

Transforming the Campus

Outdoor Action has become a fixture on the Princeton campus. In the last twenty years more than 20,000 students and 5,000 OA leaders have benefited from the program. Inside you'll be able to read about some of the ways that OA transforms students and the University, from the impact of the Frosh Trip to student first aiders responding to campus accidents.

OA has been the leader in university outdoor education programs for over twenty years. The Frosh Trip has served as a model for countless other programs and the Leader Training program has been replicated across the country. The OA Web site is considered a gold mine. People often come up to me at conferences and say, "Thanks for sharing your information, I steal stuff from the OA Web site all the time!" Try a GOOGLE search with "Outdoor Action" and "Princeton" and see what you get.

OA Leaders impact the campus every day through their work as role models and leaders for other students. Last spring three leaders, **Sarah Apgar '02**, **Jamie Bartholemew '02**, and **Becca Jones '02** were all recognized with Spirit of Princeton Awards for their overall contributions to campus life. Inside you'll find more stories of OA Leaders in service to the community.

As the program has grown in size, so have the costs of operating OA. Training Leaders, running trips, risk management, keeping equipment up to date, etc., all take more resources and more staffing support than it did five or ten years ago. So over the last three years there have been increasing demands on the OA budget. One of the fundamental values of OA has been that the program should always be available to all students at Princeton, not just those who could afford it. We kept the fees for trips and activities during the year as low as possible so that price would not be a factor in a student's decision to participate. Costs eventually outstripped income resulting in a deficit. In order to make sure that we operate at a break even



Group MA58 takes a breather in the Berkshires.

level we restructured the budget and significantly increased the cost of the Frosh Trip to generate additional funds.

Even with increased fees for the Frosh Trip we were not able to generate enough annual funds to support the full range of OA activities during the academic year. We did an extensive analysis of costs and fees to see what we would have to charge to cover the full costs of trips and programs during the year. A basic four-day backpacking trip that used to be \$95 would cost over \$200. We determined that charging this fee would result in far fewer students participating and would skew the participants to a particular socio-economic group. After much review and discussion with the University, we determined that for the time being we must discontinue offering trips and activities

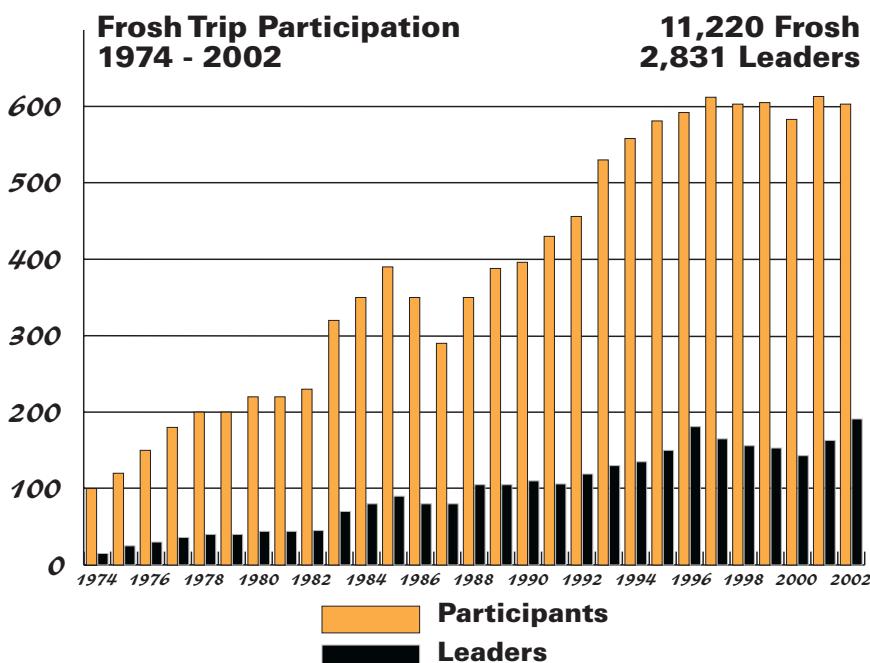
during the academic year and just focus on the most important parts of the program, Frosh Trip and Leader Training. With the resources we have available it is best to focus our efforts on improving leader training, risk management and the Frosh Trip to make sure that we are offering the safest possible program, the most highly trained leaders, and the most effective orientation experience for incoming students. It is my hope that over time we will be able to develop the resources to add day trips, break trips, and other activities back into our programming schedule.

