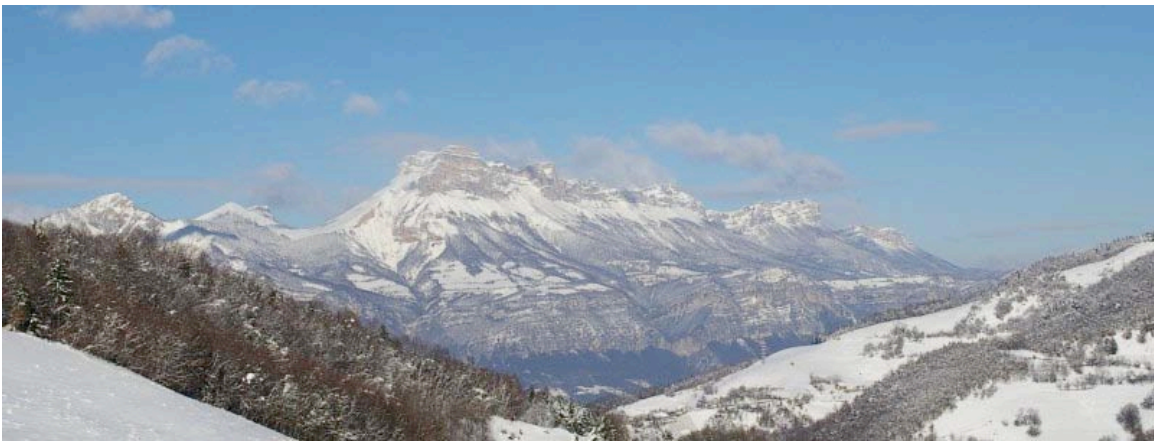


Backpacking in Western Europe
A proposal to the Wolfgang Schlitz Adventure Fund

Dominic Winski, 2009
4/23/06



In the Rhone Alps, outside of Grenoble

Basic Stuff:

Applicant Name and Year: Dominic Winski 2009

Intended Destination: The French and Swiss Alps

Dates of the Trip: June 27 to July 25

Are you applying as an individual, or as a group? (If you're applying as a group, one application can be submitted for the whole group, but all budget numbers need to be per individual.) As an individual

Money, money, money

Breakdown of costs:

Food: \$10/day X 28 days = \$280

Plane Transportation: \$791

-Roundtrip Boston-London=\$791

Train Transportation: \$380

-Roundtrip London-Paris=\$45

-Paris to Evian=\$80

-Turin to Zurich=\$50

-Zurich to Paris=\$110

-Paris to Luxembourg=\$50

-Strasbourg to Paris=\$45

Bus Transportation: \$50

-Roundtrip Bangor-Boston = \$50

Lodging in Hostels and Cabins: ~\$25/night X 18 nights = \$450

Total Cost of Trip: \$1951

I will spend some of this trip doing other activities besides hiking. The following are costs that are directly associated with outdoor adventure itself.

Food: \$10/day X 16 days = \$160

Train Transportation: \$335

-Paris to Evian=\$80

-Turin to Zurich=\$50

-Zurich to Paris=\$110

-Paris to Luxembourg=\$50

-Strasbourg to Paris=\$45

Lodging in Hostels and Cabins: ~\$25/night X 16 nights = \$400

Cost of Outdoor Component of Trip: \$895

I have received a sum of 150 dollars from my parents and 250 dollars from an Aunt and Uncle who have already gone to France on numerous occasions and are happy that I am going. My only other potential source of funding is from the Schlitz fund.

Note: This does not include the backpacking gear or guidebooks that I have already purchased and will be using on the trip.

I am asking for 500 dollars from the Schlitz Fund to help offset the costs of food, transportation, and lodging, although I would gratefully accept any amount that the fund is willing to give.

Expedition Details:

I am applying to the Schlitz fund to in order to go backpacking in Western Europe. I am planning to hike in three different locations: the first is a section of the GR5, a backpacking trail running from the Netherlands to the Mediterranean, in the French Alps, the second is a three day route in Northeastern Switzerland, and the third is another section of the GR5 leading South from Luxembourg into France. The first GR5 hike will be in the mountainous region of Southeastern France, near Mont Blanc and will run through the spectacular scenery of the French Alps. The Swiss hike is a three day hike through a scenic area to the East of Zurich. This a hike will be similar in topography to that of the French Alps and will have significant elevation change (up to 1100 m in a day), yet it will not be at all technical. Finally the hike in Luxembourg and Northeast France will be more mild will have a topography of rolling hills that are not so remote as those in the Alps.

When I am not hiking, I will be staying with friends in Paris who have agreed to provide lodging when I am not on hikes. Thus, I will use Paris as a home base during the times when I am not hiking. Hopefully, this trip, in addition to providing hiking experience, will increase my awareness of cultures different than that of the United States. Below is the timetable that is my plan for how the trip is going to proceed:

Timetable:

June 27: Bus ride to Boston and flight to London

June 28: Spend the remainder of the day in London

June 29-July 2: Take a train to Paris. Spend a few days outside of Paris staying in the house of friends of my family.

July 3-10: I will take a train to Evian which is an access point to the GR5 hiking trail which runs from the North Sea to the Mediterranean. From there, I will hike South for one week, staying in cabins along the way. The hiking is in the French Alps, so it is strenuous but not technical.

July 10: I will take an access trail, which leads off the GR5 to a town called Susa. From Susa I can get a train to Turin where I will stay the night.

