

# Bring 'em Back Alive: Managing Risk in High Adventure Activities



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# Class Outline

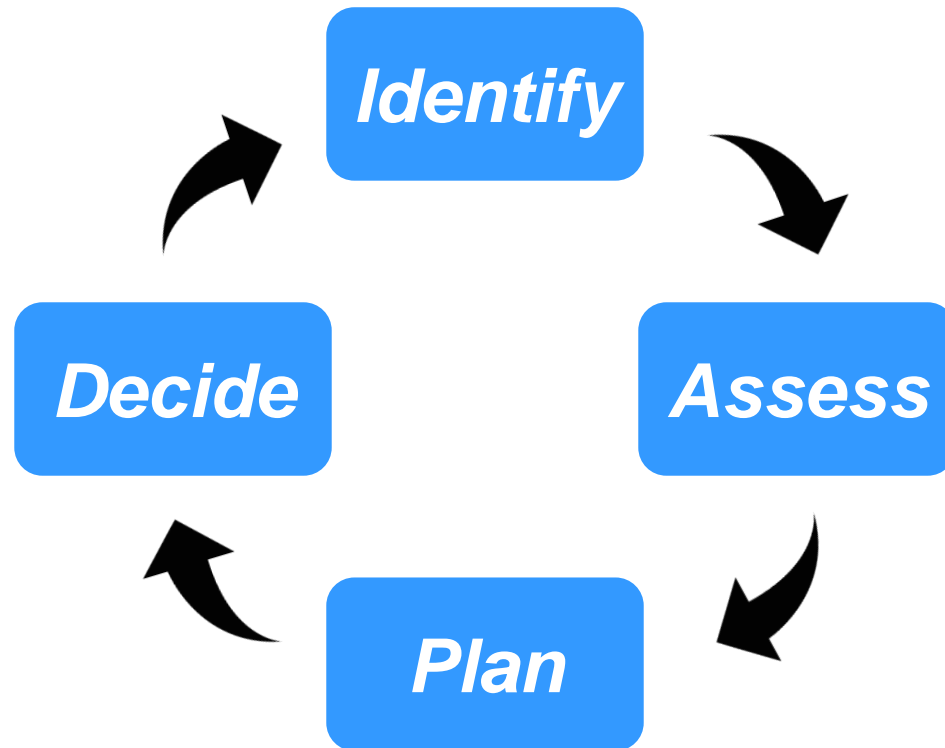
 Define Risk

 Identify

 Assess

 Plan

 Decide



# What Risks Can You Find In This Picture?



07/13/2015

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# What Is Risk Management?



## What is Risk?



Potential for Loss and Injury<sup>1</sup>



Potential for Gain, Growth, Development<sup>1</sup>



Risk = Frequency/Probability of Occurrence X Severity of Outcome



“A way of thinking about an event that leads to a way of conducting the event in order to achieve as low level of foreseeable risk as possible”<sup>2</sup>



“Legal and ethical responsibility to maintain as low level of foreseeable risk as reasonably possible for any given outdoor activity from the standpoint of the health, safety and well-being of participants, while still enabling participants to benefit from the experience.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rick Curtis

