

# GUYdelines

A few thoughts for outdoor lovers and leaders from

*WILD GUYde Adventures*, LLC

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## Fodder for your Mind and Soul

There have been people far smarter than me who have thought about the outdoors, and then given us their ideas framed as eloquent quotes about beauty, about safety, and about why we feel the need to go outside.

“Crystalized experience” is how my 12<sup>th</sup> grade Literature teacher, Mr. Jacob Kuhns, referred to poetry. Some of these quotes approximate that – an idea elegantly captured in well chosen words, and then presented for our contemplation and edification. So here are a few of my favorites. Ponder them, work them around in your mind for a while, and maybe one or more will inspire, invigorate, instruct or challenge you this week.

### On Beauty

*The world is not to be put in order, the world is order incarnate. It is for us to put ourselves in unison with this order.* (Henry Miller)

*To the dull mind, nature is leaden. To the illumined mind, the whole world burns and sparkles with light.* (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

*My father considered a walk among the mountains as the equivalent of church-going.* (Aldous Huxley)

*I will exchange a city for a sunset, the tramp of legions for a wind's wild cry, and all the braggard thrusts of steel triumphant for one far summit, blue against the sky.* (Marie Blake)

*All sights of nature are beautiful. All great natural phenomena are greatly beautiful. That is a fundamental fact. Our business is not to question it, but to see the beauty if and when we can.* (Sir Martin Conway)

*And thus these threatening ranges of dark mountains, which, in nearly all ages of the world, men have looked upon with aversion or with terror, are, in reality, sources of life and happiness far finer and more beneficent than the bright fruitfulness of the plain.* (John Ruskin)

*Down in the valley, one is constantly confronted with the blunders and imperfections of man. Here, among the gigantic ice seracs and eternal snow where man has not meddled, one has the sense of the sublimity of nature.* (Frederick Buringham)

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*Nature is the most thrifty thing in the world; she never wastes anything; she undergoes change, but there's not annihilation -- the essence remains -- matter is eternal. (Binney)*

*Earth's crammed with Heaven, and every common bush afire with God. (E.B. Browning)*

*Cruel at times, winter also has an incomparable splendor. Moonlight on the peaks, a snow and ice covered tree, the play of light and dark patterns on the snow, even welcoming dawn with a mug of hot chocolate in a mittened hand brought praises to my lips. I discovered that God's creation could be both beautiful and fearsome at once. (Wilderness Encounter student)*

### On Safety

*Mountains are not fair or unfair – they are just dangerous. (Reinhold Messner)*

*Go carefully lads, be careful; a single moment's enough to make one dead for the whole of one's life. (G. Pecoste)*

*He may, with the good luck which sometimes attends children, drunkards, and persons of weak intellect, escape the dangers without even knowing that they were there. But if he affronts too often forces whose powers he had not attempted to understand, he will in the long run succumb. (Lord Schuster)*

*Advice on "How to Get Killed": Nothing is easier than falling over a precipice. Guides say that if a tourist has a tendency toward vertigo, he should confine his ascension to peaks frequented by cows. To get killed, therefore, the alpinist with vertigo should tackle the Matterhorn, Schreckhorn, or the Thauguille Verte. While it lasts, the sensation of falling several thousand feet must be extraordinary. (Frederick Burlingham)*

*It is the momentary carelessness in easy places, the lapsed attention, or the wandering look that is the usual parent of disaster. (A.F. Mummery)*

*A mountain has never been climbed until you are safely down, and for descending climbers, a mountain sets an ingenious trap. After you've made it to the top, you have the feeling that all the hard part is over. This is the siren lure that leads to that one careless step. (Grant Pearson, in To the Top of Denali)*

*The prudent see danger and take refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it. (Proverbs 27:12)*

*The prerequisite for misadventure is the belief that you are invincible, or that the wilderness cares about you. The wilderness does not care about your human rights. The unvigilant perish; the prudent survive. (Daryl Miller)*

*The rigid person is a disciple of death; the soft, supple, and delicate are lovers of life. (Tao Te Ching)*

*Courage divorced from logic becomes hubris, in which arrogance etches away the old honesty. The good vibes of karma silently change into the false understandings of hubris. (Galen Rowell)*

