



LIFESONG WILDERNESS ADVENTURES

What sparked your interest in Wilderness Survival Training?

For **Michelle Killingsworth**, it was growing up reading books like *Hatchet* and *Julie of the Wolves*. "I had this really romantic vision of self-sufficiency and being connected to your environment," she says, "I think I always wanted that, but I never quite got it from other outdoor experiences."

Jeff Holden, shown below, had spent time camping and fishing with his friends as a kid, and has a strong interest in all things survival-and-preparedness. He came to Lifesong seeking training, to feel more confident in his ability to survive an emergency if he had to.

Roberta Kellis found Lifesong after a trip hunting with her husband. "I was terrified," she says of that first hunting trip, "The entire time, I was terrified!" With no outdoor experience, she had stuck by the camp, afraid to venture out. Arriving home after that less-than-joyful trip, Roberta was determined to make some changes. She started taking more trips into the wild with her husband and looking for a way to grow her skills.

"Honestly?" says **Steve Snider**, "My wife got tired of listening to me telling the TV what to do while I watched survival shows, so she did a ton of research, then gave me the training as a birthday gift! It was awesome to be able to put into practice everything that I had seen and thought, so all of my opinions were either proved or disproved."

Favorite lessons from your survival camp experience?

Confidence.

How to make a fire without even matches.

All the different kinds of wild plants you can use for food or medicine.

Crossing (on a log) over a river in the dark.

Everything I need to survive is already out there.

How to make fire, rope, and even my own shelter from what's available.

If I was alone in the wilderness, I know could I feed and shelter myself.



What is wilderness adventure training like?

Michelle, Steve, Roberta, and Jeff arrived at Lifesong for different reasons, and took a variety of different courses. Here are some of their experiences and lessons.

Michelle's first survival camp, [First Circle](#), was in a group with two men and one of their sons. "There was a cook, and there was a young man who had done the [Teen 28-day Camp](#), who was helping," she says. "They were all really nice. We worked as a group and we knew that Mark and the other people were not far away, they were going to help us."

Jeff, who also took [First Circle](#), agrees, "As you move up in his courses, you actually go out and stay overnight by yourself out in the wilderness, but in the beginning you're learning all of that - you're learning how to use a knife, how to make a fire, how to make a shelter.

Roberta's first course, [Intro to Survival Tracking](#) "started with classroom work, very hands-on, then we went out into the field and just started observing. Mark was asking us 'What do you see?' trying to change our tunnel vision.

"At that point," she says, "I started to see. Things started to open up. Little glimmers of light."

Is wilderness training hard?

It was tiring, says Steve, of his experience in the [L.O.S.T. Survival Training](#) and [The Edge](#). "Not like running-a-marathon kind of tiring, but you exercise physically and mentally.

You're getting a lot of information coming at you, so you're trying to absorb as much as that as you can, and of course you're walking through the woods or the mountains to get exposure and experience."

“By the time you get back to camp you're tired,” he says, “But in a positive way. You feel like you've accomplished something; you've experienced something and it's rewarding.”

“I've done way more hardcore hiking,” agrees Michelle, “like 20 miles in a day; and that was physically hard, but that's not a true skill.”

“Here you're not exhausted at the end of the day from all the work you did, but you've legit learned how to build a fire from scratch.”

Is it scary?

“The only one that was scary was the first one,” says Roberta, “because I'm just naturally afraid of the unknown, so I was outside my comfort zone. Since then it's absolutely not scary.”

All agreed that the Lifesong staff handles risks, concerns, and unexpected events (which are to be expected when sojourning with the wilderness!) sensitively.

“Mark was by no means going to put us in any kind of danger,” says Steve.

“When something came up, they made us aware and talked about how we were going to get through it or move around it. They were right there calm and walking us through how we were going to address it.”

What kind of skills do you need going into wilderness training?

“None whatsoever,” is Roberta's assessment. “The only thing you need is an open mind and a willingness to actually dive in. They need to at least be willing to consider broadening their horizons.”

“Maybe being comfortable finding the toilets at night with a flashlight ... a general sense for being outside,” says Michelle, “but I feel like Mark would meet you where you're at.”

Who is survival training for?

“Anybody who has an interest.”

“I've seen everybody from all walks. I've seen entire families come out. A husband, a wife, and their two teenaged daughters. They leave not only with the knowledge, but it also helps their family bond. And it's something that they all got something out of, and have memories to share.”

“People who just picked up the phone one day and said “You know that looks like fun.” He's got different camps geared for all experience levels.”

“I wish Mark could train up about a thousand of him,” laughs Jeff, “and this could be a course in school! That everyone could get back to basics of knowing how to take care of themselves if the power goes out or the internet goes out, or all the zombies attack in the apocalypse!”

Lifesong Wilderness Adventures offers survival training camps specializing in:

- Basic and advanced wilderness survival,
- Nature awareness,
- Bushcraft, and
- Animal tracking skills.

Trainings are held seasonally, in California, Oregon, and Texas.

Camps range from 6 to 28 days, and weekend trainings range from 1-3 days.

Lifesong training camps and survival vacations are for men, women, and teens, and we have courses for kids from 9 years and up.

Lifesong Wilderness

LWA Main Office

73569 HWY 101
North Bend, OR 97459
530-859-0539

Hours: Monday-Friday, 9 AM – 5 PM PST

Learn More

www.lifesongadventures.com
www.pinterest.com/lifesongwild
www.facebook.com/LifesongAdventures
www.instagram.com/lifesongwild