<sup>2</sup> James Hellwege

# How Do We Manage Risk?

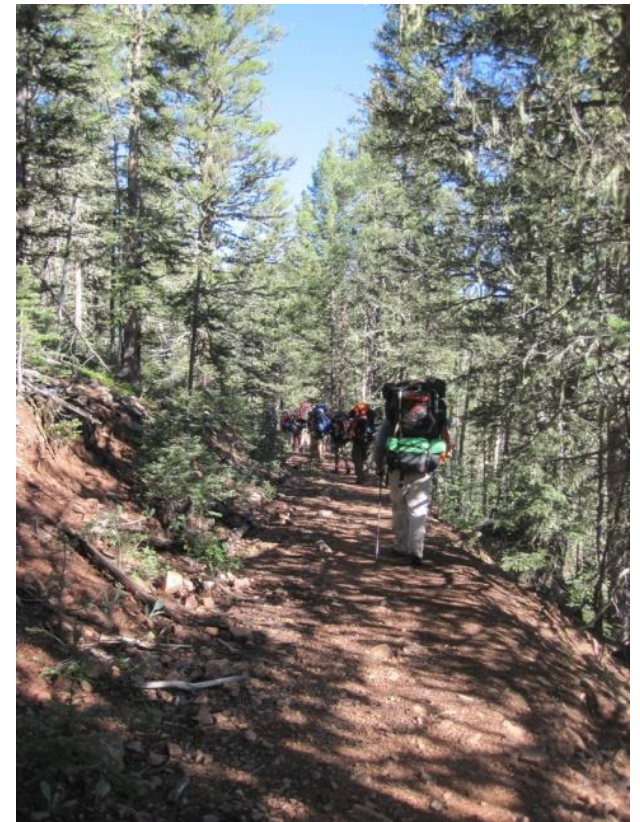
 “The exposure to risk/challenge is what impels people to personal growth”<sup>1</sup>

 How do we manage risk?

 Eliminate

 Reduce

 Accept



# Crew Resource Management<sup>3</sup>



Aviation world developed *Crew Resource Management* concept –we can adapt that to our High Adventure Crews



Increase trust and effective problem-solving









Clarify crew mission, vision, goals, roles, decision-making, decision points



Effective decision-making based on all available information



# Crew Resource Management<sup>3</sup>

-  Appropriate workload/decision-making distribution/assignments/delegation
-  Use talents of entire crew
-  Maintain focus, situational awareness
-  Clarify communications
-  Increase input from less experienced crew members
-  Manage stress and fatigue

# Identify Risks


## Activities Risks—

 Backpacking; canoeing; kayaking; climbing; horse packing; mountain biking; ...


## Environmental Risks—

 Weather; wildlife; plants; terrain; ...

## Human Factors Risks—

 Crew abilities; crew dynamics; crew knowledge/skills/experience; crew health (mental and physical); ...

## Equipment Risks—

 Fail to operate as advertised; don't have what's needed for this situation; ...

## Foreseeable Risk—

 “may be reasonably anticipated”, “can easily be imagined or known about before it happens”<sup>2</sup>

# Assess Risks



Likelihood / frequency of occurrence



Severity of impact



Combinations of risks can amplify both likelihood and severity<sup>3</sup>

- Human factors (inexperience) x environmental (severe weather)
- Environmental (cold weather) x activities (canoeing)



<sup>3</sup> Leemon/Schimelpfenig

# Plan: How Do We Achieve Our Mission, Vision, Goals?



What—do we want to achieve? Crew consensus on what we want to do as a crew



When—what season, how long, ...



Where—location, terrain, ...



Who—

- Is eligible—what skills, knowledge, capability, physical health, mental / emotional maturity, ...
- Assign authority and roles/responsibilities—crew advisor/co-advisor(s), crew leader, medic, chaplain's aide, navigator, quartermaster—duty roster
- Build good Expedition Behavior in crew—12 Points of Scout Law—includes Active Follower-ship<sup>4</sup>



# Plan: How Do We Achieve Our Mission, Vision, Goals?



What (Part Deux)—do we need to carry with us (gear, food, clothing, ...)



How—will we get there; will we prepare/train; will we obtain our needed gear; will we get emergency help if needed; will we exit in case of contingency



Communicate—Create Activity Brief<sup>3</sup> before each event with this information to all hands... and to parents as well before we go



# Good Communications Climate

## Activity Briefing <sup>4</sup>

 What are we doing

 How are we doing it

 When

 Who

 What hazards

 How to manage risks



# Plan: How Do We Manage An Emergency?



What—resources will we have available, organic to crew, external from rescue services?



