

## The Educational Program

In January of 2005, the Bedford County Wilderness Search Team's Public Education Committee began the educational program. An intensive media program began. The committee started placing public service announcements on the cable information stations and on local radio stations in Bedford County. The program was designed to remind the public on important points to remember for every season of the year. The committee continues to this day with the media program.

Public Education Programs are provided throughout the year at different locations. The committee is also working on creating a permanent orienteering course in Bedford County to assist the committee's education programs and to assist the public in maintaining their navigation skills. The Public Education Committee can also provide Merit Badge programs to Boy Scout and Girl Scout Troops.

## Mitigation

The Public Education Committee is also beginning preliminary work on an extensive mitigation program. Mitigation is the determination of what is needed to eliminate a problem. Other interventions can occur to help eliminate Lost Person Incidents. Programs that are being examined are- trail maintenance days, establishing better signage and markings for trails and establishing better access areas for the recreational rivers and waterways of Bedford County.

## Available educational classes

The following is a list of the established classes and lectures that the Bedford County Wilderness Search Team's Public Education Committee has to offer. The committee will also create custom classes and lectures for an organization. At anytime these classes and presentations can be brought to your location. Contact the committee, at the address or email below for more information.

### 1- Hour Lectures and Classes

The "10 Essentials for Outdoor Activities  
Wilderness First Aid  
Navigation  
Emergency Shelter Building and Signaling  
Backcountry Safety

### 4- Hour Classes

Basic Survival  
Basic Navigation

### 8- Hour Classes

Navigation "101"  
Basic Wilderness First Aid (this class is a certification class and requires 15 individuals to participate)

### Scouting Merit Badges

Orienteering  
Survival  
First Aid

## Contact Information

Public Education Committee  
Bedford County Wilderness Search Team  
PO Box 445  
New Paris, PA 15554  
<http://www.bcwst.org>  
Email: [bcwst@pahighlander.com](mailto:bcwst@pahighlander.com)

**Bedford County  
Wilderness Search  
Team**

## Public Education Committee



## Outdoor Education Safety Classes

## **The Team**

The Bedford County Wilderness Search Team (BCWST) is a volunteer organization dedicated to saving lives in the outdoor. The mission of the Bedford County Wilderness Search Team is to provide education, mitigation and search and rescue services in regards to lost person and injured person incidents occurring in a wilderness environment. The Bedford County Wilderness Search Team will offer a high degree of service by having dedicated, highly trained and experienced employees using modern equipment and methods in an effective and efficient manner.

All of the members of the BCWST are experienced emergency services members from a varied and diverse background. Members of BCWST come from Fire Departments (both career and volunteer), Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Law Enforcement Agencies, Ski Patrols and other Search and Rescue Teams.

## **The Public Education Committee**

The Public Education Committee of the Bedford County Wilderness Search Team was formed in January of 2005. The committee is made up of the Team's top educators in the field of search prevention. Members of the committee have received formal training in Educational Methodology. The committee members have considerable experience in outdoor education. Many have taught and guided hiking, backpacking, whitewater rafting and climbing trips. Many of the committee members work for community colleges as local level instructors teaching search and rescue

skills, rope rescue, water rescue and wilderness medical classes.

The members of the committee are Pennsylvania Department of Health certified First Responders, Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics. The members also have upgraded their medical training with the appropriate wilderness medical upgrades- Wilderness First Responder, Wilderness EMTs and Wilderness ALS certifications.

The members of the committee constantly take classes and read the latest literature on outdoor skills to assure that the skills being taught to the public are

of the latest techniques.

## **The Need for public education**

The Bedford County Wilderness Search Team is an organization dedicated to the prevention and mitigation of issues that are the causes of Wilderness based Lost Person and Rescue incidents. The members of the Bedford County Wilderness Search Team researched lost person incidents that occurred both locally and on the national level. It was determined that individuals get lost for 1 of 3 reasons: individuals are improperly equipped, ignore the signs of weather change or attempt to travel too far and/or too fast.

The best search that can occur is the one that never happened due to a properly educated public. It was determined that all three of these problems could be addressed with a properly aimed public education program. The Bedford County wilderness Search Team decided that the best way to begin addressing this problem was to establish a committee of the leaders of education from the search team.

## **The Education Plan**

After the committee was formed the examination of past educational programs were performed. It was noted that the programs of the past were aimed at educating the public on the capabilities of the search teams and not on skills needed to give the public proper outdoor knowledge.

It was determined that the best route for the committee was to established a new approach to public education. The committee decided to aim the new program at instructing individuals on skills that would prevent the three causes from occurring in the first place.

The committee also wanted to create a measurable goal to assure that the committee was accomplishing its mission. It was decided that the committee wanted to reduce the amount of lost person incidents that occur in their first response area of the team by 25% in 5 years. To accomplish this goal a strategic plan was established.

The plan looked at what groups of individuals needed to be addressed. The following groups were identified for the initial education programs: users of State Parks and Game Lands, hunters and grade school children. It was determined that the State Park and Game Land users would be approached during the summer months. The hunters would be addressed during the fall, right before deer seasons. The final group, grade school children, would be addressed in the spring. The committee would also provide education to any group wishing for a program to be brought directly to their location anytime of the year.