Strengthening connections to the natural world through outdoor education

COVID-19 Protocol
Updated 7/16/2020
All,

If you are like me, you are getting tired of being cooped up at home and are excited to make the most of the summer. Maybe you’ve been on hours of back to back Zoom calls with the mountains as your background, wishing you were actually there. Maybe your summer travel plans have been cancelled and you’re looking for safe alternatives that don’t put you or your family at unnecessary risk.

This is not the way we envisioned our summers going, and it shouldn’t be this way.

While it feels like a lot of the world has been on pause for the last few months, the Glacier Institute has been using this time to improve our operations and gear up for a fantastic summer. In doing some spring cleaning I came across several boxes of thank you letters from the years. “Once in a lifetime” and “unforgettable” are common themes throughout these letters.

“We can’t save what you don’t love, you can’t love what you don’t know.”
- Jacques Cousteau, French Explorer

We want you to join us for a camp or course that will teach you something new and strengthen your connection to the natural world.

Visit our website, glacierinstitute.org, to sign up today! You’ll never look at Glacier National Park the same way.

Like many businesses, we are weighing the risk of reopening with the need to continue the pursuit of our mission. We are excited to see you all, but also want to clearly communicate the differences you will experience in response to COVID-19. The protocol and procedures outlined in this document are based on several hours of research, deliberation, advisement from health officials, and planning.

Everyone has a different comfort level right now, and we are providing this document for you to make an educated decision on whether our programs fit into your comfort level. Please read through, then sign up for a course! We are excited to see you this summer!

Sincerely,

Anthony Nelson
Glacier Institute, Executive Director
Overview

The next pages give more of a detailed plan for each Glacier Institute activity. This page highlights overarching principles of hygiene and cleanliness we will be implementing and encouraging.

- **Stay Home if Sick**: Stay home if you are feeling any coronavirus symptoms.
- **Masks Required**: Per the Governor of Montana’s directive, all are required to wear masks indoors and in vehicles. Masks will not be required during strenuous hikes, but will be recommended for listeners during stops.
- **Wash Hands**: All participants will be encouraged to wash hands often with soap and hot water. Sanitizer will be available when sinks are not.
- **Cover Sneezes**: All participants and employees are encouraged to cover sneezes and coughs.
- **6ft When Possible**: We will encourage all participants to space 6 ft apart whenever possible and safe to do so.
- **Extra Cleaning**: Glacier Institute staff will be introducing regular and strict cleaning protocols for this season.
Screening Questions

Each participant will be asked these screening questions and have their temperature read:

1) Have you had a fever of over 100.4 °F or experienced shortness of breath or coughing in the last 24 hours? (yes/no)

2) Have you come in contact with any individual know to have tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 14 days? (yes/no)

*If you answered “yes” to either of these questions you will not be permitted to attend a Glacier Institute course.*

Each participant will also be asked to sign that they have read our protocols and agree to follow our guidelines and accept upon themselves the amount of risk detailed in the protocol.
Staff
Staff will be responsible for assessing their own well being, a thermometer will be provided to take temperatures daily. They will self-isolate if they have been exposed to someone known to have COVID-19, or are exhibiting any of the symptoms.

Students
Each parent will go through the screening questions for their students upon arrival, and the student will have their temperature taken. We request that everyone bring their own preferred face covering. We will provide hand sanitizer, but it is always good to bring your own small bottle. Parents need to be able to pick their kids up within 4 hours of receiving a phone call from the Glacier Institute, this would be used if they, or any other person on site, is showing symptoms of COVID-19. Masks will be required in all indoor situations except while eating or sleeping.

Cleaning
Cleaning of commonly touched surfaces will be occurring twice daily. This includes door handles, bathroom fixtures, light switches, tables, chairs, equipment, etc.. Each bunk house will be cleaned twice daily.

Bunks
The majority of our camps will be run at half capacity to maximize spacing of bunks, please call the office with questions. Based on reservations before the pandemic. Beds will be arranged to increase spacing as much as possible. Each bunk house will be cleaned twice daily.

Food Service
Our Big Creek kitchen will be closed to the public. Meals will be plated by Glacier Institute staff and served to our students with disposable serving-ware; meals will be eaten outside when weather permits. Kids are allowed to bring their own snacks, Glacier Institute staff will keep them safe and retrieve them upon request. Water will be made available in a spigot that reduces contamination risk.

Vehicles
Vehicles will be disinfected each day they are used, and surely between groups. Masks will be required for all participants inside Glacier Institute vehicles, students should bring their own mask to camp. We will do our best to space participants in vehicles, limiting factors include number of vehicles and number of drivers.

Distancing
Kids will be kids. We can encourage them to distance, but they will inevitably forget. Please understand that in sending your kids to camp you are accepting some amount of risk.