When/How—will we decide to self-help, to call for help?



Where—will we exit to in an emergency each day on the trek?



Who—in our crew has what skills, knowledge, capability, physical health, mental / emotional maturity, to manage the emergency; to get help; to provide direct assistance; ...

# Plan: How Do We Manage An Emergency?



What (Part Deux)—do we need to carry with us if we self-evacuate? Does our “go for help” party need to carry with them if we decide to send for help?





How—will we decide to self-help, to call for help; will we get emergency help; will we exit in case of contingency; transport injured crew members; shelter in place if needed; ...





# Informed Decisions

 Avoid/eliminate risk—decide to not proceed

 Accept/reduce risk—proceed with activity

 After gathering information and facts, it comes down to judgment

– “Good Judgment comes from Experience.  
Experience comes from Bad Judgment.”

 Judgment—perception of risk <sup>3</sup>

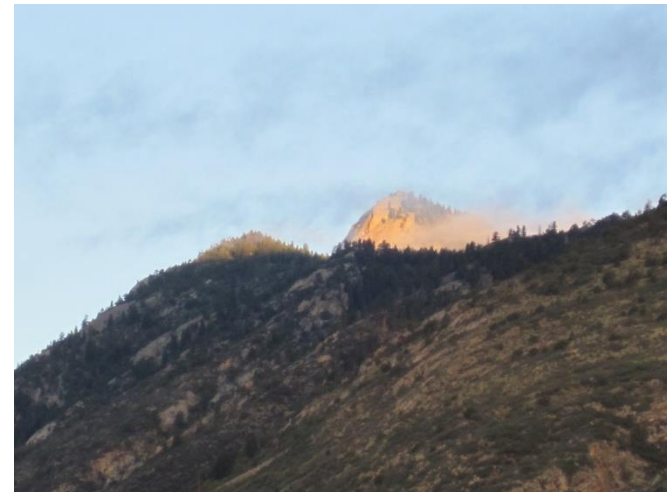
 Beware of complacency when assessing risk and making decisions

# Decide to Proceed

 Accept risk—proceed with activity as planned

 Reduce risk

- Modify activity and proceed
- Additional training/skills/knowledge
- Adjust equipment needs



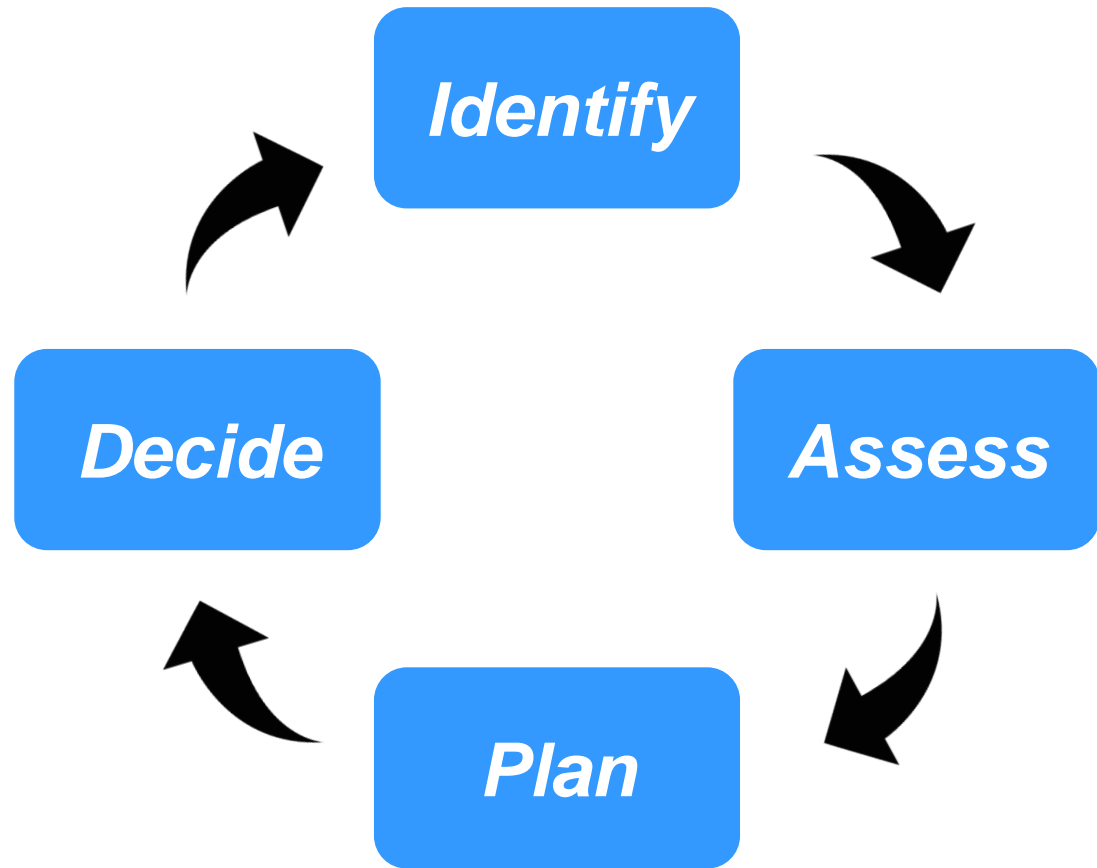
# Continuously Manage Risk On High Adventure Activities

