

GUYdelines

A few thoughts for outdoor lovers and leaders from

WILD GUYde Adventures, LLC

Vol. 11, No. 4 (Fall, 2017)

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The people will surprise you

by Aaron Zook

“Having met you, I am forever different. That encounter; having never happened before, is now part of my history. You are now a part of me.”

At the close of the 2017 season, we would like to thank you for your part in the growing history of *WILD GUYde Adventures*. At the beginning of the summer, we made a conscious decision to try and seek out some like-minded people in our area, in the outdoor industry and beyond. We’ve invested time and effort into making our company the best that it can be, and we believe that growth is tied to seeking out new people who will alter your and our perspectives. We’re interested in that kind of growth, always have been really. It was time to dress up and meet the neighbors. This summer became the summer of people who surprised us, and I’d like to share a few of them with you. We met them all, that’s for sure.

The outdoor adventure industry is overrun by the younger crowd, but a few more mature folks

showed us that the mountains can be for everyone. This summer, we took our oldest client ever by our records, 78 year-old Joe. He brought his own helmet from home to go caving, and with friends Becky and Bob (both 74), traversed the Sinks of Gandy. At 66, Mitch returned to rock climbing after a long hiatus and a bout with cancer, and ticked Romeo’s Delight (5.6) at Rawley Springs, Virginia off his climbing bucket list. Susan (58) summited Seneca Rocks, and Carole (70) took her grandson on caving adventures twice! Retirement is a state of mind, my friends, and these amazing senior clients saw no reason to go quietly into old age.

We met a family from New Jersey who showed us that hard work is best rewarded with meaningful time and adventures with the people you love. Jim and his family were a tight knit crew who hired us for a trip through Kees Cave. They joked and teased each other good naturedly the entire time and genuinely had a blast with each other. Throughout the trip, Jim told me a little bit about his life and some of his

Aaron Zook came home to the Valley to work with *WILD GUYde Adventures* in March of this year, after a year in Boone NC.



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experiences. He had a faded USMC tattoo on his shoulder from the 80s, and stories of being an iron worker in New York City in the early 90s. He spent two years hanging underneath the George Washington Bridge as it was being built, and got his hardhat signed by Arnold Schwarzenegger on the sidewalk of uptown. Thanks to Jim and his family for your service and hard work making this country great -- your vacation was well deserved.

We don't consider ourselves musicians at WILD GUYde, but we sure do appreciate people that are! This summer we had the privilege of sponsoring not one but two music festivals right here in the Shenandoah Valley. Red Wing Roots is a hometown festival for us. It showcases the gorgeous Natural Chimneys campground in Mount Solon, VA and the hosts are local musicians Trent Wagler and the Steel Wheels. Red Wing Roots has become a staple of our summer season, and we enjoy reconnecting with the local community at the event.

We were also fortunate enough to meet Ryan and Emily, two local artists who host the Jam Fish Music Festival in Mount Sydney. This festival showcases smaller touring acts and traveling musicians, and as small business owners ourselves, we love helping out the little guys! Festival people that spend time outdoors and develop talents in a supportive community atmosphere are some of our favorites. Make plans to join us at one of these awesome events next year!

In short, this has been a different and wonderful kind of summer season for us. We truly feel like we connected with our local community and drew amazing wisdom and life experiences from all of our clients. Thank you for making this one of our most interesting and inspirational years yet. Each adventure trip we lead is its own unique story. The bare outline exists at the beginning, but it is only as the characters come together that the plot comes to life. You all have different stories and we are constantly fascinated and inspired. You are now a part of us. Thank you!

ATZ

Are you coming to Virginia for a family vacation, church group trip, boys' club 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 2017 trip options below, or call to talk about your own creative adventure idea!

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You may also visit www.wildguyde.com

CHOOSE YOUR ADVENTURE: 2017 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 \$225 for 1-3 people; \$50 for each additional. ½-day \$150 for 1-3, and \$35 for each additional)



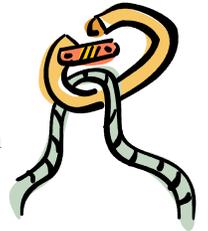
Beginner Climbing At Seneca Rocks, WV: After 90 minutes of curving mountain highway (okay, *country two-lane*), you'll gasp to see a spectacular blade of Tuscarora Sandstone, whose summit sits almost 1000 feet above its North Fork Valley floor. Seneca Rocks is a scenic place for the beginner or family 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 \$250 for 1-3 people; \$60 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 before sleeping the ride back to Virginia and "the Burg."

