

Mountain Leadership 2 Itinerary

Day 1: Establish Basecamp

Meet at Northwest Mountain Shop in Sedro-Woolley in the morning (exact time TBD by instructor). Following introductions and a thorough gear check, we will caravan to the trailhead to start the approach to basecamp. Trailhead will either be Park Butte Trailhead (if climbing the Easton Glacier route) or Heliotrope Ridge Trailhead (if climbing the Coleman-Deming route). A final decision about the route will be confirmed by the instructor. Both trailheads require a Northwest Forest Pass or America the Beautiful Pass to park.

From a starting point of 3,400-3,700 ft elevation, we will spend the remainder of the morning and early afternoon hiking to basecamp at around 6,000 ft. Once at camp, we will focus on:

- Establishing and maintaining camp in a snowy environment
- Leave No Trace principles specific to the alpine
- Filtering water and/or melting snow for potable water
- Reviewing the knots, bends, and hitches listed in the ML2 Required Knots Manual
- Fitting crampons to mountaineering boots

Day 2: Snow School & Crevasse Rescue

After breakfast, we will dive right into the snow and glacier skills needed for our summit attempt. The first part of the morning, we will cover:

- Footwork and technique for walking in steep snow (including kicking steps and the rest step)
- Using an ice axe in conjunction with steep snow footwork and technique
- Self arrest in various positions

Following snow school, we will make a short trek out to the glacier and work on:

- Roping up for glacier travel and moving as a rope team
- Placing pickets and building snow anchors
- Setting up a 3:1 haul system for crevasse rescue

If there is time, and following an instructor demo, we will try to give everyone the opportunity to practice holding a real life fall in a crevasse and performing an actual rescue using the anchor building and hauling system skills covered earlier.

Our goal will be to return to camp by 5:30 pm to make dinner then have a thorough discussion about the next day's summit attempt. After packing up for our summit attempt, we will turn in early to be ready for an alpine start.

Day 3: Summit Attempt

Our plan will be to start in the dark a couple of hours before sunrise to have firm, more stable snow conditions for the ascent (approx. 4,800 ft of elevation gain total from basecamp), taking breaks every 60-90 minutes until we reach the summit.

Following some celebratory photos and much deserved snacks, we will descend to camp, aiming to be back by late morning or early afternoon, ideally before the heat of the day to reduce our exposure to the sun while on the glacier.

Options vary for the remainder of the day. Participants will be given plenty of time to rest and catch up on sleep following the climb. Additional skills review and practice can also be included later in the day depending on the group's physical and mental capacity.

We will conclude the day with a group dinner and debrief about the past three days.

Important note: A summit attempt is not guaranteed on this course, especially if weather or conditions are deemed dangerous or high risk. In lieu of a summit attempt, we will spend the day refining skills covered the previous day or introduce new skills not already covered.

Day 4: Hike Out

We will break down camp and plan to hike out in the morning unless additional skills want to be reviewed by participants.

After returning to the trailhead, we will caravan back to Sedro-Woolley, sort and return any group gear, then celebrate with a group lunch in town.