

## Frequently Asked Questions

### *The Basics*

**Q What should we wear?**

A For most activities at Hemlock Overlook, participants should wear loose-fitting, casual clothing that they don't mind getting dirty. It is a good idea to bring at least one more layer of clothing than you expect to need. We recommend pants or shorts, a casual shirt, and sneakers. Please do not wear open-toed shoes, large earrings, or long necklaces.

**Q Why do we need to wear close-toed shoes?**

A Safety is very important in everything we do. Closed-toe shoes prevent a host of foot injuries and provide participants with the foot stability they will need for most activities.

**Q What else should I bring with me?**

A We recommend you bring a rain coat or poncho, a hat if the weather is cold or wet, and a change of cloths. We strongly recommend that you bring a water bottle.

**Q Will my group get dirty during activities?**

A Getting dirty is not guaranteed, but the possibility does exist. Through the course of the program, groups may be sitting on and touching things on the ground, sitting on and around logs, and after rain, walking through wet grass and paths.

**Q Is there a lot of walking involved?**

A We walk from activity to activity. There are some hills, trails, and open fields. We make every effort to set a walking pace that works for everyone in the group.

**Q What time does a program start?**

A Start times vary and are determined largely by the groups' needs with some consideration for other programs in the Park. Most of our full-day programs begin between 8 and 10 a.m., and half-day program generally begin in the morning or right after lunch.

**Q Do you serve lunch?**

A Hemlock Overlook contracts with a caterer to provide lunches, breakfasts, and even snacks. The lunch menu ranges from box lunches to a variety of hot lunches. Similarly, continental and full breakfasts are available. HO provides menus from which you can choose.

**Q Will there be coffee in the morning?**

A Coffee in the morning is a catering option you can choose to include. Whether or not you choose to provide coffee through our caterer, we recommend that you let your participants know before they arrive whether they will or will not be provided with coffee.

**Q Do you have water on-site?**

A We do not provide water on the course on a regular basis. We strongly encourage participants to bring their own water in a container that each participant can carry with them on the course. Hemlock Overlook's water comes from a well and is excellent for filling up bottles.

**Q What happens if the weather is bad, i.e. rain or snow?**

A Because we have a wide array of activities, we can easily take activities indoors when the weather is too extreme to be outdoors. With light rain and snow, we leave it to the group to decide whether or not they'd like to be outside. In the event of lightning, we head indoors immediately for safety reasons. During the winter, <closure policy for weather – follows GMU?>

**Q How do you handle really hot weather?**

A During the hot summer months, we encourage participants to stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water, and we work to keep groups out of the sun. Additionally, our facilitators work with groups to determine how often they'd like to take breaks.

**Q What if the people in my organization aren't "outdoorsy"?**

A Whether or not a person is comfortable outdoors, our programs focus on the people in the group and your goals for the day. We like to tell our participants that HO programs are not Survivor – no one gets voted off – or Fear Factor. We believe in challenge by choice, and we ask participants to challenge themselves but not do anything that would make them panic.

**Q What happens if someone gets hurt during an activity?**

A Safety is the most important factor in everything we do. We will do everything we can to prevent accidents and injuries. If someone does get injured, our facilitators are trained in first aid and CPR, and we are prepared for handling injuries and illnesses. We ask all participants to fill out medical information before we begin the program to give us information on previous injuries and existing conditions. Additionally, we encourage participants to know their limits.

**Q Are there snakes, bears, and wolves at Hemlock Overlook? Is it dangerous to be there?**

A Hemlock Overlook sits within 5,000 acres of beautiful parkland that is full of all kinds of wildlife. Most wild animals are shy of humans and stay as far away as possible. On rare occasion, we see some forms of wildlife, and at those times, we generally do what is necessary to avoid any contact.

### *Considerations for Your Group*

**Q How many people can be in my group?**

A Teams within your group will be made up of eight to 15 people. The number of people we can accommodate from your organization varies according to your programming preferences.

**Q My organization has a wide range of ages – can you accommodate us?**

A Programs at Hemlock Overlook are not age specific. A team with different-aged people can create a rich experience.

**Q Can people with disabilities participate?**

A Absolutely. We ask that you inform us of any special needs as early in the planning process as possible.

