70.00		\$ -	\$ 127.50	10	\$ 0.44	2	\$ 8.80	Kayak
Surfing at Hobuck	\$ 90.00	2.5	\$225.00	\$ 80.00	2.5	\$ 200.00	\$ 80.00		\$ -	\$ 70.00	2.5	\$ 175.00	\$ 600.00	400	\$ 0.44	2	\$ 352.00	Surfboard and Wetsuits
Womxn MTB	\$ 90.00	1	\$ 90.00	\$ 80.00	1	\$ 80.00	\$ 80.00		\$ -	\$ 70.00		\$ -	\$ 170.00		\$ 0.44		\$ -	Hardtail/Fu II MTB
Backpacking in the N. Cascades	\$ 90.00	2.5	\$225.00	\$ 80.00	2.5	\$ 200.00	\$ 80.00		s -	\$ 70.00	2.5	\$ 175.00	\$ 600.00	117	\$ 0.44	2	\$ 102.96	
DIY Bike Repair	\$ 12.00	1	\$ 12.00	\$ 12.00			\$ 12.00		\$ -	\$ 12.00			\$ 12.00					Touring bike
Intro to Climbing	\$ 90.00	2.5	\$225.00	\$ 80.00	2.5	\$ 200.00	\$ 80.00		\$ -	\$ 70.00	2.5	\$ 175.00	\$ 600.00	160	\$ 0.44	2	\$ 140.80	Helmet
New Moon Hike	\$ 90.00	0.75	\$ 67.50	\$ 80.00	0.75	\$ 60.00	\$ 80.00		\$ -	\$ 70.00		\$ -	\$ 127.50	15	\$ 0.44	2	\$ 13.20	
Leavenworth Yoga Retreat	\$ 90.00	3.5	\$315.00	\$ 80.00	3.5	\$ 280.00	\$ 80.00		\$ -	\$ 70.00		\$ -	\$ 595.00	322	\$ 0.44	2	\$ 283.36	
Sea Kayaking to Viqueen	\$ 90.00	3.5	\$315.00	\$ 80.00	3.5	\$ 280.00	\$ 80.00		\$ -	\$ 70.00	3.5	\$ 245.00	\$ 840.00	110	\$ 0.44	2	\$ 96.80	
Full Moon Night Hike	\$ 90.00	0.75	\$ 67.50	\$ 80.00	0.75	\$ 60.00	\$ 80.00		\$ -	\$ 70.00		\$ -	\$ 127.50	15	\$ 0.44	2	\$ 13.20	
ESCI 330 WW Raft	\$ 90.00	1.25	\$112.50	\$ 80.00	1.25	\$ 100.00	\$ 80.00		\$ -	\$ 70.00	1.25	\$ 87.50	\$ 300.00	200	\$ 0.44	2	\$ 176.00	
Backcountry Ski Day	\$ 90.00	1.25	\$112.50	\$ 80.00	1.25	\$ 100.00	\$ 80.00		\$ -	\$ 70.00	1.25	\$ 87.50	\$ 300.00	130	\$ 0.44	2	\$ 114.40	
Faculty Eagle Float	\$ 90.00	1.25	\$112.50	\$ 80.00	1.25	\$ 100.00	\$ 80.00		\$ -	\$ 70.00	1.25	\$ 87.50	\$ 200.00	200	\$ 0.44	2	\$ 176.00	
		TOTALS	\$ 2,244.0			\$ 1,944.00			\$ -			\$ 1,10 2.50	\$ 5,290.50				\$1,481.92	

<sup>\*\*</sup> Section highlighted in red is total wage cost for Excursions in one academic quarter\*\*



