

2018 Presenter Biographies



Wednesday, November 14th

Steve Smith: *Experiential Consulting, LLC*

Steve Smith runs Experiential Consulting, LLC, specializing in risk management support for outdoor programs. He served as chair of the WRMC from 2014-16, has held national leadership roles at The Student Conservation Association and Outward Bound, and is a NOLS graduate. He has been associated with Outward Bound since 1998, first as a mountaineering instructor, then staffing manager, and is currently a board member for the Northwest Outward Bound School, where he also chairs the school's safety committee. He has written emergency response plans, training manuals, field manuals, designed crisis response scenarios for a wide variety of organizations, conducted safety audits, presented at over 30 professional conferences, and published articles in outdoor magazines and journals. Steve lives in Seattle and loves to explore and photograph the wildlife, mountains, and coastlines of the Pacific Northwest.

Ben Koch: *Field Director, New Vision Wilderness*

Ben Koch is the Field Director for New Vision Wilderness and has been working in Outdoor Behavioral Healthcare for nearly 4 years, hiring and training over 75 staff members during this period to work with youth who have undergone trauma. Prior to working at New Vision Wilderness, Ben completed an MS in Outdoor Education and spent 2 seasons working as an Outdoor Educator, 3 seasons as an International Trip Leader, and 3 seasons as a Camp Counselor.

Jed Bresinger: *Logistics Coordinator, New Vision Wilderness*

Jed Bresinger is the Logistics Coordinator for New Vision Wilderness and has been working in Outdoor Behavioral Healthcare for over 2 years. Jed also is New Vision's primary trainer for de-escalation and working safely with dysregulated students. Prior to New Vision, Jed completed an MS in Environmental Social Science and has spent multiple years working in both crisis intervention and adventure education in residential treatment centers.

Arthur D'Amato: *Exercise Physiologist*

Arthur D'Amato is an exercise physiologist living in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He holds advanced degrees in kinesiology from UW-Oshkosh and UW-Milwaukee. He developed a passion for risk management and performance enhancement while participating in and guiding wilderness expeditions throughout his youth and adulthood. His long-term hope is to bridge the gap between the science of strength and conditioning, and outdoor recreation.

Kris Henker: *Freelance Facilitator & Master's Degree in The Neuroscience of Leadership*

Kris has her MSc in the Neuroscience of Leadership through Middlesex University and serves as the Assistant Director of the MSc in Applied Neuroscience program through the Professional Development Foundation in the UK. She has worked in outdoor education for 30 years during which she has lead wilderness trips, taught outdoor education at resident camps and served as Director for the Environmental Education program at Frost Valley YMCA and as the Director of The Jungai Centre in Australia. Kris owns Peerspective LLC, which offers team building and leadership development workshops to seasonal and year-round staff at youth development agencies, summer camps and outdoor education centers. Kris' work and trainings incorporate Applied Neuroscience, Positive Psychology, and Management Theory into staff development topics.

Marshal Landrum: *Program Coordinator, Wilderness Inquiry*

Marshal began his career in outdoor programs by working at Wilderness Inquiry as an intern and trip guide. He is now is part of the full-time team at WI working as a Program Coordinator. Growing up in Saint Paul, Marshal has had plenty of opportunities to canoe and camp throughout Minnesota and is an avid skier. This spring he received his B.S. in Earth and Oceanographic Science from Bowdoin College. During his time as a Bowdoin Polar Bear, research opportunities allowed Marshal to study arctic ecology in Iceland, Greenland, Norway, and Sweden. Marshal's passions also include trail running, water sports, swing dancing, and slack-lining with his family.

Paul Lovaas: *Operations Manager for Hiring and Staffing, Wilderness Inquiry*

Paul is currently the Operations Manager for Hiring and Staffing at Wilderness Inquiry. Previously, he served as the Wilderness Program Director for Camp Manito-wish YMCA and was responsible for coordinating over 15,000 participant-days of wilderness trips across North America each summer. Paul followed his interests in wilderness tripping after graduating from Kalamazoo College and spent the early years of his career working as an educator and administrator at Conserve School in the great Northwoods of Wisconsin. Paul has a Master's Degree in Environmental Education from the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point and is passionate about integrating environmental and social justice into wilderness adventure programs. Paul describes himself as a wilderness advocate, photography enthusiast, and aspiring Ultimate Frisbee pro. Paul is also an emeritus member of the MRMS steering committee.

Emily Ten Eyck: *Expedition Course Director, Voyageur Outward Bound School*

With over three years at VOBS and many additional seasons leading extended backpacking and canoeing expeditions, Emily has a wealth of backcountry knowledge and experience safely meeting the needs of many participant groups. As Expedition Course Director Emily is responsible for supporting both students and staff as they prepare for their Outward Bound courses. This includes, but is not limited to, interviewing and follow-up with a wide range of students, their families, and school programs.

Brad Little: *Staffing & Training Director, Voyageur Outward Bound School*

Brad has been instructing day programs and extended backcountry expeditions at VOBS for over six years. Whether sea kayaking with Veterans on Lake Superior, backpacking with homeless youth on the Superior Hiking Trail, or canoeing with charter high-school students down the St. Croix River, he is always excited to share the mission of Outward Bound with as many participants as possible. As a program administrator, Brad understands that preparing both staff and students for the unique challenges of backcountry travel requires proper planning and administrative support.

