WRMC Action Steps 2013

The true value of attending the WRMC is in the resulting action you take upon returning to your organization. The following list is intended to help you know where to start.

Action steps are measurable tasks or ideas you should be able to do or implement in your program within a reasonably short time frame. They are not meant as large sweeping changes, rather as small steps to move you forward in your risk management strategy.

Each presenter has contributed three action steps from their 2013 WRMC workshop. In some cases the action steps parallel the main take home points of the workshop; in other cases the action steps are examples of a multitude of possible follow-up action.

Pre-Conference Workshops

Sat-Mon, September 28-30

WFR Recert by NOLS Wilderness Medicine Institute
Gates Richards and Erica Linell

1. Renew Wilderness and CPR certifications.
2. Use the course content to compare current trends in wilderness medicine decision-making guidelines with an individual's organization protocols.
3. Develop 3 wilderness medicine scenarios to use in staff training.

Sun-Mon, September 29-30

NOLS Risk Management Training
Dave Yacubian, Shana Tarter, and Jaime Musnicki

1. Take two exercises from the training and use them in an administrative staff training in the next six months.
2. Ask your insurance carrier if they have tools that you can use for driving training.
3. Clarify emergency response roles and procedures, in writing, with your contractors.

Effective Outdoor Program Design and Management
Paul Nicolazzo and John Fair

1. To increase safety of individual courses/trips, program administration must assess and balance the risk inherent in the design of their program with the competency of their field staff.
2. Rules & guidelines will be more effective if they are self-evident to competent staff, limited in number, aligned with the program’s mission, vision, and structure, and seen by ALL staff as both necessary and supportive.
3. Program administration can increase the effectiveness of their staff trainings by first teaching site management theory and then how it is applied to a specific activity and/or environment.

Inclusion and Cultural Competency for the Outdoor Professional
Aparna Rajagopal-Durbin and Pam Rosal

1. Facilitate three exercises from the "NOLS Inclusion Briefing Guide" (found in the WRMC on-line resource center) with your staff, and encourage them to use the "Iceberg of Diversity" activity with program participants.
2. Incorporate inclusive structural practices and language to change your organizational culture, such as:
   - Including the entire group (all genders) in pre-trip discussions regarding reproductive health and hygiene in the outdoors;
   - Not making assumptions about gender and sexuality when picking tent groups;
   - Referring to significant others as "partners;"
   - Rather than describing a participant or colleague as "diverse," use specific language like "female participants" or "person of color;"
   - Referring to participant's families as "parents or guardians" versus "mom and dad;"
   - Being intentional about your use of the word "wilderness" with understandings of its roots and how others may perceive it, and where appropriate, refer to your venues as "outdoor spaces" or "nature" instead of "wilderness;"
   - Avoiding using "challenging participants" language and instead saying "I don't feel like I have the skills to provide these particular participants with a good experience—I need more resources and training!"
   - Tailoring environmental ethics guidelines such as the LNT principles "Be Considerate of Other Visitors" or "Dispose of Waste Properly" to be culturally relevant; some participants may relate to nature through community and may relate to each other through play and rambunctiousness, other participants may need to leave offerings as part of their cultural traditions.
3. Document and share inclusion-related field incidents with the WRMC community so we can all learn from them--specifically, send one "scenario" to Aparna@nols.edu at NOLS over the next year so we can collaborate on finding ways to manage these incidents appropriately.

Monday, September 29

Performing Under Pressure
Deb Ajango

See Action Steps under Emergency Planning & Crisis Response on Wednesday, October 2; Workshop Titled "Performing Under Pressure"

Discussion on Volunteer Leader Risk Management
Alex Kosseff, Melanie Mac Innis, and Catherine Hansen-Stamp

1. Identify 2-3 risk management related tools, training programs, or services you can provide your volunteer leaders at low cost and decide on one to implement within the next month.
2. Create a concise list of approximately 5 things you expect your leaders to know and do to maintain good risk management practices for a specific activity/course.
3. Review the training and risk management approaches at a peer organization and implement at least one of their best ideas in your program.