### *The Programs*

**Q What kinds of things will we be doing?**

A Your team of eight to 15 participants will be guided through a series of multi-faceted challenges that engage the mind and the body for both the individual and the team. Each challenge typically takes 45 to 60 minutes, which includes a discussion after each activity. Activities range from warm-ups and ice breakers to constructed activities.

**Q Will we be there all day?**

A HO programs can range from being half-day to multiple days in length depending on the level of programming you choose.

**Q What does the typical day look like?**

A The typical day begins with an orientation led by the facilitators working with your team. The orientation is followed by ice-breaking activities. As the day progresses, the challenge level increases with each activity. Lunch is in the middle of the day, and the last activity is followed by a debrief for your entire group.

**Q Is it a ROPES course that is high off the ground?**

A Hemlock Overlook leads teams through a team development course that

includes more than 500 activities. Facilitators choose the most appropriate ones for each group. Of the 500, 70 are constructed, and only two of those constructed activities are considered “high ropes.”

**Q My organization just needs to do some bonding. Why would I pay for this when we could just go bowling?**

A Hemlock Overlook offers basic programming for teams who want to build relationships and have fun. Unlike recreational activities, HO programs allow teams to become aware of their group dynamics thereby strengthening working relationships.

**Q My group has some real challenges. Can you do anything special for us?**

A Hemlock Overlook works with teams who face many different types of challenges. We offer several different programs that address organizational issues that we frequently come into contact with, and we are able to work with clients to tweak each of these programs to address special challenges.

**Q If my group wants a physical challenge, what activities can we do?**

A While scheduling your program, your HO contact will work with you to determine the best activities for your group. We have plenty of activities for groups who want a physical challenge.

## *Results*

**Q What will my group get out of the day?**

A Results vary depending on the program you choose for your group. We will work with you to ensure that the results you hope to achieve are addressed through focused activities.

**Q What benefits does a Team Development Course offer that traditional training doesn't?**

A According to recent adult learning studies, participants who actively experience a concept will remember 80 percent of what they are learning. Adults remember 20 percent of what they hear, such as lecture-type training, and they remember 50 percent of what they see, such as training that takes place in workshops and through reading.

**Q Will my group learn anything from our day at Hemlock Overlook, or will it just be a fun day?**

A Regardless of the level of programming you choose, your group will benefit from awareness and a common language for discussing differences that lasts long after the program is over. Depending on the level of programming you choose, your group may work on a specific challenge

and learn new skills and techniques for overcoming the challenges. We do guarantee that you will have fun no matter what your program is!

### *The Staff*

**Q What qualifications does Hemlock Overlook have to work with groups like mine?**

A Hemlock Overlook Center for Outdoor Education is a recognized Experience-Based Training and Development organization and is active in both the experiential learning and challenge course communities. HO is accredited by the American Society for Training and Development and the American Camp Association. In addition, the Center is a participating member of the Association for Experiential Education, Association for Psychological Type, and Association for Challenge Course Technology.

**Q Who will lead us through the course?**

A Each team of eight to 15 will work with a Professional Development Program facilitator. All facilitators have been trained to work with corporate, government, and non-profit groups and choose activities appropriate for the group.

**Q What kind of qualifications does someone need to be an HO Professional Development Program facilitator?**

A HO Professional Development Program has gathered a core-group of professional facilitators who have a diverse collective background. They have real-world experience working in and with organizations of various sizes, from a wide array of industries, and with regional, national, and international focuses. Among the facilitators are those who have had formal training in facilitation, training, and education and have advanced degrees in organizational development and human resources.

### *Other Questions*

**Q There are other challenge courses in the area. Why should I choose Hemlock Overlook?**

A Hemlock Overlook distinguishes itself by having the ideal mix of a cutting-edge outdoor challenge course with staff and facilitators who have expertise in group dynamics and organizational change. This rare mix for an outdoor education center enables us be the best at working with organizations like yours.

**Q Do you offer any services to help us extend our learning after we get back to the office?**

A Depending on the level of programming you choose, a Hemlock Overlook

facilitator may be assigned to work with your team to prepare for your program and then to follow up after your visit to the park.