Hiking
Wildlife safety is to trump COVID-19 safety in hiking situations.
**Adult Courses**

**Field Camp (in GNP)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff</strong></td>
<td>Staff will be responsible for assessing their own well being, a thermometer will be provided to take temperatures daily. They will self-isolate if they have been exposed to someone known to have COVID-19, or are exhibiting any of the symptoms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guests</strong></td>
<td>Guests will be required to answer our screening questions and have their temperature taken upon arrival, any guest who does not pass the screening will be asked to leave. We request that everyone bring their own preferred face covering. We will provide hand sanitizer, but it is always good to bring your own small bottle. <strong>Guests will not be able to quarantine at Field Camp if they, or other participants, begin showing symptoms of COVID-19.</strong> This should be considered when planning for your adventure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cleaning</strong></td>
<td>Cleaning of commonly touched surfaces will be occurring daily. This includes door handles, bathroom fixtures, light switches, tables, chairs, etc.. Our kitchen will be cleaned twice daily.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cabins</strong></td>
<td>As much as possible, living arrangements will be made to reduce intermingling of family cohorts. Beds will be arranged to increase spacing and guests will be provided with a spray bottle to sanitize their own cabins. Glacier Institute staff will disinfect each cabin in between groups, but will not clean the cabins while groups are in house. <strong>Masks should be worn in all indoor situations apart from sleeping and eating.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food Service</strong></td>
<td>Our Field Camp kitchen will be closed to the public. Meals will be plated by Glacier Institute staff and served to our guests with disposable serving-ware; all meals will be eaten outside. Space will be available outside of the kitchen for participants to store their food in a bear-proof container. Water will be made available in a spigot that reduces contamination risk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vehicles</strong></td>
<td>Vehicles will be disinfected each day they are used, and surely between groups. <strong>Masks will be required for all participants inside Glacier Institute vehicles, please bring your own mask.</strong> We will do our best to space cohorts in vehicles, limiting factors include number of vehicles and number of drivers. If participants choose to drive their own vehicle and parking is unavailable, the rest of the group will only wait for 15 minutes before continuing on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Distancing</strong></td>
<td>Activities that involve close contact will be limited as much as possible while retaining the purpose of the activity. Participants will be encouraged to stay 6 feet apart when closer proximity is not essential to the task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Classroom</strong></td>
<td>In classroom settings participants will be required to wear masks. The speaker will not wear a mask, but will be behind a plexiglass shield.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hiking</strong></td>
<td>Participants will be encouraged to leave extra space between hikers in open areas. In densely vegetated areas which are more prone to wildlife encounters, the leader will advise the participants to shrink distances temporarily. Wildlife safety is to trump COVID-19 safety in hiking situations. <strong>Masks should be pulled up for educational stops.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Staff will be responsible for assessing their own well being, a thermometer will be provided to take temperatures daily. They will self-isolate if they have been exposed to someone known to have COVID-19, or are exhibiting any of the symptoms.

Guests will be required to answer our screening questions and have their temperature taken upon arrival, any guest who does not pass the screening will be asked to leave. We request that everyone bring their own preferred face covering. We will provide hand sanitizer, but it is always good to bring your own small bottle. **Masks will be required in buildings, vehicles, and during stops.**

Cleaning of commonly touched surfaces will be occurring daily. This includes door handles, bathroom fixtures, light switches, tables, chairs, etc..

Vehicles will be disinfected each day they are used, and surely between groups. **Masks will be required for all participants inside Glacier Institute vehicles, please bring your own mask.** We will do our best to space cohorts in vehicles, limiting factors include number of vehicles and number of drivers. Participants may choose to drive their own vehicle and meet at the trail head, however this can cause delays with finding additional parking spots.

Activities that involve close contact will be limited as much as possible while retaining the purpose of the activity. Participants will be encouraged to stay 6 feet apart when closer proximity is not essential to the task.

Participants will be encouraged to leave extra space between hikers in open areas. In densely vegetated areas which are more prone to wildlife encounters, the leader will advise the participants to shrink distances temporarily. Wildlife safety is to trump COVID-19 safety in hiking situations.
**Staff**

Staff will be responsible for assessing their own well being, a thermometer will be provided to take temperatures daily. They will self-isolate if they have been exposed to someone known to have COVID-19, or are exhibiting any of the symptoms.

**Students**

Each parent will go through the screening questions for their students upon arrival, and the student will have their temperature taken. We will provide hand sanitizer, but it is always good to bring your own small bottle. **Students will be asked to wear masks during educational stops.**

**Cleaning**

Staff will bring some disinfectant for commonly used utensils, and hand sanitizer will be available.

**Sleeping**

The sharing of tents will occur. Students will be positioned “head to toe” whenever possible.

**Food Service**

Meals will be plated by Glacier Institute staff and served to the students. Students will keep their own serving-ware and wash it between meals.

