

# The Wilderness Studies Program

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*High school students*

## The Program

The Wilderness Studies (WS) Program addresses the educational and career needs of students who grow up in an environmentally rich geographical area. It provides youth with the lifelong knowledge and skills of the outdoor leader, the environmental steward, the naturalist, the sportsman, and the craftsman.

The curriculum comprises three discrete courses at the high school level: (1) *WS I* - an introduction to environmental studies; (2) *WS II* - Adirondack canoe building and rustic construction projects; and (3) *WS III* - an outdoor leadership and guide training course. Each of the classes integrates theory and practice and is conducted for a period of 20 weeks. Students are involved in individual and group projects that require the application of mathematics, science, technology, and language arts to the environment. Assessment methods include paper and pencil tests, writing assignments, portfolio development, and leadership demonstration projects. The program, in all its phases, underscores the importance of learning by doing. The Wilderness Studies Program is, to date, the only high school with an affiliation to the Wilderness Education Association and is the recipient of many awards throughout its history. Its graduates receive college credit in environmental studies and health education, and many have secured employment in environmentally related professions.

## Results

Over the last three years, up to 50% of the school's senior class have graduated with a Wilderness Studies course sequence. Of those graduates, 40% to 60% go on to college careers in related studies. In addition, the Wilderness Education Association has authorized the program to certify its students in Wilderness Stewardship.



## Learning Standards

**Health, Physical Education, and Home Economics:** (1) have the necessary knowledge and skills to establish and maintain physical fitness, participate in physical activity, and maintain personal health; (2) acquire the knowledge and ability necessary to create and maintain a safe and healthy environment.

### Contact

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