

GUYdelines

A few thoughts for outdoor lovers and leaders from

WILD GUYde Adventures, LLC

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Five New Year's Resolutions Worth Keeping

Humans are the only natural creatures that can imagine. We are the only ones that can create a picture of the future in advance, and then work toward creating it. Steven Covey observes that every artistic masterpiece, every symphony, every Olympic gold medal began in someone's mind. It was created twice -- once in the imagination, and then a second time made manifest. So on the individual level, the imagination can give us a picture of what we can be, and what we can become. When a leader invokes the collective imagination of others, it is called vision (Think: "I have a dream...").

The imagination can also be a deep source of motivation for us, to move ourselves off of dead center. Dan Gable, legendary U.S. wrestler at the height of the Cold War, was once asked how he got himself so motivated to work out day after day. His answer: "*I just ask myself, 'What are the Russians doing right now to beat me?'*" We will never extinguish desire in our lives, and so desires can become tempting traps, keeping us from growing. The only way to control a desire is to submit it to a larger desire. So Dan's bed was just as soft as any of ours, but his greater desire was to win and bring pride to his nation, and that trumped his lesser desire to sleep late in the morning or take it easy. Spurgeon said, "*In the battle between the imagination and the will, the imagination always wins.*"

So as we find ourselves at the start of another year, I am not so keen on New Year's Resolutions, in the conventional sense. Most resolutions tend to be wishful thinking, with no real imagery and no commitment attached. I would prefer to think of goals, and then attach plans and commitment to achieving them. "*A goal without a plan is just a hope.*" Here are five New Year's resolutions that I would encourage you to imagine about, plan for, and achieve in 2018:

1. Get healthier: At *WILD GUYde Adventures*, we love to take people outdoors. There is, however, a growing and undeniable reality: in the U.S. today, more and more of us are not functionally healthy. Outdoor activities can be strenuous, and the reality is that it is just a lot more fun to be adventuring outdoors when you are fit. Alarming, the low fitness epidemic is also affecting young people. Children and teens are getting softer, as the temptations of screen time and virtual entertainment exert themselves. So my hope and urging for you in 2018 is to address this in your life. Think 30-60 minutes of exertional physical activity. This is not merely physical movement -- walking, stretching. Think elevated heart rate, perspiring, and

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rapid breathing -- daily aerobic activity, coupled with muscle resistive exercise, can add vitality and quantity to your years, and compound your enjoyment of outdoor trips, family events, and life in general.

2. Give back: We routinely think of the outdoors as a place to go to enrich ourselves, and so it is. But we can also visit beautiful places ready to give back -- to the place, and to other users. On a micro-level, why not have an empty Wal-Mart bag or two in your pack as you hike, to pick up the trash that accumulates along trails or in parking areas? Carry your Ten Essentials (first aid kit, map, etc.) along every time, and be ready to be the Good Samaritan. The more time one spends outdoors, the more likely it is that you will happen upon someone who needs help -- maybe patching up an abrasion, or knowing how far the trail junction is. If you are ready for a larger gift of yourself, consider becoming a trail volunteer with the National Forest or the National Park, or a ridge-runner with the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club. If you are blessed financially, you can also become a contributor to causes like Friends of Shenandoah Mountain, Wild Virginia, the Access Fund, or the Shenandoah National Park Trust. None of us OWNS these resources -- we share them, and it is beneficial for us to attach some tangible behaviors and sweat equity to this idea of sharing.

3. Visit a new place, learn a new skill, try a new activity: To qualify as an ADVENTURE, an event in our lives must have three ingredients: it must be a challenge or problem, it must have an unknown outcome, and we must be able to have some influence on the outcome. With no unknown outcome, it is not an adventure -- it is an amusement park ride -- an exciting liver-shiver, but no real uncertainty. If we have no influence on the outcome, it is not an adventure -- it is a disaster. We must be able to muster our strength, skills, wit, or teamwork to increase the chances of success or survival. So when we place ourselves in an adventure, we test our character, our ingenuity, our fitness, or our teamwork. And the product is GROWTH, maybe in ourselves, and maybe in our relationships with those with whom we adventure. So my challenge to you this coming year is to put yourself in that place. If you are a climber, try wild caving. If you are a day-hiker, try a multi-day backpacking trip. If you are a runner, train for a triathlon. And if you haven't been in the wild outdoors for much too long, give me a call and let's change all that..!

4. Read to learn: Let me suggest taking a few minutes at the start of the year to create a big view of your learning. What are the 3 or 4 categories that you would like to learn in this year? Why not set a goal of reading something in each meaningful cluster, so at the end of the year, your learning has both breadth and depth. Here are a few of my suggestions:

- Leadership and Personal Growth: *Tools of Titans* (Ferris), *Appreciative Leadership* (Whitney and Trosten-Bloom), *First Things First* (Covey, Merrill, and Merrill), *The Power of Habit* (Duhigg), *A Failure of Nerve* (Friedman).
- Health and Fitness: *Natural Born Heroes* (McDougall), *Running with the Kenyans* (Finn), *Eat and Run* (Jurek)
- Relationships: *Crucial Conversations* (Patterson, et. al.), *Mentor: The Kid and the CEO* (Pace)
- History and Perspective: *The March of Folly* (Tuchmann), *The Shallows* (Carr)
- Devotional: *Holy Sweat* (Hansel), *God of Adventure* (Dunning)
- Adventure: *Destructive Goal Pursuit* (Kayes), *Surviving the Extremes* (Kamler)

5. Update your Wilderness First Aid certification: Never a bad idea if you are in the outdoors frequently, and even more so, if you take others (family, friends). My son Ethan is a paramedic, and his daily work is patching people up. For folks like you and me who do not work in the medical field every day, it is VERY easy to forget this stuff. So check out one of the providers, pay the man, and go in for a tune-up and review. You may end 2018 very happy that you did! You can find course options at www.wfa.net, Landmark Learning, Wilderness Medical Institute/NOLS, Wilderness Medical Association, or SOLO (Stonehearth Open Learning Opportunities).

Goals are hatched in the imagination. Plans then put the wheels on goals, and help them to go somewhere, take shape and happen. Imagine who you might become by the end of 2018!

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**CHOOSE YOUR ADVENTURE: 2018 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 rappelling 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*, 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 meet-up locations:

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

- **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*, the *Shenandoah Valley Travel Association*, and the *Harrisonburg-Rockingham Chamber of Commerce*.
- *For a tailored learning experience with our newly developed **Adventure, Learning, and Leadership Institute**, call for a conversation and proposal.*



Adventure,
Learning &
Leadership
INstitute (ALL-IN)

- Action consulting and experiential leadership learning
- Organizational development and teambuilding
- On your site, or in the wilds and mountains of VA and WV

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)