



THE TREK LEADERS

JOHNSON COUNTY CONSERVATION STAFF

JCC Naturalists Kristen Morrow and Frances Owen will lead the trip. These leaders have 15+ years of experience leading backpacking trips and are Wilderness First Responder certified. They have spent hundreds of nights leading youth and adults on multi-day/multi-week backpacking treks.



SBFC FOUNDATION STAFF

The Selway-Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation is a community of wilderness-minded and hardworking individuals dedicated to bringing citizens to wilderness to work, live, and play. A staff member from the Foundation will join the group in the wilderness and will be Wilderness First Responder certified, trained in radio communication, and have extensive wilderness experience in the area. They will lead the stewardship project and teach participants use of saws, axes, and more.



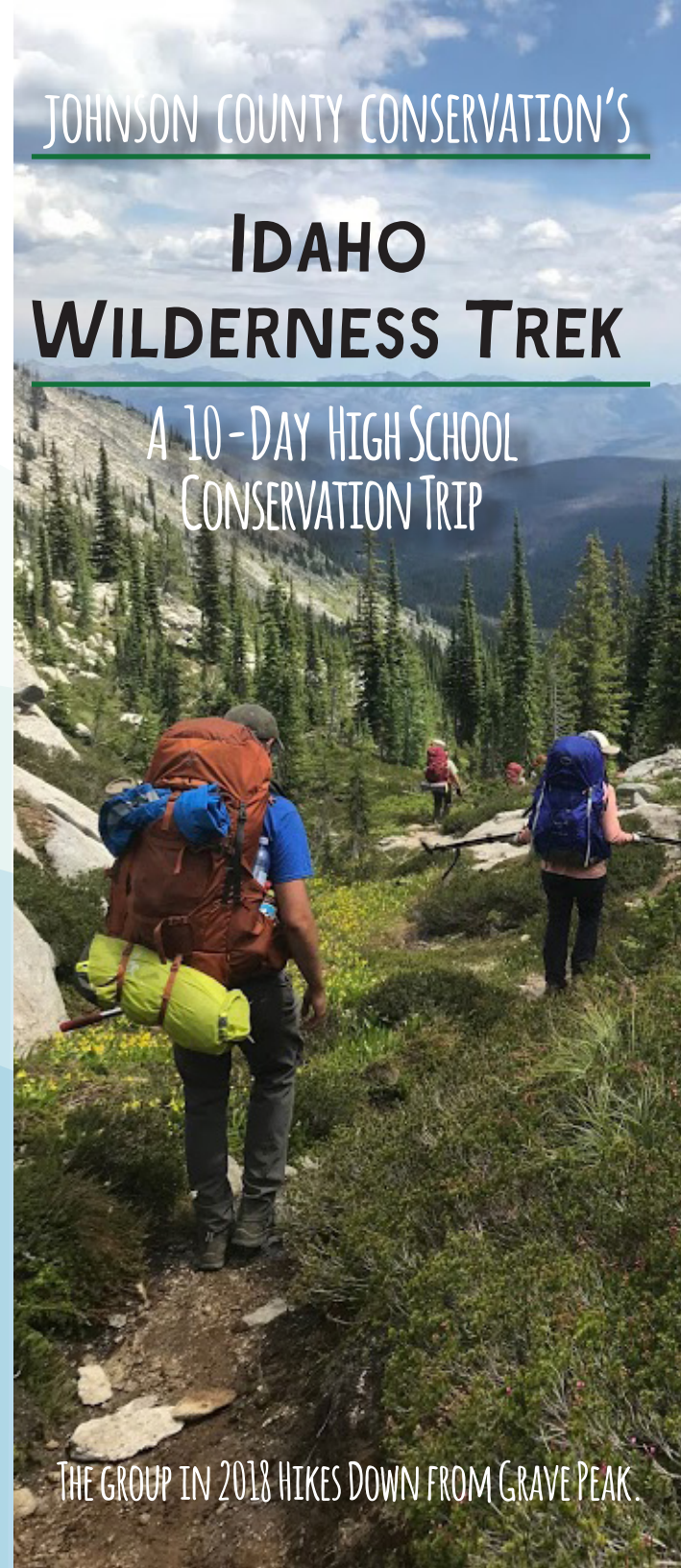
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JOHNSON COUNTY CONSERVATION'S

IDAHO WILDERNESS TREK

A 10-DAY HIGH SCHOOL
CONSERVATION TRIP



THE GROUP IN 2018 HIKES DOWN FROM GRAVE PEAK.

TREK OVERVIEW

The Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness Trek is a 10-day conservation trek for high school students to one of the largest wilderness areas in the U.S. Through a partnership with the U.S. Forest Service and the Selway-Bitterroot Frank Church (SBFC) Foundation, Johnson County Conservation (JCC) is able to offer a trip that combines wilderness backpacking with a trail stewardship experience.

WHO CAN APPLY: Iowa high school students who have completed freshman-senior years. No conservation, camping, or backpacking experience needed. Preference for Johnson County residents/students.

WHEN IS THE TRIP: July 13-22, 2026

WHERE: The Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness area is located in northeast Idaho.

IS IT SAFE: Trip guides are highly experienced and trained in advanced wilderness first aid. Satellite devices will be used for daily communication with Forest Service officials.

WHAT IS THE COST: \$550, which includes all supplies (such as sleeping bags, tents, backpacks), transportation, and trek food. Scholarship applications are available.

HOW TO APPLY: Students must complete application process by April 1. Demonstrated passion and effort spent on application highly is valued. Scan the QR code or email kmorrow@johnsoncountyiowa.gov for the application.



Four Pillars of the Trek

STEWARDSHIP: Participants will work on a trail work project designated by the U.S. Forest Service and SBFC Foundation. This work centers on clearing trails of blown-down trees to make them accessible.

ADVENTURE: We aim to balance stewardship with adventure and try to fit in many joyful activities like swimming in alpine lakes, playing in the snow, star gazing, foraging wild edibles when we can, and climbing a mountain.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE/HISTORY: Students will start their learning through required podcasts and readings to gain more awareness for concepts of the Wilderness Act, ethics of public lands, fire ecology, and more. We'll explore these concepts more through discussions and trailside learning on the trek.

OUTDOOR SKILLS: Participants will gain skills with backpacking basics like tent set-up, backcountry cooking, bear hangs, water filtration, and map-reading/compass basics.

TREK TIMELINE

FRIDAY, MARCH 27: Application and letter of support due.

FRIDAY, APRIL 3: Selection of applicants.

FRIDAY, MAY 1, 6 PM: Meet and Greet, optional but highly encouraged. Participants will have a chance to do intros and exchange contact info in order to go on training hikes together. Location and activities TBD.

JUNE 12, 9:00-4:00: Mandatory orientation session including team-building activities, gear fitting, and backpacking skills training.

JUNE 15, 22, 29, JULY 6, 8:00-12:30 Training Hikes and Skills Sessions: 4-mile pre-hikes to physically train and test backpacks and boots. Skills Sessions will include fun or useful outdoor skills such as knot tying, water sports, and navigation. Hikes will likely take place at Lake MacBride, Cangleska Wakan, Kent Park, and Pallasades State Park. These hikes/skills sessions are optional but recommended.

JULY 10, 9:00-12:00: Mandatory Gear Shakedown: Trek leaders will go through packs as a group, distribute JCC gear such as tents, sleeping bags, sleeping pads, etc., and teach students how to properly pack up and distribute their gear. Loaded packs will be left with trek leaders at the end for loading onto trailer. All personal items should be prepared and packed to bring to this session.

JULY 13 - 22: 5 AM departure for the trek!