

Training: What If?

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“Necessity is the mother of invention.” Plato

A need or problem encourages creative efforts to meet the need. This in turn naturally leads to the inevitable question: “What if?” The Northwest region was having difficulty in getting enough attendees to have a NEEC in their region. They asked a lot of “what if” questions. What if we think creatively? What if we color outside of the lines? What if we run with scissors but don’t eat the paste? As author Jim Collins would say, “What if we have a BHAG (big hairy audacious goal)?” What if our BHAG is to have a NRMC and NEEC running simultaneously at the same facility?

After almost two years of planning by the Northwest region coordinator, Lloyd Fillis, and region training coordinator, Danny Kolander, they were able to see their BHAG become a reality. On May 3-5, the first ever combined NRMC/NEEC was held at Living Waters Camp in Springfield, OR. On Friday morning, May 3, thirty-two (32) trainees arrived for their NRMC, and at the same time, eighteen (18) trainees arrived for their NEEC. We had trainees from six districts: Central Pacific, Northern California-Nevada, Northwest, Oregon, Southern California, and Southern Idaho.

While the camps were successful with fifty (50) very pleased trainees, we learned a few things. First, the team thought initially the NEEC could be included by only adding about four staff. That ended up not being the case. When the dust settled, we still had about the same number of staff members for each event as normal. Second, as you would expect, it took an enormous amount of coordination to make sure both events were ready come Friday morning. We had

a coordinator and an assistant coordinator; however, the bulk of the pre-camp planning fell on the shoulders of one person, and it was a massive undertaking.

Third, the team thought that husbands and wives would attend together—him to NRMC and her to NEEC; however, we discovered the issue of the camps not graduating on the same day. Fourth, we ran into the issue of trainees traveling together and attending different camps only to realize that those attending NEEC would be waiting until the next day for those attending NRMC. The result was we had about a half dozen switch camps once they arrived. Thus, some of the advantages of combining the camps that contributed to its allure were not realized.

The region's BHAG was accomplished, and a NEEC was successfully held in the Northwest region. The comradery amongst the staff was great. The camp staff at Living Waters Camp was excellent to work with. However, remember this was a pilot camp, which means we plan, we execute, we review, and we decide if it should be added to our national training event lineup.

Although it was great to have a successful NEEC in the Northwest region, as of now, this combined NRMC/NEEC will not become a standard camp offering. That is not to say it will never happen again. It will simply take a very special set of circumstances for this combined camp to become a reality in the future.



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