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# WEEKEND BREAK

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## EXPERIENCING 'ALONE' PART II

**SURVIVAL AND PREPAREDNESS: THE TACTICAL TOOLS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH TO STAYING ALIVE**



Photos by Aaron Breniman

Workshop participants at Hug Point during the Experience "Alone" wilderness living and survival skills workshop held near Nehalem.



**LEFT:** Alan Kay demonstrates producing fire using the hand-drill technique, one of many tools available in a survival scenario. **RIGHT:** Workshop host Nicole Apelian, who finished fourth in the second season of History's "Alone."



**By AARON BRENNIMAN**  
 For EO Media Group

*This is part II of our Experience 'Alone' series. Part I focused on the duo who ran the workshop; this installment focuses on the workshop itself, recently held near Nehalem.*

**W**hen I first saw History's hit show "Alone," I wanted to know more about the contestants, what they learned and how the experience changed them.

The show features 10 contestants dropped off in the remote ruggedness of Vancouver Island, British Columbia, in a who-can-stay-the-longest reality survival competition. Contestants bring limited survival equipment and film themselves.

When I learned that two of the show's contestant were hosting an "Experience Alone" wilderness skills workshop deep in the foothills of the Oregon Coast Range, just outside of Nehalem, I knew I had to get there.

The contestants: Alan Kay, a former Georgia corrections officer and self-defense instructor, who outlasted the other nine contestants in the show's first season; and Nicole Apelian, a scientist, mother, educator, expeditionary leader, safari guide, herbalist and traditional skills instructor who finished fourth on Season No. 2.

Apelian splits her time between the Nehalem property and her Portland home. Diagnosed with MS in 1999, she found a deep connection to nature as a path toward healthy living.

"The last 15 years I've been doing pretty well, and I still have episodes. Things still creep up, and what I usually do is go back to the woods," she said.

During the immersive five-day workshop, I and the other participants deep-dived into survival psychology.

"I think we're capable of so much more than we give ourselves credit for," Kay said. "We don't realize how strong we really are. We're survival machines."

**Fire starters**

Guests converged on the property: A mother from Vancouver, Washington; a former marine and safety consultant, also from Vancouver; a yoga instructor and student



**Aaron Breniman**



Workshop participants collect mussels from Hug Point.

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