 Identify

 Assess

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# Good Expedition Behavior<sup>4</sup>

 Self-awareness

 Self-leadership

 Selflessness

 Commitment

 Tolerance

 Consideration

 Trust

 Communication

 Humility

 Sense of humor

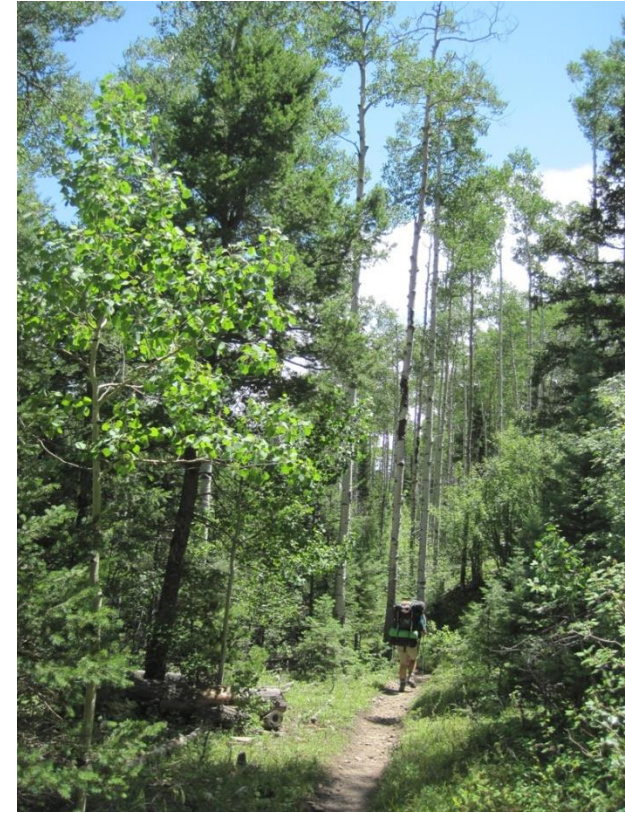


# The Sweet 16 of BSA Safety


1. Qualified Supervision
2. Physical Fitness
3. Buddy System
4. Safe Area or Course
5. Equipment Selection & Maintenance
6. Personal Safety Equipment
7. Safety Procedures & Policies
8. Skill Level Limits
9. Weather Check
10. Planning
11. Communications
12. Permits & Notices
13. First-Aid Resources
14. Applicable Laws
15. CPR Resource
16. Discipline


