

Laurel Highlands River Tours

PO Box 107, Ohiopyle, PA 15470 ~ 724-329-8531

Dear Applicant,

Thank You for taking an interest in joining our team at Laurel Highlands River Tours & Outdoor Center. We are looking for individuals with a positive attitude, a love of nature, and a strong work ethic. Laurel Highlands needs adventurous staff that can help guests reconnect, enjoy, and experience nature through the many activities we offer. We also need team members that can work with the flexible schedule of the outdoor industry.

No Experience Is Required. Our Whitewater Safety Program (WSP) is oriented towards the rafter with little to no experience. The WSP covers river navigation skills, paddling techniques, river commands, and includes Swift-Water Rescue training to the standards of the American Canoe Association Level IV Course. The program also covers company policies, procedures, and professionalism standards expected by Laurel Highlands, along with the CPR and First Aid training required by Ohiopyle State Park.

In order to be a river guide on the Lower (Class III-IV) section of the Youghiogheny (Yough) River, candidates must have a minimum of **15** trips down the river; 6 of those trips must be on the Lower Yough as a trainee or apprentice; 4 of those trips can be on the Middle Yough; and the remaining five can be made on any comparable sections. Our WSP covers 14 trips as a trainee or apprentice. To cover the remaining trip necessary to become a certified guide, we offer many free rafting trips in the spring months and the days leading up to and after the required WSP. We encourage all applicants to take advantage of these trips. The more trips you make down the river, the better guide you will become. Guides coming from other rivers looking for a new adventure are welcome at Laurel Highlands. Please provide a copy of your river logs, CPR/First Aid cards and other certifications you feel appropriate.

One Whitewater Safety Program will be offered for the 2024 season. It is mandatory that all new applicants attend, in entirety, one of the programs. The WSP will take place over 4 weekends starting April 27th running through May 19th. The other trip required can be made before or after the WSP, but it is recommended they are done before the WSP so you will be ready to start your guiding career as soon as possible.

Most first-year guides will begin their career on the Middle(Class I-II) section of the Yough. For candidates that excel, demonstrate all necessary skills, and/or have previous experience guiding, river work will become steady once the season gets to full swing in June. Guides from other rivers may also start training on the Upper (Class V) section of the Yough. Attached you will find more detailed information about our training program and application process.

Thank you,

Andrew Fiss

Director of River Operations

Application Process:

Download an application from our website: laurelhighlands.com/about-us/employment. You can also pick up an application at Laurel Highlands Outdoor Center located at 4 Sherman Street, Ohiopyle, Pa 15470. Applications can be returned via email to employment@laurelhighlands.com, by mail to Laurel Highlands Outdoor Center % Andrew Hiss PO Box 107, Ohiopyle, PA 15470, or you may drop it off at Laurel Highlands Outdoor Center. After the initial application is received the River Director, Andrew Hiss will contact you to set-up a time for an interview. Interviews can be done in person or over the phone depending on your distance from Ohiopyle, PA.

River Guide Training Procedures:

We will begin each training day at the Outdoor Center in Ohiopyle at **9am**. Each day begins with a classroom session where we will discuss the relevant skills for the day. Then it's off to the river to practice the skills discussed, along with more fun and excitement. We will try and finish each training day by **5pm**. Most of the training will be done on the Yough, however, we may travel to other sections and rivers depending on water level.

Clothing and Weather:

Guide training begins when most people are putting away their winter gear. So yes, it can be cold, brisk, but it can also be quite nice. Temperatures vary from 30° to 80° degrees, with snow, rain, sleet, and sunshine. Proper clothing is very important. Wetsuits and all other necessary equipment are provided throughout the WSP.

Things to bring for river gear:

- Swimming Clothes (Shorts, Shirts).
- Any Spandex, Capilene, or Under Armour type clothing.
- Any Wool, Poly Pro, or Fleece.
- Rain Jackets and/or rain pants.
- An old pair of sneakers or sandals for river shoes.
- Wool or fleece socks.
- Any type of wetsuit you may have.
- Any water sports gear.
- DO NOT WEAR COTTON ON THE RIVER!**

Completion of the Whitewater Safety Program:

Guide training can be physically demanding. You will be exposed to hazardous conditions and weather. Participation in all skill checks is required for employment.