*A good scare is worth more to a man than good advice. (Ed Howe)*

*There is no such thing as an accident. What we call by that name is simply the effect of some cause that we do not yet see. (Voltaire)*

*In nature, there are neither rewards nor punishments; there are only consequences. (R.G. Ingersoll)*

*Incompetence spawns scary adventures. Knowledge and judgement make memorable experiences.* (Vihjalmur Staffanson)

*You can't out-paddle a rapid, but you can out-think it.*

### On why we go there

*Now I know the secret of making the best person. It is to grow in the open air, and to eat and sleep with the earth.* (Walt Whitman)

*You never conquer the mountain; you conquer yourself – your doubts and your fears.* (Jim Whitaker)

*Deep within us, I think we know that we need challenge and danger, and the risk and hurt that will sometimes follow. Dangerous sports would not be as popular as they are if this were not so. Mountain climbing is not the only way of dealing with an over-organized over protective society, but it is one good way.* (Woodrow Wilson Sayre)

*The laws that get passed make our lives more and more prescribed and, in a sense, that fuels the need to take risks because there is a small group of people who feel more and more hemmed in. You wake up in the morning, you go to work, and everything you do is governed by legislation – the car you drive, the way it's put together, the way the road is made, you know, the things you have for breakfast, they're all covered by legislation to make it safer. You can go into the mountains though and you can behave exactly as you want, you are responsible for your own survival, you are in control of your life, and that is extremely liberating. But it comes with the proviso that if you mess up then you could pay an extremely high price.* (Ed Douglas, ed., The Alpine Journal, in Mountain Men, p. 259)

*Pretty places are good for the soul.* (Lester Zook)

*We felt ourselves to be in the presence of a novel and most inspiring revelation of the omnipotence and majesty of God. How could we think of the fatigue we had endured, much less complain of it. If you believe mountains to be the direct work of the omnipotent creator, you will welcome the indescribable beauty of the surroundings...* (Ratti, 1950)

Happy adventuring out there! **LRZ**

Are you coming to Virginia for a family vacation, church group trip, troop event, or escape weekend? Why not experience Virginia adventure with **WILD GUYDE Adventures!** WGA offers guided beginner level outdoor adventures and competent instruction in activity fundamentals. We can take you **hiking, rock climbing and rappelling, caving, or canoeing.** We use various activity areas in the George Washington and Monongahela National Forests, along Virginia's Blue Ridge, and in the Potomac Highlands of West Virginia. Check out the 2023 trip options below, or call to talk about your own creative adventure idea!

(540-433-1637 or [lester@wildguyde.com](mailto:lester@wildguyde.com) )

You may also visit [www.wildguyde.com](http://www.wildguyde.com)

## **CHOOSE YOUR ADVENTURE: 2023 Daytrips with WILD GUYde Adventures,** Harrisonburg, VA

**Top-Roping at Hidden Rocks, Virginia:** This is the rock climbing trip for the adventurous beginner – you don't have much experience, but you want a great outdoor day with your family or special friends. Thirty minutes west of Harrisonburg, we'll park just inside George Washington National Forest, gear up, and hike a scenic 20 minutes through rhododendron and hemlocks and across some mountain streams to a secluded sandstone cliff. There will be pink and white mountain laurel in June, and wild huckleberries in August. You'll be introduced to harnesses, knots, helmets, and the *belay system*; then we'll try some easy warm-up climbs to remind you that the kid inside you still likes to clamber on things. We can go on to some harder climbing that invites you to try new skills and movements. And we'll finish the day with a rappel – backing over the edge, with nothing between you and the ground below but 60 feet of air and a great view! Closer to Luray or Northern Virginia? We'll visit **Waterfall Mountain** in the Massanutten Range, or **Little Stony Man** on the Blue Ridge for TALL climbing and spectacular Shenandoah Valley panoramas! Closer to Lexington or Roanoke? We'll visit **Goshen Pass** and climb above the gorgeous Maury River!

