

Film: 19 minutes

Combat Vets suffering from Post-traumatic Stress Disorder participate in a fly fishing workshop hosted by non-profit Sun Valley Adaptive Sports. Explore the connection between nature and healing.



CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Grades 9 – 12

Health, Civics

(Caution! Brief use of profanity in film)

Health – Standard 4. Know how to maintain mental and emotional health

- Know behaviors that communicate care, consideration, and respect of self and others (including those with disabilities or handicapping conditions)
- Know strategies for coping with and overcoming feelings of rejection, social isolation, and other forms of stress

Civics - Standard 10. Understand the roles of voluntarism and organized groups in American social and political life

- Know services that are provided by charitable, religious, and civic groups in the community (e.g., health, child, and elderly care; disaster relief; counseling; tutoring; basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter)

Resource - [McREL Content Knowledge – Standards & Benchmarks](#)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ☞ What is meant by the title of the film, “Fish out of Water”?
- ☞ The veterans in this film suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Explain this condition in your own words. Have you ever known someone who suffers from PTSD? Are veterans the only people to suffer from PTSD?
- ☞ The veterans are described as selfless. Do they see themselves that way? Do they talk about their sacrifices?
- ☞ What is “survivor’s guilt”? Why are the soldiers who didn’t survive seen as heroes? Do you think they are more heroic than the soldiers who did survive? What does it mean to be a hero?

ACTIVITY

Visit the United States of America
Department of Veterans Affairs
[National Center for PTSD](#) website

Browse through the site. Find a section or topic that interests you. Did you find anything that surprised you? Prepare a five minute review of the website. Share your information in small groups. Do you think this website is helpful for veterans? Their families? The general public?

- ☞ What is meant by the comment, “I have friends but they aren’t comrades.”? How does being around someone who has experienced what they have been through help them? Can you understand something you haven’t experienced firsthand?
 - ☞ During the week that the veterans spend fishing what do you think helps them most? Is it being in nature? Is it the fly-fishing? Is it being with other veterans? Is it being with people who care about them?
 - ☞ What kind of people do you think work at Adaptive Sports? What qualities do they need to have?
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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Excerpts from interview at [explore.org](https://www.explore.org)

Tom Iselin is the Executive Director of [Sun Valley Adaptive Sports](https://www.sunvalleyadaptive.org), an Idaho-based program that uses sports and recreation as healing and therapy for people with disabilities, including service members who have been severely wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan.

What is the mission statement of your organization?

To use sports and recreation as healing and therapy to enrich the lives of people with disabilities. We serve children, teens, and adults with physical and cognitive disabilities, and service members who’ve been severely wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan.

We provide programs that help participants develop the physical skills and confidence they need to enjoy all types of sports and recreational activities. In the process, they also develop the life skills, hope, and inspiration



What is your dream for Sun Valley Adaptive Sports?

To build a large-scale sports and recreation center in Sun Valley for people with physical and cognitive disabilities. The purpose of the center would be to use sports and recreation as a place for therapy, healing, restoration, and coping. It would also be a center for Special Olympics and Paralympics training and competition. The center would offer sports such as skiing, snowboarding, Nordic skiing, snowshoeing, ice skating, paragliding, fly fishing, kayaking, whitewater rafting, hiking, rock climb, cycling, mountain bike riding, golfing, tennis, and a variety of arts and crafts activities.

The center would be compound structure complete with short-term and long-term housing. It would have a spa-like atmosphere and include things such as therapeutic massage for people with paralysis, meditation techniques for children with Down Syndrome, stress management therapy for wounded warriors, and a four-star cafeteria serving healthful food.

Staff, therapists, and instructors would be experts in the respective fields. They would conduct research and share it freely with other therapists and interested organizations around the world. The center would host frequent conferences and educational seminars.

The center would be funded by donors and foundations passionate to make lasting change in the lives of those who attended, and to improve the various industries serving people with physical and cognitive disabilities.

What would you consider SVAS's greatest accomplishment?

Designing and operating therapeutic sports camps for wounded warriors that have a lasting, meaningful, and therapeutic impact on their lives. Many sport camps for wounded warriors are nothing more than vacations. They have their place, but I’m proud to say we’re working hard to set the standards bar high for authentic sports therapy.