(Full-day: \$225 1st 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 1st person; \$125 each for 2nd and 3rd)



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 (\$90 each). We also offer the **PCIA (Professional Climbing Instructor Association) Top Rope Climbing Instructor Certification** course and exam. This 3-day course (\$425) and 1 day exam (\$125) 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!

(140 1-3 people; \$35 each additional)

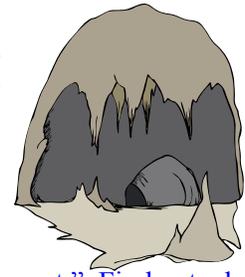


Pick-up-the-Pace Paddling: A fuller day of canoeing awaits further down the **South Fork**. This provides a little more excitement for teenagers, adventurous parents, & other paddle pilgrims! A casual start allows a review of canoe strokes and partner teamwork.

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!

(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.*



(\$125 for 1-3 people; \$25 for each additional)



Design Your Own Adventure: Numerous other options exist, including hiking and climbing guiding along Virginia’s Blue Ridge or at the Nelson Rock Outdoor Center (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 a certified member of the *American Mountain Guides Association (Single Pitch Instructor)*. He has been leading wilderness adventures and training camping leaders for 25 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*, a *PCIA Top Rope Climbing Instructor*, and has been through *Wilderness First Aid*.
- More detail on activity possibilities is available by visiting www.wildguyde.com. Call or e-mail to ask questions and to arrange dates, rates, and meeting points:



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- **WGA**’s guiding season is 7 days a week May through August, and weekends in the spring and fall. 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. Clients also may not be “under the influence” 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 *Christian Adventure Association*, and the *Harrisonburg-Rockingham Chamber of Commerce*.

How was your trip with the *WILD GUYDE*..?

"Just wanted to say thanks again for an amazing afternoon. Now I can't believe that I waited 70 years to take my first spelunking adventure. Over the course of my life, I have had opportunities to go hiking in rainforests, parachuting, ocean kayaking, hang-gliding, skiing, white water rafting and more -- all with guides or instructors, and you were the best. I was especially impressed with the way that you took four people with wide differences in age, size, and comfort levels, and gave each of us the knowledge, support, and encouragement we needed to form a team and to enjoy ourselves. And what made it even better was that I shared the experience with my 15 year old grandson. He loved it and was ready to turn around and go right back in!" (CA, 2017)

"Overall, my guys enjoyed spending the day with you. They were very complimentary on how thorough and patient you were with explanations and directions. They also loved the additional tidbits and information you gave about the history of the area. There were mixed reviews about which part they enjoyed most: one said rock climbing, the other said caving, and the last couldn't decide, but they were all unanimous in saying that it was a great day and they would do it again in a heartbeat. Thank you so much for your easy accessibility and responses when I first reached out to you. We loved the Shenandoah Valley and will definitely recommend you and see you again next time we visit the area!" (KB, 2017)

"You are organized and knowledgeable. I felt safe under your guidance. The mountains in and near Shenandoah National Park are beautiful. I shall return..." (WS, 2017)

"It was a wonderful day that more than met my objective: Experience a multi-pitch technical climb. The climb was difficult, both mentally and physically. The conversations on the way home in the car indicated that we had gained some insights about ourselves, how to approach a challenge, etc. I was very impressed with your approach. You have a wisdom that aligns with the environment we (my wife and I) have tried to foster in the youth groups (BSA, church youth group) that we work with. I definitely will be seeking your help with future trips." (MB, 2017)

"Lester, just wanted to say thanks again for our adventure and excitement! Our kids could not stop talking about it and even Kelly couldn't believe she did what she did. Thanks again for a great outing. Your level of professionalism and love for the outdoors is matched by no one that I have ever met. Thanks again." (DL, 2017)

"Everything was great! Aaron did an excellent job and it was such a memorable experience having the opportunity to explore the beauty of nature freely. I'd highly recommend it!" (JS, 2017)