July 11-13: From Turin I will take the train to Zurich. From Zurich I will take a series of trains to Wildhaus which is at the beginning of the Toggenburg trail. The rates for the Zurich to Wildhaus route are not yet available and were not included in the costs. The trail takes 3 days to hike and I will, again, be staying in cabins. The topography is reasonably challenging but the mileage is low: only about 10 miles per day.

July 14: From the end point of the trail at Amden Arvenbuel I will take a train back to Zurich (which I also do not have rates for) and then another from Zurich to Paris.

July 15-18: I will be resting outside of Paris.

July 19-22: I will take a train to Luxembourg where I will, again, access the GR5 trail and head South. I will hike for four days staying in cabins along the way. The topography is that of mild rolling hills.

July 23: I will get off at the access point at near Strasbourg and from there, take the train back to Paris.

July 24: After spending my last night in Paris, I will return to London and spend the night there.

July 25: I will catch my plane to Boston and return home on the bus.

Level of Appropriateness:

Ever since I was very young I was always interested in the outdoors. I grew up in Eastern Maine with parents who were also interested in hiking. As a result I have done an extensive amount of camping and hiking in Acadia National Park and on the many coastal trail systems in my home area. When I reached high school age I began to go on many solo hikes and kayaking trips. Living on a piece of woods that stretched, uninterrupted, for many miles, I would often hike off-trail by myself through the wilderness on day and overnight hikes. Soon my parents would drop me off at various locations in the area and I would hike for a while and get picked up the next day.

As I grew older I got in more backpacking experience. I have known been on multi-day hiking trips on the Appalachian Trail in Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont. I have also been hiking in the West and have summited Lassen Peak, Harney Peak, and have done hiking in the Canadian Rockies and the Gaspé Peninsula. I have been up Mt. Katahdin three times, once as a leader, and have led other hiking trips as well. Since coming to Dartmouth I have been heavily involved in the DOC and have gone on numerous CnT hiking trips and have learned the basics of sport climbing. I am now CPR and First Aid certified.

I have increasingly realized that what I would really love to do is to hike in the greatest variety of places around the world as possible. Although I have lots of experience in the Northeastern United States and Canada, I have yet to hike in regions such as the Alps or other areas in Western Europe.

I believe I have all of the necessary outdoor skills to successfully hike in a different region but I still anticipate encountering challenges on this trip. Perhaps, my greatest concern is the language barrier and the differences in the transportation and trail systems between Europe and North America. To prepare for this I have been contacting people in Europe or those that have been to Europe for advice. I also plan to learn a little French before I embark. Because I will be living in Paris when I am not hiking, the

family there will be able to guide me and give me instructions on how to get to and from my destinations.

I feel that that I will definitely be able to get around Europe well on my own, especially with the help of others. I also feel I have the experience necessary to safely carry me through any of the routes I am planning on hiking while I am in Europe. Although the trip is designed to be challenging, I definitely have the skills necessary to overcome these challenges.

Risk Management and Safety:

As this is a backpacking trip, there are many concerns for safety simply because of the remoteness and physical strain that would be present on almost any backpacking expedition. However, the trails that I will be on are not far from civilization in case I needed to leave in an emergency. The trails I have chosen are difficult enough to present a challenge, yet not at all beyond my skill level. In the past I have done hiking that is more strenuous than what I am planning. There will be also many other people on the trail as I am going in the height of tourist season. I am also an experienced backpacker have done numerous solo hikes on the AT in New England and Acadia Nat'l Park and other locations in Eastern Maine and New Brunswick. Additionally, I am First Aid certified and I have taken the Risk Management Seminar offered by the DOC.

A bigger challenge will be the fact that I am traveling alone in Europe. I do not speak French or any of the other languages that I am likely to encounter and I have never traveled alone in Europe. However, I have been to France before and have gained an basic understanding of how the air and rail systems work. I am also planning on brushing up on French between now and then time I leave so that I will at least be able to ask for help or directions if needed.

If, for some reason (bad weather, injury, etc.), I am forced to leave while on a hike I will be able to do so. Before nearing Turin, I will pass very close to Grenoble on my first GR5 hike and can return back to Paris from there. Similarly, the Switzerland and Luxembourg hikes do not go through wilderness, so I will be able to exit the trail if needed and return to Paris in each case as well.

How I Plan to Give Back to the DOC:

Through this I will have gained the valuable experience of backpacking in areas that are much different than the areas surrounding Hanover. This will help to boost my enthusiasm for hiking, increase my effectiveness as a leader, and hopefully inspire others to enjoy the outdoors as well.

Either this spring or next fall I am planning to become a CnT leader. After having hiked in Europe I will have had the experience that will make me all the more enthusiastic about the outdoors. Whenever I lead a trip I hope that this enthusiasm for hiking and the outdoors will spread to the rest of those on the trip and thereby increase the strength of the DOC.

Also, after having spent time hiking in different environments than those that I am used to and planning a trip much more logistically difficult than any I have planned so

far, I will have broadened the variety of hiking and leadership skills significantly that will help me to be a better leader. I feel that the more varied the experience of a leader, the more effective he or she will be.

Finally, through my paper, presentation, and conversations I will have with other members of the DOC, I am hoping to inspire people to undertake similar endeavors and put in extra effort to have adventures outdoors. I especially am hoping to have an impact on the class of 2010 and to try and pull them into the DOC and get them excited about the outdoors through sharing this experience with them.