

WWP News & Media: Veteran Group Outings, Charity Events, Helping Vets

Gator Tales: Wounded Warrior Project Veterans Connect While Kayaking

AMELIA ISLAND, Fla., May 30, 2017 /[PRNewswire-USNewswire](#)/ -- The serenity of Michael Iwanus's recent kayaking trip on Lofton Creek was interrupted by two baby alligators jumping from a log into the coffee-black water. The Navy veteran didn't flinch.

"If I was on my own, I would have panicked," he said. "But I had other warriors around me. I felt safe the entire time."

Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) connected veterans and their families during a kayaking trip on Amelia Island. While paddling through one of North Florida's unspoiled sanctuaries, participants shared experiences in a picturesque and comforting environment.

Roy Rodriguez and his wife April, an Air Force veteran, love the outdoors. They brought that passion to their first WWP event outing, and they quickly benefited by making new connections.

"We were lucky we selected this event," Roy said. "It was hard for my family to adjust after April left military life. Civilian life can be very difficult. It was rewarding to be around warriors and their families. I liked making people laugh. It gave me some peace."

In a [WWP survey](#) of the injured warriors it serves, 29.6 percent of survey respondents expressed physical activity helps them cope with stress and emotional concerns. Program events like this highlight the importance of managing mental health through physical activity and connecting with other veterans.

Thanks to generous donors, WWP programs and services are offered free of charge to warriors, their caregivers, and families, and they assist with mental health, physical health and wellness, career and benefits counseling, connecting warriors with one another and their communities, and long-term care for the most seriously wounded.

Erica Sullivan had never been in a boat before. A fellow warrior shared a seat in his kayak to ease her apprehensions.

"I was nervous, but it turned out a lot better than I expected," the Air Force veteran said. "It was a perfect trip. It was so good that I'm interested in taking lessons and buying my own kayak."

"I'm just glad I didn't see any alligators."

To learn and see more about how WWP's programs and services connect, serve, and empower wounded warriors, visit <https://newsroom.woundedwarriorproject.org/>.

About Wounded Warrior Project

Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) connects, serves, and empowers wounded warriors.

SOURCE Wounded Warrior Project

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<https://newsroom.woundedwarriorproject.org/2017-05-30-Gator-Tales-Wounded-Warrior-Project-Veterans-Connect-While-Kayaking>