

## Echo Trip Conference Notes

- Journey/destination balance
- You never know when a moment is going to be important
- There are lots of things to balance on a trip
- Echo trips are rarely about reaching a specific destination
- Not super skill intensive
- Point is not just getting to the end
- Small little things can matter a lot
- Always ask, "What can I do?"
- The experience of the trip guides is important to both the staff and the trippers, as many see themselves as future guides
- Trips are a path to leadership @ Echo
- By building trust, guides can create a safer physical and emotional space
- People don't care how much you know, until they know you care
- More than anything, people will remember how you make them feel
- Some of the best memories are unplanned
- Unplanned times can bring out the best in trippers and guides; you need to be open to those unplanned experiences
- It's important to take memories/lessons with you
- "Golden nuggets" for life
- Kids always come back different
- It's ok to not be paddling for a while
- Trips can be a break from "paddling"
- Trips are a chance to find yourself

- Trips allow space to learn about yourself and to help you grow (trippers, guides and parents)
- The idea of someone finding a different way to go
- How do we recognize the choices that trips present?
- It's important for kids to feel cared for
- Pay attention, be present
- The art of the possible, "low-tech fun," can be a simple thing
- Provide a chance to vocalize fears before the trip
- Anticipate some of the things that might be stressful for trippers
- When guides share and are open, it helps kids open up
- Guide expectations should be the same as tripper expectations
- The whole group owns the trip experience
- Guide development is an unspoken element of Echo trips
- Spontaneity leads to great things
- Sense of accomplishment for both trippers and guides
- Fun crazy stories
- Gross at the time, funny now
- All the non-glamorous work is crucial to making the trips successful
- Importance of participant transformation through empowerment and making decisions
- Role models, from trippers to guides
- Great memories from difficult circumstances
- Guide tent time is important
- Guides can give kids a new way to think about things, a positive spin

- Important to involve the group in the decisions
- Find creative ways to work with challenging kids
- Say hello to kids by name everyday
- Guides should care for each other, set out sleeping bags, etc.
- Create a framework for failure, learning from mistakes is important
- Echo trips provide for basic needs and focus on the top of the hierarchy of needs (satisfaction, successful, transformative)
- Focus on leadership development, not survival skills
- Important to value your kids
- Be open to kids teaching you
- Recognize the responsibility of the guides
- Don't forget the adventure
- Provide adventure, but in a safe environment
- Kids like to learn skills
- Trips are a good change of environment for kids, a healthy change of routine
- People are what make Echo trips different
- Love your neighbor
- Use creative trip titles
- Don't grow up too fast, ok to be learning
- Caring for each other creates space for relationships to grow and develop
- You have a great job, just be present
- It's the job of trip guides to facilitate the "journey within the journey"
- Trips can be special and unique in the moment, but can also be enduring and lasting
- Finding fun while leading the group, even when making significant decisions
- Not the extreme challenges, but it is the challenge to dig deep

- It's in the woods
- Nurture the nature connection
- Less can be more; down the road you can find meaning
- Be there, be safe, be fun, let it happen
- Build community and trust
- Share yourself
- "We," not "I"
- Be a steward of Echo trip program, operate on a high standard
- Balance leadership, skills, and community
- Recognize your unique role
- Create a culture of accountability
- These are adventure trips
- Push comfort zone
- High standards with a sense of humility
- You're the best guide when you can be yourself
- Trips can be magically enduring
- Trip program is part of something larger
- Ask, "How can I best serve the program?"
- Focus on the relationships and friendships
- Training is important
- Selfless shine
- Transcendence/faith
- Finding glamour in the unglamorous
- Humility, a higher form of caring
- Feeling comfortable - confidence
- Authenticity
- Love others and love yourself
- Trips should be a safe adventure
- Trips should make people feel valued as individuals
- Recognize that you are responsible for children's welfare
- Small things matter

- Important to have honest communication with kids
- Everyone owns the trip
- Spontaneity can lead to growth
- The value of preparation, all the behind the scenes work
- If trust is built, kids will feel safe even if unexpected situations occur
- There is value in sharing stories/journals
- Listen/pay attention - give everyone a voice
- Make a personal connection with each tripper
- Don't grow up too fast
- You have the greatest job in the world
- You are more than a guide, you are a life counselor
- Trips are not extreme challenge or super psycho babble, it's a chance to dig deep for a while to help kids get a grasp of themselves
- Kids go out to the woods and find whatever it is when we get there
- For some kids trips are their first (and last) exposure to nature - nurture that connection, you belong
- Be there, be safe, be fun, let it happen
- Recognize your unique role
- Actions speak louder than words, take the job no one wants
- It's a matter of character, how do you want to be?
- Nurture a healthy environment
- Community (trust, we not I, stewards of Echo), balance leadership vs skills vs community), details (roles, responsibilities, accountability), adventure (comfort zone)

## Questions

- How can you capture or record the transformations kids go through on a trip?
- How do guides make decisions?
- How does the trip program make decisions?
- How do you lead groups to positive experiences?
- How to balance food fights and getting to the campsite?
- How can we be aware of balancing the drops of oil and seeing everything?
- How can we be aware of our choices?
- How should you work with challenging kids?
- Knowing the line, what's the process?
- How much responsibility do guides have for framing the experience?
- How do you enroll people into the Echo trip program philosophy?
- How should you welcome people to Echo trips?
- Trip guides as leaders of camp, how do you create this kind of culture?