



TRACKING STEP BY STEP... JOEL HARDIN PROFESSIONAL TRACKING SERVICES

225 Mill Road, Stites, Idaho 83552 telephone 208-926-4390 Email: Joel@jhardin-inc.com

Lake County JHPTS/VTATI

June 29, 30 July 1, 2018

The Lake County MT man tracking class is finished for 2018. It was held at the Kootenai Christian Service Camp 10 miles west of Dayton MT. It was my first visit to this location and was impressed with the beauty and quality of the facility. We ended up with 16 students ready to learn. We were also treated with cool temperatures and periods of rain showers throughout the weekend.

Instructors for this class were Julie Balch, Jimmie Yorgensen and assistant Mark Culp. Mark had some fun ideas and did a great job of organizing this class with everything going very smooth. Julie continued to impress all weekend with her knowledge, experience and passion. They were both a joy to work with and a credit to our organization.

I was able to arrive on Monday evening. I took my RV into the camp and was warned the road could be a little challenging and it was. We were the only group present for the weekend and the first group to utilize the facility this year. I was able to get a good feel for the area and terrain before others arrived. I took the opportunity to lay short lines of sign for aging purpose. I made some lines with date and time while laying others with only numbers. They had all week end to revisit the aging course before making the determination on Sunday as to which numbered sign lines were the newest to oldest. Surprisingly, I set up one blank line of sign (no prints) and nobody got it correct.

Our Novice (Little Kids) lines of sign were started inside the camp area and continued through the camp, out the gate, across the road and up into the timber. They were all attentive and very much interested. Their biggest challenge was getting the sign off the property but once across the road, up the hill and into the timber went well.

For the Big Kids, the instructors reflected on our own real life experiences and training to share with the students. We used such things as vehicles, barriers



TRACKING STEP BY STEP... JOEL HARDIN PROFESSIONAL TRACKING SERVICES

225 Mill Road, Stites, Idaho 83552 telephone 208-926-4390 Email: Joel@jhardin-inc.com

(natural and manmade), varying terrain/vegetation along with the use of our novice students to set up challenging scenarios. We really focused them on finding the first and correct prints, determine direction of travel and the use of their sign cutting skills to find and follow the sign to the end. They took turns being the Tracking Coordinator and directing their teams to accomplish the goal.

We had a fun Saturday evening with the boarding of 3 students (2 to Basic and 1 to Apprentice). Eric Lowe from Quesnel B.C. Canada and Jennifer Armstrong from Can-Am in Eureka, MT were our students challenging for Basic Certification. Quiet and reserved Jennifer seemed, at times, to be a little unsure and confused with the questioning but did well with her answers. Her team from Can-Am rewarded her with a new tracking vest to celebrate her success and new certification. Eric was all over it and more than prepared to be a basic. Jared was prepared as well with lots of SAR experiences and tracking to draw from. He is the president of Lake County SAR and handles himself very well. I hope he continues his upward mobility. He could be a great future asset to JHPTS/VTATI.

The class ended on time with lots of positive feedback. We filled out the financial information and I delivered it and a check to Kris Scovel. I appreciated the opportunity to be a part of this class.

Jimmie Yorgensen