**(Full day \$250 for 1-3 people; \$60 for each additional. ½-day \$175 for 1-3, and \$45 for each additional)**



**Beginner Climbing at Seneca Rocks, WV:** After 90 minutes of curving mountain highway (okay, *country two-lane*), you'll gasp to see a spectacular blade of Tuscarora Sandstone, whose summit sits almost 1000 feet above its North Fork Valley floor. Seneca Rocks is a scenic place for the beginner or family to learn the rock climbing basics, top-roping and rappelling to an awesome West Virginia backdrop. Easy routes guarantee early success, but more challenging climbs also wait to test your skills. Seneca Rocks is an awesome place to climb, just beyond the sign: "*Here ends the realm of the hiker!*"

**(Full day \$275 for 1-3 people; \$65 for each additional. ½ day \$200 for 1-3; \$50 each additional)**

**Multi-Pitch at Seneca Rocks:** A little more experienced in climbing? Maybe you tried it at camp or the local rock gym? Ready for the next step? Join me for the multi-pitch experience, seconding the route as we lead-climb to the top of the fabled South Summit! This is the only technical summit in the U.S. east of the Mississippi. Seneca has routes at all ranges of difficulty, from starters like *Old Ladies Route* (5.2) to mid-range classics (*West Pole* 5.7) to old school hardman routes like *Crack of Dawn* and *Madmen Only* (5.10). Every one of them will give you a new appreciation for the expression "*high and vertical.*" Register your accomplishment and ruminations in the summit journal, wave to tourists way down in the valley, and then head down to *terra firma* via the three-pitch rappel. Finish the day with a splash in the North Fork River swimming hole at "Gravel Beach"; then pick up a cold drink and a West Virginia memento at Harpers General Store.

**(Full-day: \$225 1<sup>st</sup> person; \$150 each addl.)**

**Instructional Climbing:** This is a tutorial for those who have a little exposure to climbing, and want to gain eventual autonomy. Lots of instruction in current best-practice and hands-on trying it for you in rigging top anchors, belaying skills and equipment alternatives, movement coaching, and rappel setup and protection. There will be individualized attention and repetitive practice, as well as some exploration of the historical evolution of climbing equipment and protocol. You will finish the day with a lot more confidence in your basic skills. Bring a partner so you'll have someone to climb with later.

**(175 1<sup>st</sup> person; \$125 each for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>)**



**WILD GUYde Adventures** offers two other rock climbing options: a **Boy Scout Rock Climbing Merit Badge** tutorial for troops and leaders. We send a booklet to get troops started on their knots and First Aid requirements ahead of time, and then spend two days going through all the climbing, gear spec., and rappelling activity requirements (\$95 each). We also offer the **PCIA (Professional Climbing Instructor**

**Association) Top Rope Climbing Instructor Certification** course and exam. This 3-day course (\$450) and 1 day exam (\$150) is for recreational climbers who want to add an instructor certification on their resume. It's also very useful for individuals guiding with club, camp, or university outing programs.

**Peaceful Paddling:** Canoe a ½ day stretch of the **South Fork River**. This Class I and II water is ideal for families with elementary school children – just long enough to be engaging without getting boring. As we wind through pastures in the Shenandoah Valley, you'll learn basic canoe strokes and maneuvering. Dangle your feet or plunk your head to cool off. And keep watching for blue herons, turtles on logs, and cows in the water!

**(Half-Day: \$140 1-3 people; \$35 each additional. Full-Day: \$175 1-3 people; \$45 each additional)**



**Pick-up-the-Pace Paddling:** a fuller day of canoeing awaits further down the **South Fork**. This provides a little more excitement for teenagers, adventurous parents, & other paddle pilgrims! A casual start allows a review of canoe strokes and partner teamwork.

An amazing rope-swing breaks the quiet – you won't believe what comes out of your mouth when you let go (“*Geronimo!*?”) More paddling through runs and pools, always under the shadow of Massanutten Mountain. Lunch on the bank and then back into the boats. Finally, at Milepost 17, *Compton's Rapid* – a great shoot-through with some higher standing waves! Paddlers call it a “Fat II,” but stay wide of Pillow Rock! Below, there's a jumping rock for another cool-off before paddling the final mile to the take-out. Load the boats and start the drive home – happy, tired, and maybe a little sun-tanned! West Virginia travelers may want to visit the gorgeous “Trough” on the **South Branch of the Potomac**. High and remote mountain walls on each side of the river, and keep your eyes open for bald eagles!