Figure:1.2

Cost Per (40% of rental cost)	Quantity	Gear Rental Subtotal	Misc. Costs (permits, campsites	Subsidies	Total Cost	Max# participants	Min # participants	Cost per person (minimum participants)	Cost Per Person (maximum participants)	Price	Gross Revenue (minimum participants)	Gross Revenue (maximum participants)	Net Revenue (minimum participants)	Net Rever (maximum participant	
		\$ -			\$ 85.00			#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	s -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (85.00)	\$	(85.
\$ 9.96	8	\$ 79.68			\$ 324.08	9	5	\$ -	\$ 36.01	\$ 60.00	\$ 300.00	\$ 540.00	\$ (24.08)	\$	215.
		\$ -			\$ 48.00			#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (48.00)	\$	(48.
\$2.18	10	\$ 21.80	\$348		\$ 539.80	8	4	\$ 134.95	\$ 67.48	\$ 5.00	\$ 20.00	\$ 40.00	\$ (519.80)	\$	(499.
		\$ -			\$ 48.00	10	3	\$ 16.00	\$ 4.80	\$ 5.00	\$ 15.00	\$ 50.00	\$ (33.00)	\$	2.
\$ 9.96	8	\$ 79.68			\$ 215.98	9	5	\$ 43.20	\$ 24.00	\$ 35.00	\$ 175.00	\$ 315.00	\$ (40.98)	\$	99.
\$ 40.00	9	\$ 360.00	\$ 139.60		\$ 1,451.60	12	5	\$ 290.32	\$ 120.97	\$ 160.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,920.00	\$ (651.60)	\$	468.
\$ 11.31	7	\$ 79.17			\$ 249.17	9	3	\$ 83.06	\$ 27.69	\$ 9.00	\$ 27.00	\$ 81.00	\$ (222.17)	\$	(168.
		\$ -			\$ 702.96	9	5	\$ 140.59	\$ 78.11	\$ 90.00	\$ 450.00	\$ 810.00	\$ (252.96)	\$	107.
\$ 2.18	1	\$ 2.18			\$ 14.18	15	5			\$ 5.00	\$ 25.00	\$ 75.00			
\$ 2.38	12	\$ 28.56			\$ 769.36	9	5	\$ 153.87	\$ 85.48	\$ 85.00	\$ 425.00	\$ 765.00	\$ (344.36)	\$	(4.
		\$ -			\$ 140.70	12	5	\$ 28.14	\$ 11.73	\$ 15.00	\$ 75.00	\$ 180.00	\$ (65.70)	\$	39.
		\$ -	\$ 636.76		\$ 1,515.12	10	6	\$ 252.52	\$ 151.51	\$ 160.00	\$ 960.00	\$ 1,600.00	\$ (555.12)	\$	84.
	8	\$ -			\$ 936.80	9	5	\$ 187.36	\$ 104.09	\$ 160.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,440.00	\$ (136.80)	\$	503.
		\$ -			\$ 140.70	12	5	\$ 28.14	\$ 11.73	\$ 15.00	\$ 75.00	\$ 180.00	\$ (65.70)	\$	39.
		\$ -			\$ 476.00	12	10	\$ 47.60	\$ 39.67	\$ 40.00	\$ 400.00	\$ 480.00	\$ (76.00)	\$	4.
		\$ -			\$ 414.40	9	5	\$ 82.88	\$ 46.04	\$ 60.00	\$ 300.00	\$ 540.00	\$ (114.40)	s	125.
		\$ -			\$ 476.00	11	6	\$ 79.33	\$ 43.27	\$ 50.00	\$ 300.00	\$ 550.00	\$ (176.00)	-	74.
		<b>,</b> .			3 476.00	-11		AVERAGES	3 43.27	3 30.00	\$ 300.00	3 330.00	3 (170.00)	2	/4.
		\$ 651.07			\$ 8.547.85 10 3125 5.125			#DIV/0! #DIV/0!		TOTALS \$ 5.147.0		\$ 9,566.00	\$ (3,411.67)	c	957.
		3 031.07			J 0,347.05	14,5125	3.123	#510/0:	#DIV/0:	TOTALS	\$ 5,147.00	3 3,300.00	(3,411.07)	3	337.

<sup>\*\*</sup> Section highlighted in red is total cost to students paid by students for one academic quarter\*\*