Your annual support for OA is critical to helping us achieve our goal, to have Outdoor Action be the very best at what we do, providing leadership development opportunities in the wilderness that enhance the lives of students at Princeton University and transform the campus. I hope that you can support OA this year in our quest for excellence by being a member of the Friends of OA.



Rick Curtis '79

Director, Outdoor Action



Frosh Trip 2002 in Words & Pictures

More photos online at www.princeton.edu/~oa/images/ft/2002/ft2002.html



Group C83 salutes from the Catskills in New York

This story about Frosh Trip by OA Leader Ryan Salvatore '02 illustrates so clearly the ways in which OA transforms the campus. It appeared in the Daily Princetonian in September 2001.

"After all of the cardboard boxes are thrown away and the Public Safety officers end their week-long hiatus from ticketing cars parked on campus, much of Freshman Week and the activities associated with it will be long forgotten. Though the past few days will be a blur to many, the nearly 600 freshmen and more than 100 upperclassmen who participated in the Outdoor Action Frosh Trip will likely remember their woodsy prelude to this class-free period forever. Over the past three years I have come to realize that the OA program has been one of the most significant parts of my and others' Princeton experiences.

I am not outdoorsy, or in the parlance of Princeton, I am not 'hard-core OA.' Some may even call me compulsive about dirt and cleanliness. I arrived on campus three years ago never having been camping, nervous about what would be in store for the next four years and knowing just two people in my class. Apprehensively, I left the modern conveniences of Princeton for five nights on the Susquehannock Trail in 'The Middle of Nowhere,' Pennsylvania, and I returned dirty and disgusting—and more comfortable and prepared than I ever thought I'd be to begin life as a college student.

So what makes OA such a special experience? Why can't we just rent hotel rooms in New York City and sightsee for five days? One of the more important parts of the trip is that camping in the woods forces everyone to work together: You carry as

This year's Frosh Trip, number 29, was a huge success. Six hundred and three men and women from the Class of 2006 participated in 71 six-day trips. This year 191 student leaders from the classes of 2003, 2004, and 2005, the largest number ever, returned to lead. This incredible number of leaders was a direct result of the popularity of the OA Leader Training Program which trained over 100 new leaders last year.

We added number of improvements to this year's trip thanks to the hard work of this summer's Frosh Trip Coordinators—Anne Kern '04, Jon Nuger '04, Courtney Scala '04 and Mark Zee '03. After the Frosh Trip we sponsored our first **Frosh Trip Slide Show** as part of Freshman Parents Weekend. Over 300 leaders, frosh and their parents came to see what Frosh Trip 2002 was all about. If you want a remember what it's like to be out on the trail, you can see more photos online.



Group G12 - "parked illegally" on the Appalachian Trail



Backpacking trip group S36 on the Susquehannock Trail in Pennsylvania

much as you can, even if it means that you are carrying food that someone else will be eating; you divvy up campsite tasks and must have faith that the tarp your classmate set up will keep you dry at night, and most importantly, you help form a camaraderie on the trail that is rooted in contributions from every single person in the group. All group members learn to get over petty differences or disagreements—that annoying kid on the trip who doesn't shut up, that guy who isn't carrying as much as the others—because everyone knows that their 'survival' requires them to work as a team.

Although the trip into the woods only lasts five nights, its impact lasts four years, and perhaps even longer. The bonding around the campsite, the songs sung on the trail and the jumping and shaking of booties on Poe Field

To read more news accounts online check out
www.princeton.edu/~oa/articles/

all create a welcoming atmosphere in which all participants can drop their guards, be themselves and really get to know ten or twelve other Princeton students. The embarrassing games and small group setting serve as the perfect remedy for the nervousness with which every freshman arrives on campus.

