

GREAT SMOKY
MOUNTAINS
INSTITUTE AT
TREMONT

Teacher Escape Weekend 2018 at Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont

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"I can catch salamanders! I didn't know I could do that."- TEW Participant

What is Teacher Escape Weekend?

Teacher Escape Weekend (TEW) gives educators an opportunity to meet other teachers, share ideas, learn about new programs, and retreat to Great Smoky Mountains for respite. Each year Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont (Tremont Institute) hosts three TEWs that take place throughout the early Fall season, Saturday morning through Sunday afternoon. Attendance in this program allows teachers to attend free of charge when their school participates in a three or five day Tremont Institute school program. It also reduces the cost of the trip for each participant. With a maximum capacity of eighty participants per workshop, TEW composes a learning environment that facilitates collaboration between teachers. Throughout the weekend, teachers participate in programs designed to simulate classes the teacher could do with their students when they return to Tremont Institute for a school program.

IF YOU ATTEND A TEACHER ESCAPE WEEKEND

- FREE** REGISTRATION WHEN YOU COME BACK FOR A 3-5 DAY PROGRAM WITH YOUR SCHOOL
- REDUCED COST** FOR YOUR STUDENTS WHEN YOU COME BACK FOR A 3-5 DAY PROGRAM*
- EXPERIENCE THE BENEFITS OF ENGAGING WITH NATURAL PHENOMENON
- ENHANCE WAYS TO TRANSFER THE TREMONT EXPERIENCE TO YOUR CLASSROOM

*For \$75 you receive \$438+ in value and an \$8 discount for all your students

Teacher Escape Weekend and Our Strategic Goals

Impacting teachers is one of the most important endeavors we can take, because by enriching teachers we are helping them reach thousands of students and build the “soil” in which future generations will grow. Through hands-on professional development, Tremont Institute is empowering teachers to get their students outside, whether in their schoolyard or through a class trip to the national park. Rather than add to an educator’s workload, TEW aims to make their already tough job easier by providing the skills needed to incorporate outdoor learning into their regular teaching. TEW helps educators achieve their academic and personal goals in a manner that is local, personal, relevant, and fun!

Focusing on Educators

To magnify the impacts of transformative residential programs at Tremont Institute, we strategically train educators, primarily through Teacher Escape Weekend, so that experiential learning does not end once students leave Great Smoky Mountains National Park. With benefits of outdoor learning ranging from improved mental and physical health to increased academic motivation and subject retention, training the teachers is an effective way to ensure that students are receiving meaningful experiential education experiences on a regular basis. Furthermore, by training teachers, Tremont Institute is supporting leaders who are capable of connecting their local community to local nature spaces, developing environmental leaders, learners, and advocates along the way.

Some of the Activities Teacher Will Do Include:

- Participate in cross-curricular hands on lessons
- Learn about the logistics in bringing students to Tremont Institute
- Meet Tremont Institute staff members
- Learn new techniques for journaling, reflection, and group discussions
- Come together Saturday night for a casual social in our pavillion
- Hike to Spruce Flats Falls

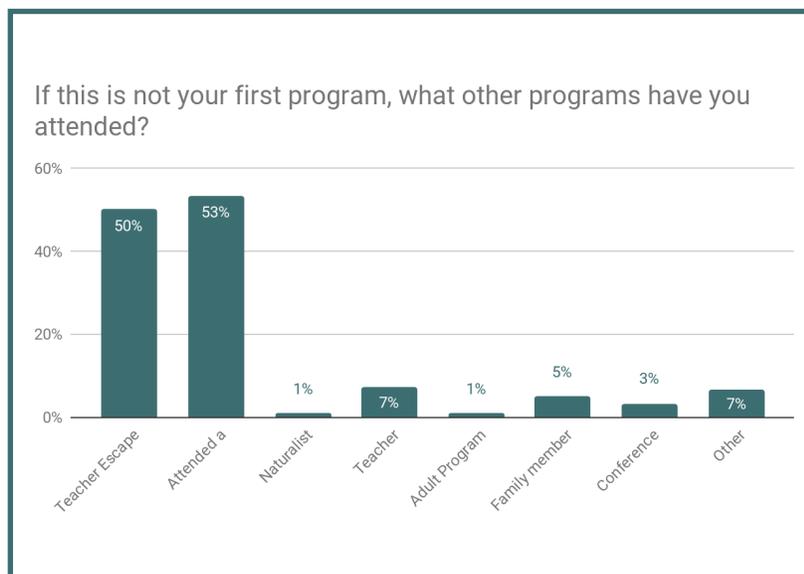


Major Impacts of Teacher Escape Weekend

122 of participating educators (59% of total participants) completed an online post-TEW assessment with some of the key points and highlights indicated below.

