Strengthening connections to the natural world through outdoor education
Dear Guests,

Looking back on 2020, there is a lot of negative talk in the world. My view of 2020 is very different from most. Perhaps you could consider it a "glass half full" kind of perspective, but I won't apologize for it.

We faced pressures and oppositions that caused us to question if we should put the Glacier Institute into “hibernation” until better days. I'm so glad that we didn't. I'm so glad that we pushed through. We were faced with insurmountable challenges, but we came together to solve them.

We had 233 youth cycle through Big Creek Outdoor Education Center, and 290 adults attend courses at our Field Camp location inside Glacier National Park. Throughout the entire season, we had no cases of COVID-19 confirmed in any staff or attendees. We wrote strict cleaning and procedural protocols and committed ourselves to following them.

Because of our decision to push through, I had parents calling me in tears, thanking me for continuing to run our courses. We had school districts refusing to pull the plug on their trips, realizing the experience the kids have at Big Creek is too valuable to abandon. While the overall number of attendees was significantly down from previous years, every one of those people were introduced to the natural world in a new way. Every one of those people created memories that will last them a lifetime, and came away with a new respect for the world they live in.

I look forward in hopeful anticipation for the coming season. We’re well practiced in our procedures, and have come up with even more improvements.

Please accept my invitation to join us for a class or course this season. We’re certainly excited to have you join us, and believe these protocols will allow for that safely.

See you soon,

Anthony Nelson
Glacier Institute, Executive Director

“You can’t save what you don’t love, you can’t love what you don’t know.”
- Jacques Cousteau, French Explorer
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**
Masks will be REQUIRED for guests in Glacier Institute vehicles and buildings. Outdoors, masks should be pulled up anytime distancing can not be achieved.

**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 known 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.

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
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.
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 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. **Guests will not be able to quarantine at Field Camp if they, or other participants, begin showing symptoms of COVID-19.** This should be considered when planning for your adventure.

Cleaning
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.

Cabins
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.

Food Service
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. We have space available in the kitchen to store snacks that guests bring for themselves. We can retrieve these snacks on request. No food is allowed in the cabins for rodent and bear safety. 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, 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. 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.

Distancing
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.

Classroom
In classroom settings participants will be required to wear masks. The speaker will not wear a mask, but will be behind a plexiglass shield.

Hiking
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.

Guests
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.

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

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, 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.

Distancing
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.

Hiking
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.
### Youth Courses

#### Backcountry Overnight

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Students</strong></td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cleaning</strong></td>
<td>Staff will bring some disinfectant for commonly used utensils, and hand sanitizer will be available.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sleeping</strong></td>
<td>The sharing of tents will occur. Students will be positioned “head to toe” whenever possible.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Food Service</strong></td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vehicles</strong></td>
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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.

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.

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.
Main Office
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.

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

Distancing
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. We also have custom Glacier Institute neck gaiters for sale at each site.

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.

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?

   Please visit our website at glacierinstitute.org! You might chose to sign up for an annual membership, make a donation, follow us on social media, or write us a good review. We are a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, every little bit helps us acheive our mission. Thank you!

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!