For freshmen who know no one upon arrival, much like my situation, it's a relief to return from the trip with solid relationships with nine of their classmates and a few upperclassmen. Frosh trips encourage people to cross the boundaries of their residential colleges and to seek out friends elsewhere on campus. It also encourages inter-class interactions, providing freshmen with a source for mentoring and advice and giving upperclassmen the chance to meet some of the younger members of the University that they might not have otherwise met as easily.



C84 reaches the summit of Slide Mountain in the Catskills

As a Frosh Trip leader, I love to see the participants on my trips, but I also enjoy it when some random person comes up to me and asks if I was the 'water-Nazi' on his OA bus. OA facilitates interaction between members of the freshman class before they become assimilated into the Princeton community and take on different activities and, unfortunately, different stereotypes."

Leave No Trace & Leave a Trace Programs for FT 2002

Leave No Trace has always been a fundamental value of OA. Sending almost eight hundred people into the woods could be a significant impact so we want to make sure that leaders always have the latest information about LNT practices.



Hiking in the Gap - group G10 on the Appalachian Trail in NJ

A Class of 2006 Student on FT 2002

I was extremely scared about beginning college and the OA trip really helped to allay most of my fears. I got to become really close with a group of 10 people, all of whom I've remained friendly with on campus. In the wilderness atmosphere you get the chance to learn so much about these people who all seemed so strange and different. I learned that all ten of us had the same fears and insecurities about starting college; making new friends, handling schoolwork, becoming small fish in an incredibly large pond. The OA trip really taught me that first impressions mean absolutely nothing, that I should place more faith in my physical abilities (I never thought I could survive a backpacking trip), and interpersonal abilities (I usually consider myself shy and reserved, but my group members didn't see me that way at all), and that no matter how alone I may feel sometimes, everyone is really feeling just as scared and unsure of themselves as I am.

One of the most valuable aspects of the trip for me was the nightly debriefings. These really gave our group a chance to reflect on the challenges and triumphs of the day and observe how our relationships with each other and with ourselves were changing. Our final night debriefing on the trail, during which we all went around saying things we liked/admired about each other, was especially valuable. So much of your self-view depends on how you think others view you, and hearing positive feedback from the people you've opened up and exposed your vulnerabilities to was just so incredible.

The most incredible part of my trip though, had to have been my fearless leaders, Andrew and Erin. I have so much respect for them and for the way they handled themselves throughout the trip. I really feel like we all became good friends with them, we joked around on the trail and genuinely had a good time. But both knew when and how to appropriately assume the role of leaders. They carried far more than their share of weight on the trail, responded to our complaints, motivated us, made sure we ate and drank enough, mediated small disputes that arose....What really amazed me about these two was how they fit perfectly into the dual roles of friend and leader, and could transition effortlessly between the two without compromising either. Erin and Andrew were also invaluable resources for everything we wanted to know about Princeton. They tirelessly fielded all our questions answering honestly and helpfully.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate what an absolutely incredible experience OA was for me. I am so glad I decided to participate in the program. The trip exceeded my highest expectations in every way. Thank you for facilitating such a wonderful program here at Princeton.



VA73 in Shenandoah National Park - foggy day on the ridge.

Thanks to the services of Leave No Trace, Inc. we were able to bring in two traveling Leave No Trace Trainers to do special workshops for leaders. The Traveling Leave No Trace Trainers are sponsored by Subaru and travel around the country (in a Subaru wagon of course) teaching LNT techniques to different audiences. We were one of the largest groups that they have worked with (191 leaders).

The other new piece of training for this year's trip is the Leave a Trace training program. This is a continuation of the community building training that we've done for the past three years. The idea behind "Leave a Trace" is that OA leaders are important role models for incoming frosh. Part of the responsibility of a leader is to leave a trace for frosh, a "positive set of footprints" for getting through Princeton. We did a special day-long training program, facilitated by leader trainers that focused on the diversity of the incoming class, encouraging tolerance and respect within the group, and explored issues that will face many incoming frosh like alcohol use and eating disorders.

OA Leaders Respond to Campus Emergencies

The training that OA Leaders go through is intensive—twenty hours of wilderness first aid and CPR, safety management training, group dynamics and leadership workshops, and the six-day Leader Training Trip. The skills that leaders learn are applicable far beyond the trailhead. OA teaches students fundamental skills of leadership that they bring to all of their other activities on campus from Resident Advisor positions to student organization leaders and SVC volunteers.

