

Wilderness Professional Semester Program Outline

Program Description

[Wilderness Trek](#) offers The [Guide Semester](#) program for individuals looking to pursue a career in the outdoor industry or simply looking for an awesome experience that provides, the adventure of a lifetime, personal growth, professional development, spiritual growth, outdoor training, and certifications. Our semesters are based out of the [Glorieta Camps](#) basecamp in Northern New Mexico.

Throughout our semesters we address the three major things employers look for when assessing job applicants: personal experience, formal training, and certifications. We provide all three throughout the length of each semester to give participants a solid foundation to start pursuing their career goals. Our semesters are also helpful for students who want time to find out what their outdoor interests and career goals may be. If you aren't sure if a career in the outdoors is for you that doesn't mean this program isn't a good fit for you. Your semester is a great opportunity to gain real life experience as you travel, both in the U.S. and internationally, experiencing what the best of the great outdoors has to offer. You'll learn more than just technical skills; you'll learn to problem solve and think critically, recognize and manage risk, understand how you personally approach challenge and adversity, and how to care for yourself and others in outdoor settings.

Course Objectives

- Raise up qualified Christians to work and live as lights in the outdoor industry
- Give participants relevant hands-on experience in various outdoor disciplines
- Provide instruction and training by qualified guides and organizations
- Help students obtain certifications that are meaningful in the industry
- Develop students instructional skill and experience

Overarching Themes

Ministry Focus - We include a ministry curriculum that runs throughout the length of our semesters. The ministry aspect of our program can be separated into three different parts: helping students develop an understanding of the world around them, deepening their personal faith, and inspiring them to live out their missional call as Christians in their lives and work.

- Understanding the World Around You - The world contains many different religions and worldviews and the outdoor industry is no different. During this section of our ministry curriculum students will utilize the book *The Universe Next Door* to study multiple major worldviews. Throughout this experience students will read and discuss the worldviews included in this book to better prepare them for the different systems of belief and worldviews they might encounter working in the outdoor industry. It is our belief that better understanding breeds better communication and we hope to deepen students understanding of the world around them so they are better able to communicate the love of Christ. Students will also critically assess their own worldview and the perceived worldviews of individuals in their personal lives as a way to better understand their influences and their sphere of influence.
- Deepen Your Personal Faith - We accomplish this through a number of avenues during our semesters. Students will live together in Christian community and share their personal stories with other believers. We will incorporate students into the larger community at basecamp by arranging times where students will be hosted for various meals by full-time staff. As a class we will read and discuss texts by noteworthy Christian thinkers such as; C.S. Lewis, A.W. Tozer, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Multiple times during the program students will choose a spiritual discipline and put it into practice for a week. During this time students will journal on their experience implementing their chosen discipline and we will discuss the experience as a group.
- Be Inspired - During this aspect of our ministry curriculum we will discuss the great commission and our responsibility, as Christians, to live as lights in the world. Students will discuss ways that the Church has caused people to turn away and ways that the Church has demonstrated the love of Christ. We also work to offer the opportunity for students to interact with Christians currently working in the outdoor industry, either in an overt ministry setting or not, to get their perspective of what it is like to be a Christian working in the outdoor industry and the opportunities and difficulties that they have encountered.

The Guide Mindset - This is something that can't be learned and understood without experience and practice. The guide mindset is a way of thinking characterized by an ongoing mental evaluation of: risk, terrain, ones clients, and goals/objectives. The development of a good Guide Mindset allows one to balance goals and objectives against risk while applying critical thinking and technical skill in a variety of terrains. Developing this guide mindset is arguably the most valuable aspect of our semesters.

- Risk Management - This is a theme that goes into everyday of our courses. Students regularly practice risk management by identifying and weighing risk, mitigating risk, discussing what risk is appropriate and inappropriate, and assessing risk in hindsight.
- Critical Thinking and Skill Application Across Activities - Our semesters are designed to get students into a variety of terrain types: mountains, canyons, rivers, etc. This is done to give students the opportunity to apply principles and skills outside of the context they were originally learned. A true sign of mastery is the ability to choose the most appropriate technique, and its application, for any given situation.
- Variety of Terrain - There is no substitute for experience in a number of different types of terrain because experience in varied terrain is a big contributor to good decision making in the backcountry.

