



MONTANA WILDERNESS SCHOOL

ANNUAL REPORT 2015



“This has truly changed my life! I will look back on this experience and think, wow, I truly did something magical.”

-Kevin, Montana Mountaineering Expedition





LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2015 has been a whirlwind of excitement as we have put into place every aspect of our grassroots nonprofit organization's foundation. Thank you to so many of you that have donated your time or money, been a part of our family of staff and volunteers, enrolled your son or daughter, or taken that step to be a student on one of our first expeditions. We are humbled and grateful and couldn't have done it without a huge family of supporters!

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2015:

- MWS ran three successful and empowering multi-week wilderness expeditions on Montana public lands with amazing groups of diverse students
- Our Scholarship Fund crowdfunding campaign in March was an astounding success. It allowed us to give all of our deserving students some level of tuition financial assistance so THANK YOU again for all of you generous donors that helped make our MWS Scholarship Fund possible.
- ALL of our 2015 students said they would recommend MWS to future prospective students. Many of these same students said it was the best experience of their lives!
- MWS received 2 design awards and 4 foundational and community grants in its inaugural program year.
- Four different Montana papers wrote stories about MWS, which were shared by many others in 2015.
- Two movies were produced about MWS in 2015. The first for our scholarship fundraising campaign in March by an amazing local videographer, George Potter; and the second is our first promotional video this fall by another amazing local videographer, Reid Morth. Both George and Reid did an incredible job and we are extremely thankful.
- Our website and professional promotional materials just keep getting better. Thanks to local programmer, Brett DeWoody, and local graphic design artist, Yogesh Simpson, for giving so much to help make MWS look so sharp in our first year.

We couldn't have asked for a better first program year and feel extremely excited for developing and improving every part of MWS for our upcoming 2016 season, including doubling the number of expeditions offered. Thank you for believing in us and for helping us provide such life-changing experiences for our students.



OUR MISSION

is to provide empowering expeditionary wilderness courses to youth that foster personal growth and cultivate a conservation ethic through connecting with remote landscapes and wild places.

OUR VISION

is to develop the highest quality expeditionary outdoor education program in the United States. We strive to serve diverse and motivated youth in communities throughout Montana. Through challenging and empowering experiences on our courses, youth will develop a deeper connection to the natural world, and will return to their communities as competent, confident, and compassionate leaders.

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

The Montana Wilderness School had a successful first season running three expeditions during the summer of 2015. MWS impacted the lives of sixteen students by providing challenging and adventurous expeditionary experiences in three unique wildland areas. We educated students about camp craft, Leave No Trace ethics, wilderness medicine, leadership, communication, community building, and technical skills involving backpacking, mountaineering, whitewater paddling, and fly fishing. Students were challenged by terrain and weather while simultaneously developing cohesive expedition teams and lifelong friendships.

Our first field season provided both constructive experiences and programmatic challenges, which ultimately encouraged growth of our organizational capacity. In addition the field season allowed us to identify areas of improvement for the school in: student recruitment, expedition student retention and programmatic guidelines and accepted field practices. MWS faced challenges with enrollment and connecting with interested students and parents in addition to last minute withdrawals from courses. We also faced medical and motivational student evacuations, which provided us an opportunity to test and analyze our evacuation and communication systems while witnessing their success. These instructive experiences couched in resoundingly positive feedback from participants and parents highlighted a tremendously successful first operating season.