# Philmont Risk Advisory

- 🏠 Cardiovascular disease
- 🏠 Hypertension
- 🏠 Insulin dependent diabetes
- 🏠 Excessive body weight
- 🏠 Epilepsy
- 🏠 Asthma
- 🏠 Allergy or anaphylaxis
- 🏠 Recent musculoskeletal injuries/surgery
- 🏠 Psychological/emotional difficulties
- 🏠 Medication—chronic conditions well controlled



# Role of Advisors

 Duty of Care—An obligation to act toward others and the public with the degree of watchfulness, attention, caution, and prudence that a reasonable person in similar circumstances would have.<sup>5</sup>

 Coach, mentor, advise—Intervene for health and safety

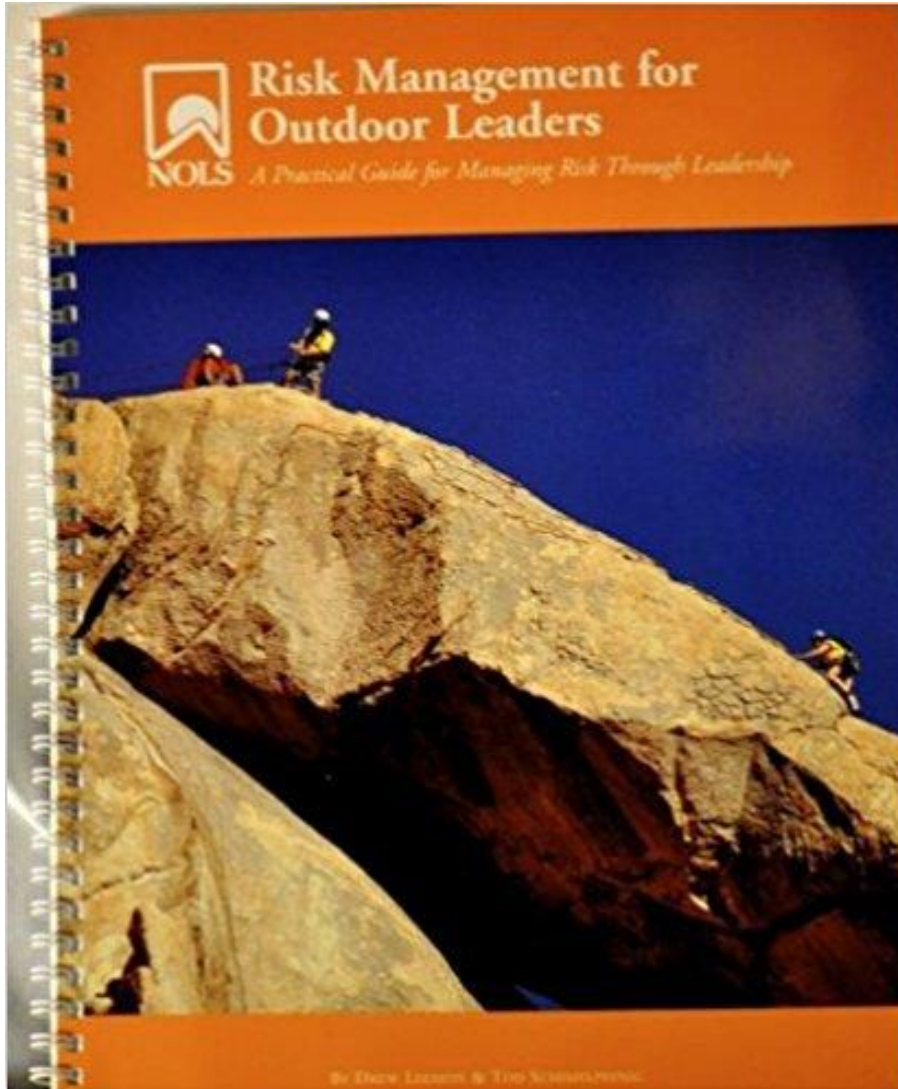
- Build the team—four stages of team growth
- Develop open communications climate—anyone can speak up with concern for managing the risk before the crew