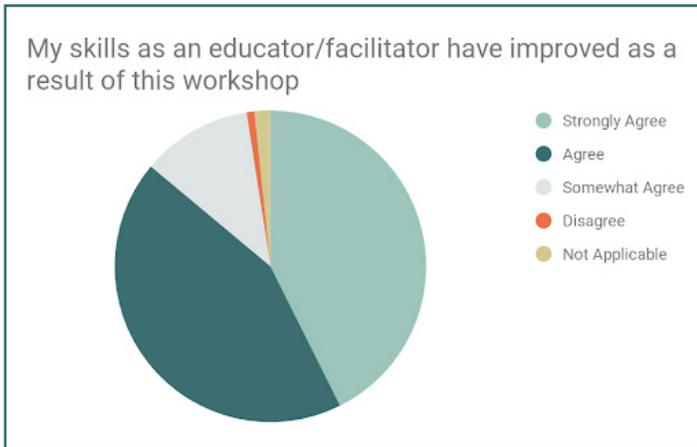
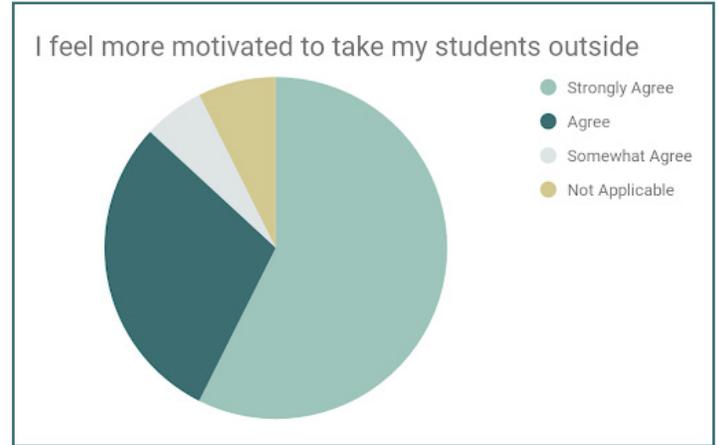
1. Who comes to Teacher Escape Weekend?

- More than half (61%) of respondents have come to Tremont Institute before, most commonly with a school field program or through attending a previous Teacher Escape Weekend.
- The most popular reasons for educators to come to teacher escape weekend include:
 - i. To be more prepared for their field experience at Tremont Institute (76%)
 - ii. To receive a discount for their students (70%)
 - iii. To spend time in the Smokies (67%)
- 66% of participants learned about Teacher Escape Weekend via conversations with other teachers.



2. Participating educators gained skills that are transferable back to the schoolyard

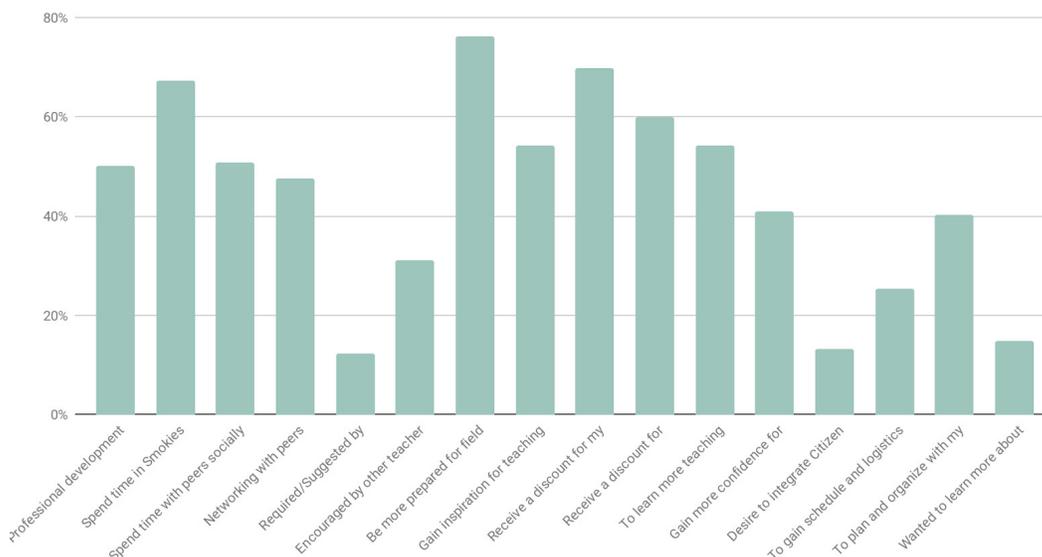
- The vast majority of educators (93%) noted that they learned something that they intend to implement into their classroom in the coming year. Anecdotal evidence in the survey indicated that some educators were already incorporating newly learned education techniques into their curriculum.
- Each respondent that worked with students felt increasingly motivated to take their students outside.