And the Winner is…(?) Hot Issues, Hot Cases

Catherine Hansen-Stamp and Reb Gregg

1. Remind your staff of the role of risk and its value - you are doing a good thing!
2. Consult with your local counsel regarding laws in your jurisdiction, which alter your duty of care in instruction and other risk taking situations.
3. Examine your literature, including web site, for appropriate explanations of your philosophy of engaging and managing risk.

Parent Phone Call Lab
Katie Baum Mettenbrink

1. Identify two characteristics or behaviors of potential parents (or clients) that are likely to hook you into angry or defensive communication. Write down one strategy for responding constructively to each of those behaviors.
2. Identify five pieces of information you want to have written down before making your next parent phone call about a behavioral incident. Then do the same for a medical incident. Incorporate those lists into your next staff training.
3. Identify two people in your program or a similar program who can serve as resources for you in preparing for or debriefing a challenging parent phone call. Contact those people in the next six months about serving as resources for you in the future.

Risk Management in Wilderness Therapy: Critical Intersections of Research and Practice
Stephen Javorski

1. To reduce exposure to negligence litigation, wilderness therapy programs should stay up to date with industry standard practices through participation in open professional dialogue/knowledge sharing through relevant professional groups.
2. To better manage risk in wilderness therapy, programs contribute medical, restraint, and runaway incident reports to an aggregate industry database to identify times/locations/activities prone to higher incidents frequencies and collaborate with other programs to improve management policies and procedures during these times.
3. To ensure wilderness therapy client outcomes are consistent with marketing materials, programs should participate in rigorous third party outcome studies using well-validated psychometric instruments and practical progress markers.

Emergency Planning & Crisis Response

Tuesday, October 1

Crisis Management: A Preplan in Action
Drew Leemon

1. Build or utilize a simple template to develop a crisis management plan.
2. Identify key players in your organization who will be involved with crisis management and assign roles and responsibilities.
3. Run a crisis drill to determine current areas of strength and areas that need improvement in your organization's existing crisis response capabilities.

This is Not JUST A Drill!
Mark Vermeal

1. Identify 3-5 plausible critical incidents.
2. Determine where on the simulation continuum your organization currently is and plan the first in a series of administrative staff simulations.
3. Conduct the simulation and implement changes.

Risk Management: The Traumatic Aftermath
Will Marling

1. To identify emotional needs after a critical incident, risk managers should diagram the emotional impact to determine priorities.
2. To equip team leaders with skills to support victims, risk managers should introduce crisis intervention checklists to team leaders during training.
3. To promote physical and emotional health, risk managers should follow a self-care checklist with every managed incident.

Wednesday, October 2

Crisis Communication in the Digital Age: The Basics Still Matter
Bruce Palmer

1. Identify three to five questions that would likely be asked of your organization in a crisis.
2. Craft organizational and crisis message points unique your organization.
3. Practice two new methods of monitoring social media.

The Benefit of an External Risk Management Review
John Fair

1. Create a list of factors that demonstrate the need for an external review to your supervisor.
2. Identify the scope of the desired review.
3. Identify appropriate external reviewer(s).

Getting Beyond Operator Error: Using Systems to Analyze Accidents

Jeff Jackson

1. Differentiate between operator and system error causes.
2. Dissect system errors into leverage points and manageable change items.
3. Put operational factors into context of high or low risk contributions to accidents.

Performing Under Pressure
Deb Ajango

1. Create a realistic and intense simulation that forces participants to experience stress, to perform under stress, and to make difficult decisions while under stress.
2. Develop guidelines or a template for giving feedback to staff that incorporates methods proven effective for improving learning and performance.
3. Create a usable and effective checklist that can help guide employees through a field emergency.

Field Practices

Monday, October 1

Medical Topics: Old, New, and Controversial
David Johnson, MD

1. Review the medical policies, procedures and protocols in light of current information.
2. Assess quality and level of training required (if any) and actually completed by staff in light of current information and available standards.
3. Have a list of accessible resources to answer medically related questions (e.g., including screening, acute management, policy, procedures and protocols.)

Managing Challenging Mental Health and Behavioral Issues in the Field
Cynthia Stevens, MD

1. Review your stated course objectives, including behavior expectations and the outcomes associated with negative behavior.
2. Create a written resource for your field staff to help them understand behavioral or motivational issues.
3. Create a staff training module (potentially using the material referenced in WRMC Resources 2013) to help your field staff respond to behavioral or motivational issues in the field.