Amy Hadow: *YMCA Camp Widjiwagan, Summer Program Director*

Amy is the Summer Program Director at YMCA Camp Widjiwagan. She grew up spending her summers in the North Woods with her family where she developed a love for canoeing and the smell of pine trees that led her to Widji and a career in Outdoor Education. Amy spent five summers as a trail guide at Widji. She also has worked in environmental education, conservation and land management and she has a Masters of Arts in Higher Education and Student Affairs from the University of Iowa. Amy loves to laugh, paddle and spend time with friends.

Andy Sinykin: *YMCA Camp Ihduhapi, Outdoor Learning Program Director*

Andy Sinykin is the Outdoor Learning Program Director at YMCA Camp Ihduhapi. He has worked in the camping department for the YMCA of the Greater Twin Cities since 2004. He have served as a kitchen staff, program staff, Leadership Development Program Coordinator, Outdoor Learning Program Instructor, and Program Director during his 14-year tenure. Andy is passionate about getting young people outside, equity in outdoor opportunities, mental health, group dynamics, and adventure. When he's not out at camp he love to practice yoga, run, watch NBA basketball, play with his dog Fozzy, and see live music.

Thursday, November 15th

Travis Loeffler: *Loss Prevention Representative, West Bend Mutual Insurance*

Travis has made a career out of Risk and Loss Prevention after studying Risk Management in Graduate School and spending the last 8 years working in the field. He spent 7 of those working with construction companies creating safety programs and educating industry professionals. For the last year he has worked with West Bend Mutual Insurance, working with a variety of customers, and has had an emphasis on the YMCAs... finding a passion with the camping and youth-serving groups.

Danny Frank: *Northland College*

Danny Frank is an Assistant Professor of Outdoor Education at Northland College. He holds an Ed.D in Global Indigenous Teaching & Learning from the University of Minnesota Duluth, and an MA and BA from Prescott College. Throughout the past two decades, he has worked in a variety of direct service and administrative capacities in expeditionary learning, wilderness therapy, therapeutic recreation, youth development, and residential treatment, as well as higher education student affairs and academic instruction. Danny lives in Duluth, MN with his partner Angie and his sons Max (10) and Lev (8), and spends family time biking, skiing, fishing, and attending music festivals.

Katie Baum Mettenbrink: *Risk Services Manager, NOLS Risk Service*

Katie has worked in outdoor education since 1999. She currently leads NOLS Risk Services, which provides risk management training and consulting for organizations around the world, and chairs the WRMC Steering Committee. She is also a senior field instructor at NOLS, with 140 weeks of experience on extended wilderness expeditions. Before landing in her current role, she oversaw staffing for NOLS Custom Education, was the program manager at NOLS Alaska, taught environmental education in the Pacific Northwest, and worked for the outdoor program at Princeton. She lives in Lander, Wyoming with her partner and young son

Kathleen Floberg: *YMCA Camp Widjiwagan, Wilderness Program Director*

Kathleen works for YMCA Camp Widjiwagan as their Wilderness Program Director. Part of her duties include working with the camp board and staff to develop effective risk management practices for Widjiwagan's canoe and backpacking programs. Kathleen grew up paddling in the Boundary Waters of Minnesota and swimming in Lake Superior on family vacations. She spent six summers leading backcountry canoe trips for Y camps and also worked as a naturalist for Widjiwagan's Outdoor Learning Program. These experiences gave her a new perspective on the role of the outdoors in a child's education and development and led her to pursue a Master's of Environmental Education degree from the University of MN, Duluth. Even though her current role keeps her at a desk most days, the wilderness still plays a significant role in her life. She currently serves on the MRMS Steering Committee.

Kurt Simer: *BOLD & GOLD, Program Director*

Kurt is the Director of BOLD & GOLD for the YMCA of the Greater Twin Cities, a program which is focused on teaching multi-cultural leadership skills through wilderness adventure. As a member of the BOLD & GOLD Leadership Team, he has the opportunity to help YMCAs around the country develop tripping programs – it's a lot of fun! Prior to this position, Kurt worked for a variety of organizations as a course leader, program director, logistics coordinator, and director of risk management. Kurt helped start the Midwest Risk Management Symposium in the fall of 2012 and currently serves on the MRMS Steering Committee.

Poppy Potter: *Director of Operations, Voyageur Outward Bound School Twin Cities Center*

Poppy is the VOBS Director of Group Programs and Twin Cities Center. The Twin Cities Center serves over 1,500 youth from 20+ schools and organizations annually. Prior to this work, she taught for 10 years in a Charter High School called Skills for Tomorrow, an experiential school-to-work high school. In addition, she's been a program director with the American youth Foundation's Miniwanca Education Center and a field instructor for VOBS, the YMCA and the Girl Scouts of America. Poppy holds a Master's of Science in Experiential Education from Mankato State University and an Emotional Behavioral Disorders Special Education License, attained at Bethel University.

Claire Dzierzak: *YMCA Camp Menogyn, Program Director*

Claire has worked for YMCA Camp Menogyn for 6 years and currently serves as their Program Director. Her current role at Menogyn includes overseeing the development and implementation of a varied wilderness-tripping program serving youth age 12-18. Prior to this role, Claire led canoeing, backpacking and rock-climbing trips through Menogyn all across North America. Growing up in Minneapolis, she was introduced to the wonders of exploration early on and had the opportunity to traverse wild spaces through a leadership development program at Wilderness Inquiry. Graduating from the University of Minnesota with an Anthropology degree inspired her to pursue her passion for connecting people to the land and the stories it holds. Risk management plays a vital role in the creating that sustainable and lasting relationship between both the youth and staff at Menogyn and the places in which they travel. Claire also serves as the Chair of the MRMS Steering Committee.