Our training provides wonderful life experiences. It teaches you how to push your physical and mental boundaries. It also provides an opportunity to progress your public speaking skills, can be used as a resume builder, and of course, it teaches you whitewater paddling skills. The completion of the WSP does not guarantee a candidate's position at Laurel Highlands. Employment is achieved through the completion of several skills tests. Our WSP is only offered to those who are serious about **River Guide** employment. We have several other positions available at Laurel Highlands if guiding is not for you or if you want/need more work.

Important Dates for River Guides:
Guide Applicant Orientation and River Trip

When: Saturday, April 13th (04/13/2024) 9:00am.

Where: Laurel Highlands Outdoor Center, Ohiopyle, Pa

River Trips and Training Runs: River trips and training runs are not mandatory. You are greatly encouraged to attend as many of these trips as possible so you can get a feel for our operations. You get to run the rivers we love, and work towards the required 15 river trips required to be a certified guide. Attending these sessions greatly enhances your skills as a guide. These dates are based on availability. Please call ahead if you plan to attend.

- Saturday April 13th and Sunday April 14th**
- Saturday April 20th and Sunday April 21st**

Whitewater Safety Program (WSP) Training Dates: Full Attendance is mandatory for the WSP training sessions. The training session is an eight day course over 4 weekends.

- Weekends starting Saturday **April 27th** at 9:00am till Sunday **May 19th** at 5:00pm.
04/27 - 04/28, 05/04 - 05/05, 5/11 - 5/12, 5/18 - 5/19

Full-Time Seasonal Employment Opportunities:

River Guide:

Description: Prepare all trip equipment for the day's trip. Navigate the clients/guests through the rapids in a safe, fun and informative manner.

Requirements:

- Must be 18 years old or older.
- Able to swim.
- Strong public speaking skills.
- Professional mannerisms.
- Can handle stressful situations
- Must make the minimum of 15 river trips.
- Attend the Whitewater Safety Program in full.
- Capable of heavy lifting.

Bike Mechanic and Guide:

Description: Maintain bike fleet. Guide on bike tours. Assist in shuttles and other operations as needed.

Requirements:

- Experience with bike repairs.
- Public speaking skills.
- Professional mannerisms.
- Capable of heavy lifting.

Operations Staff:

_____ Description: Run shuttles. Support guided tours. Rent out equipment.

Requirements:

- Must be 21 years old or older.
- Comfortable driving 15 passenger vans.
- DOT Medical Card.
- Able to drive a manual transmission.
- Knowledgeable of basic vehicle maintenance.
- Public speaking skills.
- Capable of heavy lifting.

Part-Time Seasonal Positions:**Rock Climbing Instructor:**

Description: Guide trips to designated climbing areas in Ohiopyle State Park. Inspect, clean, and maintain climbing gear. Assist in shuttles and other operations as needed.

Requirements:

- Must be 18 years old or older.
- Capable of tying knots.
- Knowledgeable in Top Rope on Belay climbing.
- Public speaking skills.
- Professional mannerisms.

Mountain Bike Guides:

Description: Guide trips to designated biking trail systems in Ohiopyle State Park. Inspect, clean, and maintain biking gear. Assist in shuttles and other operations as needed.

Requirements:

- Must be 18 years old or older.
- Experience with bike repairs.
- Familiar with Hydraulic disc brakes.
- Public speaking skills.
- Professional mannerisms.

Base Staff:

Description: Rent out equipment. Support guided tours. Perform general cleaning and landscaping.

Requirements:

- Must be 16 years old or older.
- Public speaking skills.
- Capable of heavy lifting.

Other Information:

All employment is weather and reservations dependent. River work is especially dependent on reservations. On-call methods are used. For first-year guides, work is most abundant on the weekends, holidays, and during the months of June, July and August.

- ❑ All Training Seasons will start at our base of operations, the Laurel Highlands Outdoor Center, located at 4 Sherman Street Ohiopyle, PA.
- ❑ Current CPR/AED and Advanced First Aid are required for guides.
- ❑ Classes for First Aid and CPR/AED are provided.
- ❑ Complete attendance of a Whitewater Safety Program is required for any river guide candidate without experience.
- ❑ 15 river trips are required with 10 trips on the Youghiogheny and 6 of those trips being on the lower Youghiogheny section.
- ❑ 30 commercial river trips are required for trip leader qualification.
- ❑ All Applicants need to be capable of heavy lifting.