SAR Panel Discussion
John Gookin, Will Smith, MD, Will White; Shana Tarter, facilitator

1. Brief your instructor teams to develop realistic expectations about a SAR response.
2. Review your ERP with specific attention to having a backup plan to electronic emergency notification.
3. Know who coordinates SAR in the locations you operate and if possible, make a personal introduction of yourself and your program.

Wednesday, October 2

Accidents in Outdoor Pursuits: Assessment and Prevention Approaches
Jed Williamson

1. Introduce the Meyer/Williamson Accident Matrix into staff training.
2. Use the matrix to analyze a previous accident within your organization.
3. Design one method, such as a sentence added to your first-day orientation that informs participants of their responsibility in managing their own risk and that of others in the group.

Risk Managing a Wilderness Fast: Why, When and How to Facilitate a Fast in the Backcountry
Paul Stonehouse

1. Utilizing information from the presentation, develop a way to better frame a fast for potential participants.
2. Make adjustments to a waiver, course description, and marketing materials to reflect the possibility (or requirement) of a fast.
3. Use presentation information to make an addition on fasting to a risk management plan and/or instructor manual.
4. Adjust a ration plan to accommodate pre-fast, during-fast, and post-fast needs.
5. Alter instructor equipment list to ensure adequate risk management of a stationary backcountry fast.
6. Alter a course progression to increase the likelihood of a meaningful fasting experience.

'I'm not like the others': 3 Activities to Minimize the Emotional Risk of Exclusion
Aparna Rajagopal-Durbin and Pam Rosal

1. Facilitate three exercises from the "NOLS Inclusion Briefing Guide" (found in the WRMC on-line resource center) with your staff.
2. Encourage staff to use the "Iceberg of Diversity" activity (found in the WRMC on-line resource center) with program participants.
3. Every week, practice one act of allyship, and encourage your staff to do the same. Allyship is defined on page 10 of the NOLS Inclusion Briefing Guide and illustrated by example on the video at http://www.upworthy.com/one-easy-thing-all-white-people-could-do-that-would-make-the-world-a-better-place-5?g=2.

Bear Habitat Field Practices
Katie Baum Mettenbrink

1. Evaluate your bear practices using the Bear Awareness Triangle. Consider how well your staff are set up to accurately assess conditions in each area of the triangle.
2. Pick one question in each area of the triangle that you can help your staff answer more effectively, and address those questions in your next staff training.
3. Determine whether staff or students could encounter red-light bear conditions on your program. Identify examples of green-, yellow- and/or red-light bear conditions that could be encountered on your program, and consider whether your practices appropriately match potential conditions.

Legal Considerations

Monday, October 1

Employment, Staffing, Compensation, and Other Legal Stuff
James Pearson

1. Meet with everyone in your company doing employment interviews to ensure compliance with what the law permits in regard to what enquires are permissible prior to extending an offer of employment.
2. Review every staff member to determine if they are an exempt employee, non-exempt employee, independent contractor, volunteer or intern.
3. After determining the employee's status, review hours worked and applicable payroll for non-exempt employees to confirm compliance with the FLSA and state law.

The Law Says "Yes" to Risk
Reb Gregg

1. Identify the key risks associated with a specific program and formulate strategies for proactively mitigating those risks during the first 72 hours of the program start. If applicable, consider risks unique to international program orientations.
2. In the workshop (and on the WRMC Resources page) we provide a sample risk management rubric for planning the first 72 hours of a program. Based on this template, outline a program-specific orientation guideline for the first 72 hours of your program.
3. Take one action to create a culture of risk awareness that proactively lays the foundation for risk conscious staff, students, and groups.

Managing Legal Issues After a Serious Incident: What to Do, What to Say
Frances Mock

1. Identify the person in your organization who will be responsible for collecting evidence, interviewing witnesses, and managing the legal issues after an incident.
2. Create forms to help track communications, evidence, and witness statements. (Examples of these forms will be shown.)
3. Educate your staff about the discoverability of internal communications and the need to be thoughtful about what you say.