# References

- <sup>1</sup> Risk Assessment & Safety Management (RASM): The Complete Risk Management Model for Outdoor Programs, by Rick Curtis, OutdoorEd.com, February 14 2015
- <sup>2</sup> *Risk Management in Scouting: Essential for Leaders*, by James Hellwege, 2015
- <sup>3</sup> *Risk Management for Outdoor Leaders: A Practical Guide for Managing Risk Through Leadership*, by Drew Leemon & Tod Schimelpfenig, 2005 National Outdoor Leadership School
- <sup>4</sup> *AMC Guide to Outdoor Leadership*, by Alex Kosseff, 2003 Alex Kosseff, Appalachian Mountain Club
- <sup>5</sup> *Risk Management in Outdoor and Adventure Programs*, by Aram Attarian, 2012



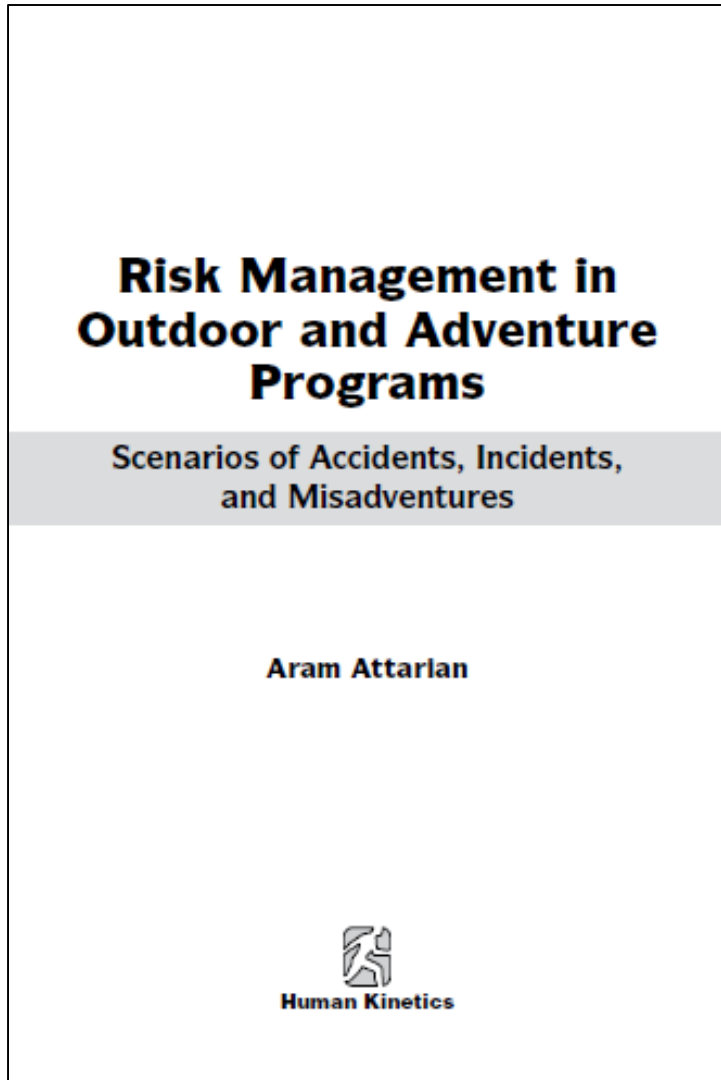
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- <sup>3</sup> *Risk Management for Outdoor Leaders: A Practical Guide for Managing Risk Through Leadership*, by Drew Leemon & Tod Schimelpfenig, 2005 National Outdoor Leadership School

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# Thanks for Listening!

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