

Smith Outdoor Program Initiative

Smith College created the Smith outdoor program (Smith Outdoors) as a result of the last decennial review. Outdoor recreation was the primary theme of the initiative designed to get students involved in off-campus activities with students from across the campus. Opportunities also existed for Smith students to meet students in outdoor programs at other colleges. An outdoor consultant was hired and two students received internships to assist with program development.

Using student participation as a marker, the program has been very successful. Since its inception, we have directed over a hundred weekend day trips with over a thousand students participating in hiking, canoeing, sea kayaking, ice skating, climbing, mountain biking, snowshoeing, cross country and downhill skiing. We have directed multi-day backpacking trips to the Adirondacks, Appalachian Trail and Vermont's Long Trail over the fall break. Students have participated in week-long sea kayaking trips to Florida and spring break trips to the canyons of Utah.

Posted trips are quickly filled and a lengthy waitlist exists for most trips, suggesting a strong need for expansion. Currently, the Smith Outdoor Adventure Program is staffed by one employee and two financial aid students. Although there is a need for growth, any expansion of the program requires additional personnel. Fortunately, the actual cost of expansion is very reasonable. We would need a part-time outdoor specialist who is a qualified trip leader. For a nominal amount of money, we can hire that person (without benefits) to lead multiple trips and fill several other essential roles. Some additional programming funds will also be necessary since more trips will be scheduled.

Additional staffing will allow us to:

- Provide additional weekend trips.
- Establish a staffed center to check out outdoor equipment and provide advice for student trips. (This has been a long term goal of the program.)
- Work more directly with individual students and student groups on leadership projects. We will have time to train student leaders for outdoor activities.
- Provide some leadership and outdoor activities for staff and faculty.

Whately Land Proposal

We strongly support the development of back country retreat on the Whately property (see outdoor portion of Tom Litwin's conservation proposal) which will provide superb outdoor education and recreation opportunities.