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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

BOW FAQ

ABOUT THE BECOMING AN OUTDOORS-WOMAN PROGRAM

For more than a decade, the Becoming an Outdoors-Woman (BOW) program has taught North Carolina women the information and skills they need to enjoy a wide range of outdoor recreational activities. Fly-fishing, archery, nature photography, outdoor cooking, firearm safety, wilderness survival, rock climbing and many more topics are among the beginner-level, hands-on classes taught during weekend workshops. One fee covers expert instruction, equipment, meals, lodging and entertainment for the weekend.

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How do I know if I am an outdoors-woman?

You know you're an Outdoors-Woman if ...

You can cook more things over an open fire than on your stove. You run toward a snake instead of away from it. Your idea of a blind date is in a turkey blind. Your perfume of preference is insect repellent. Your favorite clothing store stocks camo. Your boots really are made for walking.

What kind of person attends BOW?

While BOW courses are geared toward women, anyone over the age of 18 who wants to enjoy the outdoors may take part. One participant was 84 years old. Women commonly bring friends or relatives with them, or come alone and leave with a host of new best friends.

How does it work?

The basic BOW course takes place over a weekend. Registrants sign up for four classes: one on Friday, two on Saturday and one on Sunday. Saturday night generally includes a short seminar or a roundtable discussion, followed by some type of entertainment. Sign-up forms are available at www.ncwildlife.org. Print one from the Web site and mail it to BB Gillen, BOW Coordinator, 1712 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, N.C., 27699-1712.

When can I go?

The next BOW workshop is scheduled for April 11–13 at Camp Cheerio, which is located high atop the Blue Ridge Mountains off U.S. 21 in Roaring Gap. The camp is about 19 miles north of Elkin and features spectacular views overlooking Stone Mountain State Park. Accommodations are rustic group cabins, each of which will house eight to 10 women. Maximum enrollment is 85 people and the all-inclusive fee is \$185. See www.ncwildlife.org for a list of classes and descriptions.

What courses can I take after my first BOW?

You may take the basic BOW again and sign up for different classes — there are more than 30 available. “Beyond BOW” workshops are a smaller selection of courses over a one- or two-day period (generally two classes on Saturday and one on Sunday), and some teach advanced skills. The May 17–18

Beyond BOW scheduled for McDowell Nature Preserve in Charlotte will offer five different courses. One-day events are often specific to one set of skills, such as the fly-fishing workshop scheduled for Aug. 2 at the Pisgah Center for Wildlife Education in Brevard. Events are added according to opportunity and demand.

How did all of this get started?

Christine Thomas, dean of the College of Natural Resources at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, founded the program in 1991 in her home state. Programs spread to other states quickly, and Beyond BOW workshops began in 1997. BOW programs are now established in 42 states, Canada and the Caribbean. Participation in all BOW programs has grown from a few hundred in 1991 to more than 20,000 each year. International BOW workshops are held in far-flung locales such as Costa Rica and Alaska. Visit www.uwsp.edu/cnr/bow for more information.

What difference does the BOW program make?

In 1995, BOW Director Diane Lueck published her master's thesis on the effects of the Becoming an Outdoors-Woman program on attitudes of women who attended workshops in Arkansas, Nebraska, Oregon, Texas and Wisconsin. Her research showed that women who attend BOW are more likely to increase participation in outdoor activities compared to women who do not attend a workshop.

BOW participants surveyed said they felt more positive about hunting, fishing and other outdoor activities as a result of the program. These same women were more likely to hunt or fish in the future than women who did not attend a workshop. Other data indicated that women could learn to hunt and fish with less trepidation because of the program. ♡

2008 BOW SCHEDULE

Basic BOW course

April 11–13
Camp Cheerio,
near Roaring Gap

Beyond BOW

May 17–18
McDowell Nature
Preserve, near Charlotte

Aug. 2
Fly-fishing at Pisgah Center
for Wildlife Education

For more information, contact BB Gillen at bb.gillen@ncwildlife.org or (919) 707-0172.