16
MWS STUDENTS

259
FIELD DAYS

243
MILES HIKED

7
GRIZZLY BEAR
SIGHTINGS

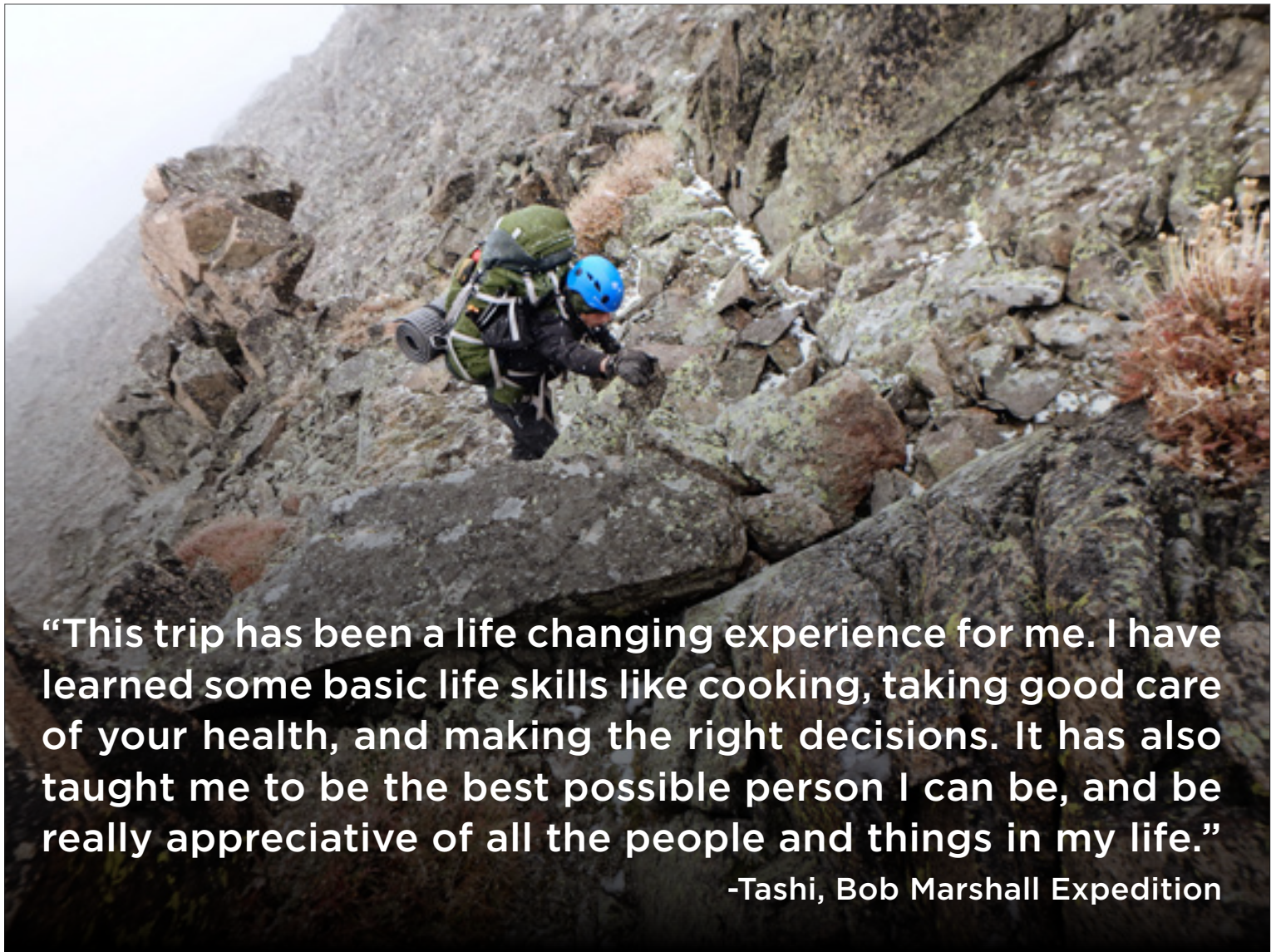
6
10K+ FT PEAKS CLIMBED

15
STUDENTS TAUGHT
THE **LNT** AWARENESS
CURRICULUM

8
STUDENTS CERTIFIED IN
WILDERNESS FIRST AID

11
PAIRS OF OBOZ BOOTS
GIVEN AWAY

COUNTLESS
FISH CAUGHT



“This trip has been a life changing experience for me. I have learned some basic life skills like cooking, taking good care of your health, and making the right decisions. It has also taught me to be the best possible person I can be, and be really appreciative of all the people and things in my life.”

-Tashi, Bob Marshall Expedition

FINANCIALS

INCOME

- Individuals - \$149,564
- Business/Corporate - \$5,500
- Grants - \$22,743
- Student Tuition - \$5,250
- Scholarship Fund Income - \$86,999

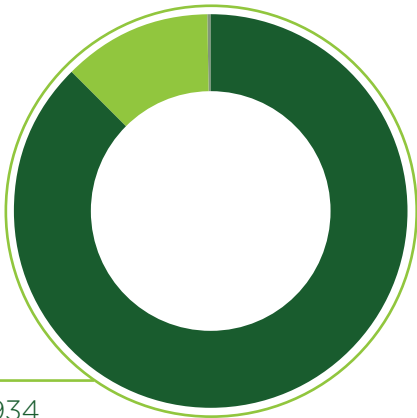
Total: \$270,056



EXPENSES

- Programs - \$189,934
- Administration - \$25,524
- Fundraising - \$382

Total: \$215,840



2015 DONORS

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IN-KIND SUPPORT

Design Egg – Award recipient
Oboz Footwear
Gerty
Bronwen Jewelry
Sitka Gear
REI Bozeman
Arc'teryx

Schnee's Boots and Shoes
Tuli Fisher Blacksmithing
Omni Bar
Yogesh Simpson Design
Montucky Beer
Rabia Bellante Massage
Duckworth

FOUNDATION GRANT AWARDS

Mountain Sky Guest Ranch/Arthur Blank Foundation
Yellowstone Club Foundation
Bozeman Area Community Foundation/Women and Wine Group

FOUNDERS' PROGRAM

The MWS Founders' Program is an exclusive group of Legacy Partners that have come together to support the establishment and formation of MWS during our inaugural years. This generous family of founding members have made significant financial contributions in 2015 and helped make a substantial impact on the lives of Montana youth during our organization's grassroots inception. **Thank You!**

Sitka Gear

Schnee's Boots and Shoes

Outdoor Safety Institute

Linda Mornell

Robert and Judy Duke

Bina Peters and Josh Olsen

Nicole Friend and Gar Duke

Justin Stalpes and Lindsey Beck

David and Deborah Peters

Bob and Michelle Friend

William and Geraldine Olsen

Jason Friend

Benjamin Friend

Janie and Donald Friend

INDUSTRY AND ORGANIZATION PARTNERS:





**MONTANA
WILDERNESS
SCHOOL**

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



BEGIN THE ADVENTURE AT
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