**Vehicles**

Form programs with Glacier Institute vehicle use. Vehicles will be disinfected each day they are used, and surely between groups. **Masks will be required for all participants inside Glacier Institute vehicles, students should bring their own mask to camp.** We will do our best to space out in vehicles, limiting factors include number of vehicles and number of drivers.

**Distancing**

Kids will be kids. We can encourage them to distance, but they will inevitably forget. Please understand that in sending your kids to camp you are accepting some amount of risk.

**Hiking**

Wildlife safety is to trump COVID-19 safety in hiking situations.
Staff

Staff will be responsible for assessing their own well being, a thermometer will be provided to take temperatures daily. They will self-isolate if they have been exposed to someone known to have COVID-19, or are exhibiting any of the symptoms.

Students

Guests will be required to answer our screening questions and have their temperature taken upon arrival, any guest who does not pass the screening will be asked to leave. We request that everyone bring their own preferred face covering. We will provide hand sanitizer, but it is always good to bring your own small bottle. Parents need to be able to pick up their kids within 2 hours of receiving a phone call from the Glacier Institute. This would be used if any participants begin showing symptoms. Students should have a mask and will be required to wear them during any indoor activities such as bathroom breaks or during inclement weather.

Cleaning

Cleaning of commonly touched surfaces will be occurring daily. This includes door handles, bathroom fixtures, light switches, tables, chairs, equipment, etc..

Distancing

Kids will be kids. We can encourage them to distance, but they will inevitably forget. Please understand that in sending your kids to camp you are accepting some amount of risk.

Hiking

Wildlife safety is to trump COVID-19 safety in hiking situations.
## Let’s Talk About Columbia Falls Campus

| **Staff** | Staff will be responsible for assessing their own well being, a thermometer will be provided to take temperatures daily. They will self-isolate if they have been exposed to someone known to have COVID-19, or are exhibiting any of the symptoms. |
| **Guests** | Guests should stay at home if they have been exposed to someone confirmed to have COVID-19, or are feeling symptoms themselves. We will provide hand sanitizer, but it is always good to bring your own small bottle. **Guests will be required to wear masks while on Glacier Institute property.** |
| **Cleaning** | Cleaning of commonly touched surfaces will be occurring before and after the event. This includes door handles, bathroom fixtures, light switches, etc.. |
| **Distancing** | Cohorts will be encouraged to distance themselves from other groups in our yard as much as possible. |
Staff will be responsible for assessing their own well being, a thermometer will be provided to take temperatures daily. They will self-isolate if they have been exposed to someone known to have COVID-19, or are exhibiting any of the symptoms. With only two staff on site during the summer season, they will pull masks up when any visitor enters the building.

Guests should stay at home if they have been exposed to someone confirmed to have COVID-19, or are feeling symptoms themselves. We will provide hand sanitizer, but it is always good to bring your own small bottle. Guests will be required to wear masks in the building.

Cleaning of commonly touched surfaces will be occurring daily. This includes door handles, bathroom fixtures, light switches, tables, chairs, etc.

Activities that involve close contact will be limited as much as possible while retaining the purpose of the activity. Participants will be encouraged to stay 6 feet apart when closer proximity is not essential to the task.
Frequently Asked Questions

1) What will happen if a participant gets COVID-19 while on a course?
   All participants of paid Glacier Institute programming will be screened before admittance to any program. Any person who fails the screening process will not be allowed to attend and will be given a refund. If a person starts showing symptoms during a multi-day course they will be asked to leave and will be refunded for the remainder of the course.

2) Will the Glacier Institute provide face coverings?
   All participants are encouraged to bring their favorite face covering, we have a small amount available if you forget to bring your own.

3) Are there any changes to cancellation or transfer policies?
   Participants who do not feel safe coming to their scheduled adventure can choose to postpone their reservation until next season, request a full refund, or choose to donate their deposit to further our mission. The same options will apply if the course is canceled by the Glacier Institute.

4) Could I transfer my reservation to a Personalized Education Tour if I don’t feel comfortable being around other people?
   Absolutely! If you are currently enrolled in a Glacier Institute program and would like to transfer to a Personalized Education Tour with a Teacher Naturalist, we will give you a $100 discount on the price (normally $500). This is pending availability, we expect these tours to be a popular option for this summer.

5) How can I support the Glacier Institute?
   We are more than thrilled when participants choose to donate their enrollment fees to further our mission rather than get a refund. You may also donate on our website! As a 501(c)3 non-profit, all donations are tax deductible.

6) What resources are you using to make decisions?
   The Glacier Institute staff has been in close communication with state and local health officials, the National Park Service, and USDA Forest Service to put together our COVID-19 Protocols, along with guidance from the CDC’s website.

For more information about COVID-19 please visit these websites:
  - www.cdc.gov
  - www.who.int
  - www.flatheadhealth.org

Please give us a call at (406)755-1211 if you have additional questions!