

Final Draft



Will's Hope Summary of Programs for Veterans Rev 10

As of: 30 Jan 2022

Subject: 2022 Will's Hope Programs for Veterans

Summary

Veterans have many strengths & capabilities that can be overlooked by society. This can lead some veterans to under appreciate their value to society. Will's Hope is an opportunity to help them frame their life experiences & see their situation in a positive manner while helping energize them for the future.

Vision

Serve veterans & others (e.g., active-duty personnel, law enforcement, public safety, healthcare) with conditions such as mild PTSD, mild depression & other similar conditions. Provide a world class outdoor educational program that captures their interest & allows them to recharge while immersed in a stimulating program that highlights positivity. Will's Hope provides an opportunity for each participant to strengthen themselves & show them their value to their family, community & humanity.

Mission

Provide veterans and other qualified persons a supportive atmosphere & opportunities to see their situation in a more positive way while using the outdoors, nature, & Native Americans as mechanisms for self-enabling & self-discovery of interests & strengths. Other mission objectives include but are not limited to:

- Uniqueness is a strength and is to be shared,
- Recognize the uniqueness of each individual and the importance of their uniqueness to humanity,
- Reinforce the importance of each individual,
- Show participants the good in the world & the good in themselves,
- Use positivity as a tool to improve relationships,
- Improve or foster the development of passions,
- Enhance communication skills, resiliency of spirit and group dynamics,
- Strengthening individual participants also strengthens the participant's family,
- Promote & expand individual growth & self-healing,
- Provide multiple opportunities for each veteran to assess and choose those that are most beneficial to them as an individual,
- Provide the setting for bonding and friendship to thrive,
- If applicable, promote improvement of self-confidence & self-esteem,

Concept of Operation

The Concept of Operation is similar to regular Will's Hope Programs for young adults with disabilities & uses a similar methodology but is modified for veterans who may have different & more diverse life experiences as well as typically being more independent. Use the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem as the primary venue for a diverse outdoor educational immersion program. Programs run approximately 10 - 11 days. Each participant actively participates in a variety of outdoor individual & group activities. Group size is 5-6 participants or less. Dedicated instructors & volunteers are subject matter experts & oversee activities, logistics & operations.

Eligibility

- Veteran or person from other qualifying groups that have a disability – the disability may or may not be diagnosed,
- Wants to attend, learn, participate in all activities and are willing to help themselves,
- Are positive & stable,
- Are respectful & considerate of others (e.g., instructors, guides, program leaders and others),
- Are able to follow instructions,
- Use appropriate language & appropriate behavior at all times,
- Are courteous, truthful & honest,
- Can work together as a small team or group,
- Are willing to share their observations and thoughts with the group,
- Listens more than talking,
- Track record of good behavior,
- Share responsibility for common housekeeping tasks and meals,
- Are able to hike up to 3 miles with a 600-foot elevation gain, *
- Complete an application and disclose any information pertinent to their participation in the program,
- Self-certify that Will's Hope Programs will help them with their diagnosed or not diagnosed disability,
- Will's Hope acceptance of the application

* This requirement may be waived based on an individual's specific situation

Will's Hope is a non-smoking program (including chewing tobacco, marijuana and vaping). Non-prescribed harmful drugs & Over the Counter harmful drugs are not allowed. Prescribed medications must be in a container with a prescription attached. Weapons, ammunition, knives & other similar items are not allowed. No alcohol in any form. Will's Hope is not a therapeutic, medical or a program for someone in crisis. Will's Hope is a voluntary program and is not connected with any government program.

In 2022 there are three veteran programs. Please see the website and click on the "Click here Veterans" button at the top of the page for specific dates. The three programs are for 1st time attending women veterans, 1st time attending men veterans and one program for those that attended the pilot programs in 2021. For each program we are able to accommodate 5-6 veterans. At the end of each program, we are requesting feedback about how the program benefits the participants & for constructive comments on how to improve the program for future veterans. For familiarization with regular Will's Hope Programs please visit www.willshopeopportunities.org In addition to the "Click here Veterans" button at the top of each web page there are photos and videos at the tab (on the bottom) labeled "2021 Veterans Programs Photos".

Major Activities

Participants can anticipate being busy throughout the entire period. All activities take place in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. For returning veterans some of those activities that they participated in during 2021 will not be repeated in 2022. Major activities may include but are not limited to:

- Wildlife observation and viewing led by a professional wildlife guide using binoculars and spotting scopes,
- An introduction to the regional geology, the "Yellowstone Hot Spot" and volcanic activity,
- Native American culture and philosophies that are applicable to today's world and relevant for veterans,
- Fly fishing led by a professional guide,
- US Forest Service demonstration and possibly a field exercise,
- Wildlife track identification in the field and casting tracks (this will depend on weather, river flows and time available),
- Hiking through a petrified forest in the Gallatin National Forest (with a permit selective collection is allowed),
- Practical exercise(s),
- Understanding Old Faithful,
- Insight into the fragile balance of nature by learning about keystone species,
- Insight into the challenges facing the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem,
- Participant presentations,
- Numerous other activities, and
- Reflections

Cost: The cost for each participant in the 2022 programs is \$400. The actual cost of the program is approximately \$5,000 per person and the portion above \$400 is covered by Will's Hope. Limited funds may be available to help qualifying veterans with part of the \$400.

Application: If you are interested in attending the 2022 programs, please let us know so that we can set up an informational briefing and interview. **We will release applications only after the individual has completed the informational briefing. Once the application is complete, please return it to the address on the first page or call Mark Squire 719-210-5625 or send us an email to: willshopeinfo@gmail.com.** We will then set up a time that is convenient to you to meet with you and discuss the application. If you are interested it is important to get on our radar as soon as possible so please call or contact us at the email address below. We may request additional input/recommendations from a professional (doctor, counselor, etc.), pastor, VA, DAV, service agencies or other organizations that are acceptable to Will's Hope.

Standards: Please visit the Will's Hope website www.willshopeopportunities.org and click on the "Click here Veterans" button at the top of the page. This takes you to the "Veterans Program" page. On the "Veterans' Program" page look at "Expectations of Veterans, Staff and Self-Assessment" pdf document at the bottom of the page. Please review this document as this outlines the behavior and environment pertinent to Will's Hope programs. In summary, we are looking for similar standards from veterans that we require from regular Will's Hope Program mentors & staff.

Veteran Applications ** are due 14 February 2022 with a \$100 application fee. The remaining \$300 is due once the application is accepted by Will's Hope. We will continue to accept applications until all slots are filled. For planning purposes, the **remaining \$300 should be submitted by 25 February 2022**, if not sooner. The \$100 application fee plus the \$300 equals the \$400 program fee

Dates for pre-program activities: Due to the public health emergency we are deferring any face-to-face orientation and training activities until April 2022:

20 April 2022 (Wednesday) 1730 – Orientation for veterans and their families (Location to be announced) ***

23 April 2022 (Saturday) 0930 – Voluntary Hike at Cheyenne Mountain State Park (emphasis on local wildlife, plants, raptors, etc.)

17 November 2022 (Thursday) – Will's Hope Annual Dinner (we request that veterans plan to attend this dinner).

** The application packet will contain detailed information about the program such as clothing to bring, schedule, and other details.

*** The orientation will discuss all details related to the program such as food, what to bring, travel arrangements, emergency procedures, etc. and have pictures of lodging, major activities & so forth.

More Info: Contact Mark Squire at 719-210-5625 or willshopeinfo@gmail.com