A good example of OA leadership in action took place on campus in October when two students were hit by a car while crossing Washington Road. The first to respond to the accident scene was OA leader **Amanda Neely '03**. Amanda did basic patient assessment and first aid while instructed by bystanders to call 911. She was joined by leaders **Tim Dowd '03** and **Hilary Kalmbach '04** who helped stabilize the two injured students until the first aid squad arrived. Details on the incident were highlighted by the Daily Prince.

www.dailyprincetonian.com/archives/2002/10/21/news/5796.shtml

Leaders in Service

OA is all about serving the community. Leaders volunteer their time to teach and inspire other new students coming to campus. The lessons learned through service stay with leaders throughout their Princeton years and beyond. During the year Leaders are involved in dozens of Student Volunteers Council projects from after school tutoring to serving on the Princeton First Aid Squad. After Princeton, OA Leaders have joined Project 55 Fellowships, Princeton-in-Africa, Princeton-in-Asia, Teach for America, Americorps and other service endeavors. Here are a few highlights of OA Leaders in service around the world. Send us your highlights for the next Tiger Trails.

Nina Henning '96 is starting a second year at Wild Earth a non-profit in Nepal as a Princeton-in-Asia intern. **Brandon Hall '02** is also working with Princeton-in-Asia teaching English at Vientiane College in Laos.

OA's Thirtieth Anniversary is on the Horizon!

Outdoor Action's thirtieth anniversary is just a little over a year away. As anniversaries go it's always a little complicated to figure out just when to celebrate. The first Frosh Trip was September of 1974 for the illustrious Class of 1978 who celebrate their 25th Reunion this coming June. This coming fall 2003 will mark the 30th actual Frosh Trip. We decided that our celebration of 30 years of outstanding experiences in wilderness leadership will be held in calendar year 2004.

OA officially welcomed in our OA "second generation" this fall. **Harrison Frist '06** who participated in FT 2002, is the son of **Bill Frist '74** who was one of the first OA Leaders. Harrison is the first son or daughter of an OA Leader to participate in the program.

In Memoriam - Josh Miner '43

Josh Miner '43 passed away peacefully on January 29th at his home in Andover, MA with his family by his side. Outdoor and experiential education in the United States, and of course Outdoor Action, owe a huge debt to Josh. He was the pivotal figure in bringing the Outward Bound concept to the U.S. and started the first Outward Bound school in Colorado in 1961 which gave rise to an entire outdoor education industry. The idea for Outdoor Action and a freshman year wilderness orientation experience grew out of the Outward Bound model which Josh nurtured for over forty years. Josh was an ardent supporter of OA.

In 1995, to recognize Josh's lifetime achievements, the Friends of OA Board initiated the Josh Miner '43 Experiential Education Award given each year to an alumna/us that has made special contributions to the field of outdoor or experiential education. Josh was the first recipient. The award is presented each year at Reunions.

Last year, after another major gift from Josh, we started a special fund in his name to support the OA Leader Training Program. The Josh Miner '43 Leadership Fund is an important source of financial aid support to help students participate in OA leader training. More information on Josh is available at www.princeton.edu/~oa/alumni/campaign/minerfund.shtml.

Notes from the Trailhead

Send us your latest stories and tidbits for Tiger Trails on the enclosed membership form.

Sue Suh '96 is living in Washington, DC working with the State Department's Bureau of Arms Control where she did support work for the Arms Reduction agreement signed by President Bush and President Putin in May.

Lori Pellegrino '96 is enjoying her second year as a psychiatry resident in the Harvard Longwood program.

Another summer of OA weddings - **William "Liam" Pott '99** and **Emily Atwood '00** were married in the University Chapel in June. After honeymooning in Spain, Emily and Liam moved to New Haven where they are both enrolled at Yale.

Claire Devine '95 and **Alex Horner '95** were married on the eastern shore of Maryland on September 28. After honeymooning in New Zealand they both return to Stanford where Claire is completing her doctorate in Ecology and Alex is finishing his degree in Geology.