Tuesday, October 2

Discovery and Depositions Can be Fun
Wilma Gray

Please look for these action steps online at the WRMC Resource Center at http://www.nols.edu/wrmc/resources.shtml

Standards in the Industry: What Does this Phrase Really Mean and How do Standards Impact Your Programs and Practices?
Tracey Knutson

1. Define and understand the phrase “industry standard.”
2. Identify sources for researching standards.
3. Articulate which industry standards apply to your program.

‘My Feet are Cold’ Mock Trial
Reb Gregg and Catherine Hansen-Stamp

1. Examine your operating policies pertinent to the issues raised and make changes, if necessary.
2. Consult with local counsel regarding laws in your jurisdiction pertaining to these practices and policies.
3. Consider role-playing the courtroom exams for your staff.

Participants Agreement: Is It Really Better than the Paper It’s Written on?
Tony Clapp

1. Identify the mandatory components of an effective participant agreement in order to communicate effectively with counsel in determining whether revision is necessary.
2. Structure program applications to make certain that they fall within the provisions of the agreement.
3. Understand the effectiveness of the document to gauge expectations when facing claims and potential litigation.

Program Administration

Monday, October 1

Adapt-Ability: Working with People Disabilities in an Adventure Setting
Becky Van Horsen, Eric Bonin, and Janine Donald

1. Look at your current risk management plan and see how you can refine it to include the special needs of different disability groups.
2. Include disability awareness training in your staff training protocols.
3. Assess your current marketing materials to ensure that no exclusionary verbiage is being used.

Bloodborne and Other Pathogens in the Backcountry
Steve Neal and David Johnson, MD

1. Review staff job descriptions to determine risk of “Occupational Exposure” to blood and other potentially infectious materials.
2. Evaluate organizational obligations for compliance with CDC guidelines and the OSHA Bloodborne Pathogen Standard, 29 CFR 1910.1030.
3. Examine how to incorporate templates provided in this session into the organization's Exposure Control planning.

Contracting with Third Parties
Catherine Hansen-Stamp, Todd Duncan, and Justin Talbot

1. Analyze your current (or projected) contracting arrangements. Characterize the nature of those relationships, and develop screening guidelines, as appropriate.
2. Work with your legal counsel to develop a contract template or template/s for your contracting relationships.
3. Consider targeted staff training regarding roles and responsibilities, and how the contract process can inform program improvement (whether staff are attending programs run by (or shared with) third parties, or are working with user groups on premises).

Tuesday, October 2

Mission Creep: When the Tail Wags the Dog
Steve Smith

1. Increase alignment between mission, risk tolerance, and program activities.
2. Develop strategies to identify and mitigate mission creep.
3. Create common language and terminology surrounding the topic of mission creep.

Social Media's Heuristic Trap and the Role of Digital Immigrants in Teaching Risk Management to Digital Natives
Jerry Isaak

1. Introduce the topic of the influence of social media on risk management during staff training.
2. Review their personal decision making influences and heuristics, particularly in regards to their online identity.
3. Teach instructors that are "Digital Immigrants" to speak the language of "Digital Natives".

What You Need to Know when Applying for or Renewing Insurance
Don Pachner

1. Prepare for insurance renewals or new submissions through a careful assessment of exposure to insurable risk, and segregate it from uninsurable or business risk
2. To effectively assess and analyze exposure to insurable risk, insurance program administrators must take inventory of all business relationships including all oral and written contracts with participants, suppliers, vendors, independent contractors and land managers, with a copy of all written contracts and permits.
3. After fully evaluating and analyzing your organization's exposure to insurable risk, prepare a list of questions to ask the insurance agent/broker based on your assessment and your organization's concerns.

How Managing Risk for Military Veterans will Improve Your Whole Program
Stacy Bare, Kevin Heiner, and Jarrod Ball

1. Create a staff training that gives application managers the tools necessary to effectively screen veterans and service members for program participation.
2. Expand medical questionnaire to fully capture issues relating to post traumatic stress (PTS) and traumatic brain injury regardless of applicants military affiliation.
3. Create a 30 minute staff training highlighting and providing resources for these three things: a. Basic literacy of military rank and force structure; b. Conversations and questions to encourage and avoid; c. Increased understanding of the value veterans and service members bring to courses.

