

# How to Go Outside More As an Idaho Teen Girl

By Declynn Brian



Would you believe me if I told you I hadn't been camping until I was 16? Idaho is known for its picturesque, breathtaking outdoor spaces but there are many born-and-raised female Idahoans who have yet to experience it. I was one of those many Idahoans. I first learned about Wild Hearts Idaho when I was tagged in one of their Instagram posts by a friend.

This past Summer, I was focused on trying new things. I had never been camping, kayaking, in Salmon, ID, or very independent before. After staring at the Instagram post for 10 minutes, I rushed to my dad to asking if I could go, he said maybe, and we pulled up the website. Nothing could have prepared us for the cost: the whole adventure would be free of cost. I felt comforted and excited knowing that people in my community wanted me to experience outdoor adventures for a free or reduced cost. My dad promptly registered me for the adventure.

On an early Friday morning I was dropped off at Veterans Memorial Park to leave for Salmon, Idaho. Perhaps the adventure mentor had noticed how nervous I was, asking if I wanted to sit passenger seat in the van. Sitting up front sounds so simple, but it was my first experience with leadership. I helped the adventure mentor with small

tasks like passing out snacks, changing the radio station, and initiating conversations. After the first 20 minutes in the van I had already made two friends; Claire and Brynn.

When we arrived in Salmon we hopped in kayaks/rafts, paddling eight miles down the river. We stopped in a sandy area riverside and set up camp for two days. That adventure was filled with many new and exciting activities. We fished, played leadership games, created art, hiked, swam, and made prayer flags. Claire brought her GoPro to film a three minute video of the whole adventure, and I had so much fun being in that video with her. Making the video I remember doing backflips off the raft five times wanting it to look perfect. Having the other girls help me out, we all did backflips. I was overjoyed.

The friendships I made were unique. I met girls from all sorts of backgrounds who shared the same passion for being in the outdoors. As the adventure came to an end, I found myself wanting more. I was begging my dad to go hiking, camping, and kayaking with me every weekend. Before my first adventure with Wild Hearts Idaho I didn't know how to set up a tent - now I can kayak a river for miles, start a campfire, do a backflip, and more.

I wanted to become more involved in Wild Hearts Idaho because they taught me the significance of female empowerment and outdoor access. Going on outdoor adventures can often be inaccessible, but this organization gives girls like myself the necessary resources to explore outside. Wild Hearts Idaho has been important for me because it's shown me the women in my community who care about and want me to succeed; something that I haven't had much of before. My time in Salmon lead me to the Youth Leadership Board where six other girls and I have had the opportunity to explore, grow, and lead.

***If you are looking to participate in an  
Outdoor Adventure or volunteer then  
visit [www.WildHeartsIdaho.org](http://www.WildHeartsIdaho.org)***