

Shake Up Your Summer with Campus Recreation Outings

Thursday, June 28, 2012

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WILDERNESS-CERTIFIED GUIDES LED A TREK UP SOUTH MOUNTAIN AT PAWTUCKAWAY STATE PARK TO WITNESS THE SUMMER SOLSTICE SUNSET ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 20, 2012.

New Weekly Series Offer Hiking, Climbing and Kayaking

Just a few minutes into a Summer Solstice hike at Pawtuckaway State Park last week, it was easy to see why it was wise to join the trip leaders from Campus Recreation for one of their weekly summer outings.

They know all the cool places to go, such as the fire tower atop South Mountain, and how to get there. The trips they pick appeal to almost anyone. They know first aid. They'll even share their water and bug spray if you're in a pinch.

"And we try to keep it fun and low key," says Lisa Meerts-Brandsma, a trip leader and graduate student pursuing an MFA in nonfiction writing. "We want everyone to feel like they can come out, and try something new or go someplace they haven't been to before."

This is the first summer that Campus Recreation is offering weekly outings to the public. The Solstice Hike was the first of 10 such trips, ranging from sea kayaking under the full moon at Mendum's Pond to rock climbing to an overnight backpacking trip in the White Mountains.

"We were looking to add more opportunities for people to get out during the summer months, especially for students," says Cary Rhodes, Outdoor Adventures coordinator for Campus Recreation. "Even if they aren't taking classes, a lot of them stay around Durham during the summer, and this is a great way for them to get out, meet some new people and do it with the added safety of a group."

Both Meerts-Brandsma and co-leader Caleb Collins, a graduate student pursuing a master's in outdoor education, have years of experience leading groups and both are certified in first aid and as wilderness first-responders.

Unlike most trips offered during the academic year, summer trips are open to anyone who's willing to sign a waiver and pay a small fee. And it's a hard bargain to beat, starting at just \$5 per trip, including equipment.

"Because we offer equipment, it opens access to a lot of people who might not want to invest in gear right up front," says Rhodes, adding that Campus Recreation also rents outdoor equipment throughout the year.



SUMMER SOLSTICE SUNSET FROM SOUTH MOUNTAIN AT PAWTUCKAWAY STATE PARK.

PHOTO COURTESY LISA MEERTS/UNH CAMPUS RECREATION.

Even as temperatures reached into the mid-90s, the Solstice Hike on June attracted six hikers, all UNH students who had never met before. After riding a Campus Recreation bus to the park, the group embarked on a moderate 3.5-mile hike that would find them climbing the fire tower atop South Mountain for a spectacular sunset. Hikers wore headlamps on the way back, and the group returned to campus about 10 p.m.

“From the summit, we could see bridges in Portsmouth and we had a beautiful sunset,” said Ronak Bhatia, a UNH student taking several Summer Session courses. “It was a perfect way to celebrate the summer solstice.”

Several of the hikers ran low on water, however, and suffered from both the heat and mosquito bites – underscoring the importance of the Campus Recreation’s advisory that trip attendees bring adequate water, insect repellent, food, and clothing.

Visit the [Campus Recreation](#) homepage for more information on trips, activities, classes and equipment rentals throughout the year.

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