



February 23, 2020

**To: PRCA Board of Directors**

**From: Peter Smerud**

**RE: Nomination for Board of Directors**

**Please accept this statement as my expressed intent (self-nomination) to run for an open board position. My skill set background, while including construction and builder skills, currently includes that of an owner/user group representative (as the Executive Director of an experiential learning program).**

**I am interested in using my experience and management skills to help PRCA grow as an organization, increase it's membership and influence in the industry as a whole, and to truly represent the needs and concerns of the both the summer camp owners, operators and school outdoor education facilities.**

**I will bring my diverse professional skill set to assist PRCA in maintaining high quality standards and am willing to role up my sleeves, work in collaboration with other board members and to take on projects as needed. I see this as an opportunity help PRCA stand out as a leading organization that effectively serves the needs of the practitioners, operators, administrators, and builders within the Ropes Course community.**

I go way back with PRCA to its inception (actually before it was an association), and I served on the 12 member PRCA ANSI Accredited Standards Developer Committee, but I've been "out of the game" the past several years.

Our facility's courses are some of the highest use in the nation for a multiple element static belay outdoor high course, e.g 14,000 trips per year; our courses and climbing walls (indoor) serve primary 10-14 year olds; we operate courses in temps ranging from 90F to -40F; all of our coursework is conducted as a part of a holistic environmental learning experience; as we're also an accredited school our learning theory models we've developed support the concepts and outcomes that are applied to how we conduct a challenge course experience. I was the designer and builder of the courses, and for decades was the chief instructor and manager, but now I lead the entire organization and have oversight as the lead administrator.

I also just returned from China where I was advising environmental education leaders on models of development to incorporate in the build out of environmental ed in their country (note... I returned coronavirus free). Although Ropes courses weren't the main focus of my trip but it was certainly a super interesting insight into Chinese education philosophy and systems.

· I am a PRCA Member under our Wolf Ridge Outdoor Education Center's Organizational Membership (Representative).

## Bio

Peter Smerud is the Wolf Ridge Executive Director and has served in this position since 2011. Previous roles at Wolf Ridge include assistant director, director of operations, director of adventure education, special programs coordinator and



naturalist. His tenure at Wolf Ridge began in 1987 at a time when the new site had no buildings or curriculum. Today, Peter directs a staff of 60-75 people who enrich the lives of 15,000 students and summer campers annually.

Experienced in all aspects of residential center operations – education, strategic planning, fund-raising and facilities maintenance – Peter consults with other environmental education organizations in the United States and abroad. He presents at state and national conferences, conducts seminars and is a member of several professional organizations including the North American Association for Environmental Education and the Minnesota Science Teachers Association. Peter is a founding member of the Professional Ropes Course Association.

He received a bachelor's degree from Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, majoring in German with concentrations in chemistry and biology. Peter also pursued graduate studies in natural resource management at North Dakota State University and outdoor recreation at the University of Utah. In addition, he graduated from the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) in Lander, Wyoming.

A lifelong skier, Peter is certified as an alpine ski patroller and wilderness first responder. He's been a member of the Lake County Search and Rescue squad since 1994, serving as its captain from 1997-2001.

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