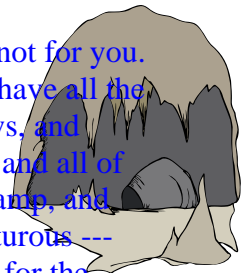
**(Half-Day: \$140 1-3 people, \$35 each additional; Full-Day: \$175 1-3 people; \$45 each additional)**

**Half-Day Caving:** The underground sidewalk and the tourist cave light show are not for you. You want to see it the way it was before the electrician got there! Primitive caves have all the features of the subterranean world – *speleothems* (stalactites, flowstone, soda straws, and columns), *lots of real mud*, and sometimes even *bats* (but most of them are asleep, and all of them are harmless). Pull on your coveralls, clip on your helmet, adjust your headlamp, and down we go. There are squeezes if you want them, and belly crawls for the adventurous --- but there are also corridor ceilings higher than your house, and large cavern rooms for the claustrophobic. Learn cave travel safety, underground navigation, and some “total body movement.” Find out what the year-round underground temperature is, and then finally emerge back into sunlight with a new appreciation for what happens underneath Virginia when limestone and groundwater meet. The gleam of your smile might be the only thing shining through the mud on your face! Caving trips can be **Beginner Caving** (mostly horizontal movement – walking, stooping, or crawling) or **Intermediate Caving** (for folks fit enough to handle strenuous vertical moves, and more sustained physical effort). Various locations are available in both Virginia (20 minutes from Harrisonburg), and West Virginia (between Franklin and Elkins). *Caving trips are not advised for individuals who might be unfit, excessively overweight, or who live an extremely sedentary lifestyle, or for very young children.*

**(\$140 for 1-3 people; \$30 for each additional)**

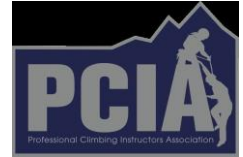


**Design Your Own Adventure:** Numerous other options exist, including hiking and climbing guiding along **Virginia's Blue Ridge** or at the **NROCKS** (WV), group orienteering challenges in the National Forest, a climbing self-rescue clinic, outdoor fitness training, and flatwater paddling instruction for beginners and children. We can customize to meet the interests of your family, scout troop, or youth group. Call to talk about your needs.



## Things you oughta know:

- **Lester R. Zook** is the **WILD GUYde**. He is a *Wilderness First Responder*, and is an *Instructor Provider* with the Professional Climbing Instructors Association. He has been leading wilderness adventures and training camping leaders for 30 years, and loves to take people outdoors! **Ethan Zook** has been a camp counselor and adventure leader at numerous camps. He is a *Red Cross Lifeguard* and a *Virginia Paramedic*. **Aaron Zook** is a climber, caver, and paddler, a *Red Cross Lifeguard*, and has been through *Wilderness First Aid*. **Mary Tapolyai** is a *WFR*, and a *Leave No Trace Master Educator*. Together, we are a small family business that strives to provide exceptional service, and create value in the lives of our guests.
- More detail on activity possibilities is available by visiting [www.wildguyde.com](http://www.wildguyde.com). Call or e-mail to ask questions and to arrange dates, rates, and meeting points:



**(540) 433-1637 or lester@wildguyde.com**

- **WGA's** guiding season is 7 days a week. Rock climbing is March through October, paddling is best in the spring and summer, and wild caving is year-round. Call early to reserve; weekends in particular can fill quickly.
- **WILD GUYde** will provide all technical equipment (ropes, harnesses, helmets, etc.). A personal *things-to-bring list* (clothing, water, lunch, etc.) will be provided.
- We can also help with **lodging ideas**. We can recommend from *primitive to posh* – National Forest campgrounds, drive-up motels, and some delightful Bed and Breakfast inns!
- For groups of 10 or larger, we disregard the starter fee and simply bill the per-person rate.
- Payment is by cash or check, payable to WGA; unfortunately, credit cards cannot be accepted at this time. Gratuities are never expected, and always appreciated!
- Some activities have inherent risks – that's the meaning of the word *adventure*. Participants will be asked to fill out a *Medical Form*, and sign a *Participant Agreement* acknowledging certain dangers. Some activities are physically strenuous, emotionally demanding, or require sustained cognitive attention to task and detail. We make every effort to create a great day, but **WGA** guides do reserve the prerogative to deny access/participation if, in our judgment, the client is not likely to be successful, or might pose undue hazard. Clients also may not be “under the influence” or “feeling the effects” of alcohol or recreational drugs at the time of the event.
- **WILD GUYde Adventures** incorporated in Virginia in 2004, and is fully insured. **WGA** is a permittee with the George Washington and Monongahela National Forests, and along Virginia's Blue Ridge. **WGA** is an equal opportunity provider and employer. **WGA** practices environmental stewardship, and is a member of the *Access Fund*, the *National Speleological Society*, the *Virginia Tourism Corp.*, the *Shenandoah Valley Travel Assoc.*, and the *Harrisonburg-Rockingham Chamber of Commerce*.

### **How was your trip with the WILD GUYde?!**

Thanks again for guiding us – the trip was awesome! I'm a little sore and bruised today but it makes me happy because it reminds me of everything we did. The info was clear and the location appropriate. I also really enjoyed how you incorporated learning and team building elements into our trip. (Sarah, 2012)

We arrived back in Florida late Thursday night. We had a wonderful time on our adventure with you and we have all been raving to everyone about how great the trip was! Your professionalism and encouragement allowed us to continue on even when some of us were reluctant to try (me, of course)! The boys raved about the caving and

the fact that it looked scary, but once you got through it, it wasn't as difficult or scary as you thought it would be. Todd and I were both thrilled with the learning experience for the kids and feel that we have all grown as a result of facing our fears. Everyone talked about what a great guide you were for us! Overall, our adventure was a wonderful experience and the highlight of our trip to VA! (Christine, 2012)

We had a blast, everything was perfect, and you did an amazing job! The pictures are AWESOME! We would recommend you to any outdoor lover! We agreed that we learned so much from you. (Nina, 2012)

Thank you so very much for a wonderful adventure rock climbing last week. It was wonderful to share the time with my daughter. We both really appreciated your teaching style and the knowledge you imparted. I found a whole bucket-full of sermon illustrations. The location was excellent. We appreciated the fact that we were alone on the climb (except for the beautiful hawk). The photos you took came out well, and we showed them to my wife who appreciated our joy, but was thankful that she chose a more Hobbitish way to spend the day (reading). (Pastor Chris, 2012)

Your customer service was outstanding. Despite my late contact, you found a way to get us in on an adventure. The experience was excellent. The kids had a blast but you were appropriately serious in your approach. Safety was a clear priority as it must be. The experience was well structured and presented a number of great challenges. (Mark, 2012)

Our 3 children (25, 21, 16) went on a rock climbing adventure with Lester. They were beginners and Lester was an excellent guide. He was knowledgeable, safety and detail oriented, and an excellent teacher. They came back smiling and a little sore. Our family isn't the outdoorsy type, but they all said they would definitely do it again! Well worth the drive and the time. (Meredith, 2021)

This was my and my husband's first time rock-climbing. All I can say is that it was an amazing experience. We have done activities from zip-lining and parasailing to sky-diving and I can say this is right up there with all of those activities. I was a bit nervous to start my repel over the edge but Lester makes sure you are confident that your equipment is holding you. Now that I have experienced it, I want to go back and do it again and again. This was a great learning experience and Lester was full of knowledge about rock climbing, repelling, nature, and just life in general. Would recommend to anyone looking for some adventure! (Krysten, 2021)

Lester, we absolutely loved climbing with you! We will be climbing more – that was so fun and challenging yet doable with an incredible adrenaline rush and boost of confidence. Things we learned: How to tie a strong knot; Small footholds do a lot for you; Look down! The harness is holding me; Screaming helps; The hike is not the hard part; You will get giant leg bruises after rock climbing; Don't give up cuz you can make

it; safety, positivity, and being good to nature; Talking with people makes hikes less exhausting; It is quite thrilling to climb 70 feet without falling knowing that you could've done it without a rope. (Haley and Sam, 2021)