- Half of all respondents felt strongly that they were more comfortable taking their students outside.
- 86% of respondents noted that their skills as an educator or facilitator has improved as a result of Teacher Escape Weekend.

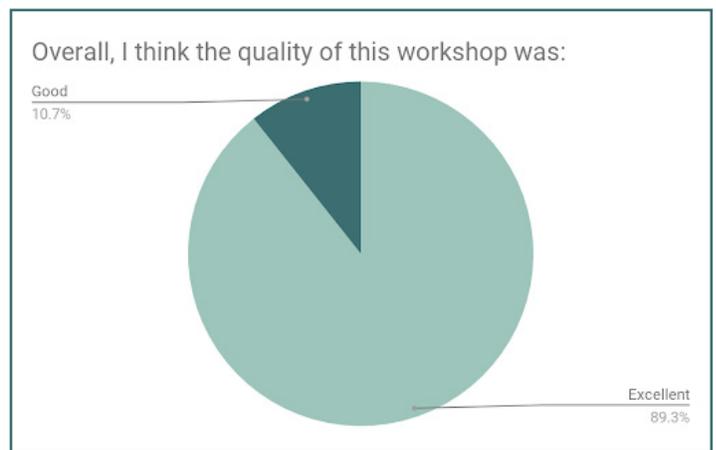
“The activities (leaf timeline, my secret plant, camouflage) allow for and target cross-curricular disciplines and multiple domains very easily. As a high school social studies teacher, this was the best part of the weekend for me. I have already used a modified version of the “my secret plant” in my senior government class. I really like how it addresses multiple perspectives of people as well as communication and curiosity.”- TEW Participant

Reason(s) I took this workshop (Check all that apply):



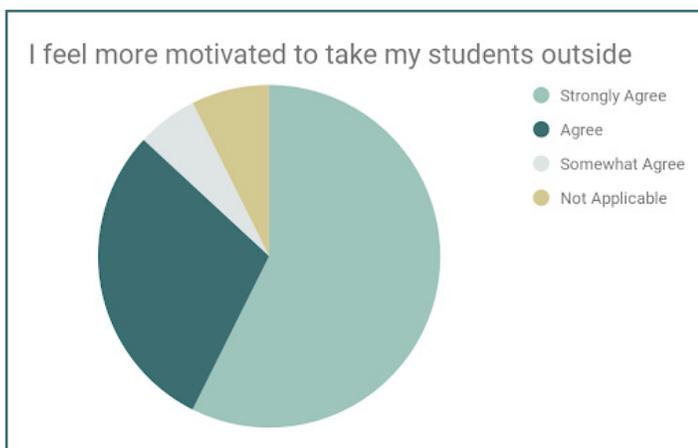
3. Educators benefited by having time to network with other educators

- An equal number of respondents (97%) believed it was helpful to spend time with other educators. Both educators they have not met and educators on their school team.
- 91% of educators enjoyed the educator social hosted on Saturday night of each Teacher Escape Weekend.



“The hands on full immersion is different than most, nearly all, workshops I have ever attended. The price is a deal, affordable, with knowledgeable presenters who have an obvious passion to share with others and spread the wealth of this fabulous resource.” - TEW Participant

4. Tremont Institute was able to provide a positive weekend experience



- Every respondent indicated that the Tremont Institute faculty facilitated the sessions well.
- 67% of educators thought the workshop either exceeded expectations, was better than previous years, or the best workshop they have ever attended at Tremont Institute.
- Every respondent noted a positive experience with Teacher Escape Weekend while 89% stated that the weekend was excellent.

“I loved the salamander session. It opened my eyes to how to apply math to the exploration of not only these amphibians, but just about any type of species/ insect/etc.” - TEW Participant