Staff Training & Decision Making

Monday, October 1

Training to Failure and Other Unlikely and Highly Effective Training Strategies
Jeff Jackson

1. Identify non-normal in relation to their programs.
2. Articulate outcomes to target and avoid non-normal.
3. Apply a-typical training strategies such as failure and testing.

Central Gulley Avalanche, A Case Study: How Good Intentions Slide You Straight to Hell
Tom Pollard and Will White

1. When planning to do a promotional climb or fundraiser develop and write an action plan for if the climb/fundraiser goes as planned, if it does not go as planned, what happens if it all falls apart?
2. When planning a promotional climb or fundraiser have all members agree to one person that deals with the press no matter the outcome of the climb.
3. Have all members of the team agree to a turnaround plan, wherein at a pre-determined time in the afternoon the group discusses whether moving forward or turning back is the better alternative.

Where Are We Now? 20 Years of Decisions Making
Brendan Madden and Tod Schimelpfenig

1. Conduct an internal training focusing on mindfulness in field staff decision making and incorporate new vocabulary into staff supervision, mentoring and coaching.
2. Run an effective debrief for all field programs
3. Implement one new staff training component centered around awareness of decision-making.

Wednesday, October 2

Stupidity Explored: Mindful Leadership Amplified

Lester Zook

1. Develop a tool or questionnaire for leaders to help them evaluate what personal qualities they possess that might predispose them towards an incident.
2. Schedule a meeting with program leaders to discuss, or routinely include as a part of trip debriefs, input on specific programmatic and administrative vulnerabilities. Or maybe: Send out an anonymous survey to program leaders designed to gain insight into specific programmatic and administrative vulnerabilities.
3. Seek out one or two well know program leaders and ask them to begin sharing stories of prior incidents and mistakes to begin establishing a climate of mutual learning from past incidents and mistakes.

Keeping Field Staff Fresh: A Model for Ongoing Training
Rebecca Bear and Jeremy Oyen

1. Outline your organization's current field staff training timeline and assess current strengths and weaknesses in the plan.
2. Use the REI Outdoor School Instructor Training plan, provided in the 2013 WRMC Resources, as a resource for improvements to your plan.
3. Design one new field assessment for your staff.

Decision Making: Errors of Perception
Gates Richards

1. Address decision-making strategies within your team as a concept worthy of attention, but do so without focusing on a specific decision.
2. Conduct some of these activities within your team to illustrate that we all have misperceptions-- this is a fact, not a judgment.
3. Create a decision-making system within your team to minimize the chances of only one perspective being used in the DM process.

Three Plug and Play Staff Training Activities
Shana Tarter

1. Introduce at least one new staff training activity into your program this season.
2. Use the value clarification exercise with your administrators and then your instructors to identify areas of difference.
3. Use "reverse planning" to improve training and meeting design throughout your organization.

Sector Specific Issues

Tuesday, October 1

Incident Trends in Outdoor Behavioral Healthcare: What do They Mean to Me?
Stephen Javorski

1. To better manage risk in their programs, Outdoor Behavioral Healthcare (OBH) providers should track and analyze all incidents in aggregate across multiple providers to identify times and activities associated with higher incident frequencies and alter programming/policies to reduce risk accordingly.
2. To reduce incident frequencies early in the program, OBH providers should considered providing additional program staff during the first 20 percent of each program cycle.
3. To reduce incident frequencies late in the program, OBH providers should avoid keeping clients in the field longer than the average length of stay in their program.

Higher Expectations: The Professionalizing of International Trip Leading
Bill Frederick

1. Gauge and critique the appropriate level of risk management for one international program.
2. Acquire one resource recommended in the workshop and apply it to your program.

Chance and Randomness: The Complications of Managing Incidents Overseas
Gennifre Hartman, Aaron Slosberg, and Jennifer Royall

Please look for these action steps online at the WRMC Resource Center at http://www.nols.edu/wrmc/resources.shtml

College, University, and Municipality Risk Management Today
Jeannette Stawski and Tim Moore

1. Apply one proposed solution from this workshop (as listed in WRMC Resources 2013) for trends or common concerns, to your program.
2. Thoroughly review your current list of required certifications, and evaluate whether there are any you should add or remove. Determine if you should be providing additional training to support any required certifications.
3. Start using one new resource (provided in the WRMC Resources 2013) to support your program.