Individual Role in the Outdoor Industry - As instructors, educators, and guides there is an expectation to have a more in-depth understanding of the industry, its ethics and practices, and to apply oneself to the task of spreading that knowledge. Additionally, individuals who pursue careers in the outdoor industry will be in positions of responsibility and importance that offer extended time with clients and co-workers in amazing outdoor settings. As Christians this creates ample opportunities, and a relational environment, for sharing the Gospel.

- Christian Ministry: Inspiring students to see themselves as missionaries in their field and giving them a framework to understand what that means is a greatly desired outcome of this course. The outdoor field is populated by many different types of people who don't know Jesus. Positions in the outdoor industry often entail extended time with clients and co-workers which offers opportunities to show others the love of Christ. A profession in the outdoor field is a great opportunity for Christians to live as lights in the world.
- Education: We believe students need to have an understanding of the landscape of the industry as a whole, not only a grasp of technical skills. Throughout their time in the program students interact, participate, and learn about many different aspects of the outdoor industry. These aspects include different geographical areas, different cultures, other outdoor companies, various technical disciplines, and ethics common in the outdoor industry.

Description of Training

[New Mexico River Adventures - Whitewater Rafting Guide School](#) - Whitewater Rafting guide training taught by our trusted partner, New Mexico River Adventures. They are an established commercial rafting company based in Northern New Mexico. This portion of the Guide Semester consists of a multi-day whitewater rafting river expedition. For this trip we will be travelling internationally to Mexico to run rivers such as the Rio Aros, Rio Yaqui, or Rio Mulatos. Exact rivers, and river sections descended, will depend upon flows. During this trip students will learn about multi-day commercial river trips, international expedition planning, cultural considerations, loading and rigging both paddle boats and gear boats, reading the river, guiding paddle boats, rowing gear boats, and delivering safety orientations. All of this will be done on a 100+ mile section of the Rio Aros in the State of Sonora in Mexico. This section of river has rapids ranging from Class I to Class IV. This training trip also includes the American Canoe Association - River Safety & Rescue Skills course.

Canyoneering - Multiple days in the North Wash area of Utah learning about and descending technical slot canyons. During this trip students will learn various aspects of technical Canyoneering such as: guide books and resources, canyon navigation, movement techniques, technical systems, and canyon specific risk management considerations. Students will implement all of this knowledge to descend a variety of sandstone slot canyons through the use of ropes, rappelling, and climbing movement.

Backpacking - Throughout the backpacking portion of our program students will progress from introductory backpacking principles to expedition style backpacking techniques. Students will learn about on trail and off trail navigation techniques, outdoor living skills, LNT principles, living and travelling in bear country, etc. These trips are education intensive and offer many opportunities for students to develop their teaching style and experience. Students are given topics to teach on and provided opportunities throughout these trips to instruct their peers on different aspects of guiding, backpacking, and LNT principles. Peer and instructor feedback is provided. These trips will take place in either New Mexico or Colorado and students will attempt to summit multiple peaks over 10,000 feet with the high likelihood of peaks in the 13,000 to 14,000+ foot range. Subject to instructor approval students will be given the opportunity to operate as guides. In this role students will be in charge of working with peers, running guide meetings, navigating and route finding, time management, group and individual task assignments, and dealing with situations as they arise.

Maps, Compasses, and Navigational Skills - We educate students on the components of topographical maps and specific concerns when using maps and GPS devices together. Background into map datums and the Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) coordinate system is given to aid student in gaining a deeper understanding of topographical maps and how to use them to effectively navigate in the field. Through this component of our semester's students learn and demonstrate map reading skills, how to orient a map, take a bearing, transfer a bearing, triangulate their position, and are trained in the use and operation of a two way satellite messenger GPS device. These skills are taught early on in our semesters and are utilized on our various trips throughout the remainder of the course.

Trip Planning - During this component of our semester students go through a comprehensive trip planning phase where they create trip objectives, map out routes, communicate with public land agencies to find out expected conditions on the ground, learn about and pack bulk rations, and research public land agency management restrictions specific to the area we will be travelling in.

Traditional Climbing - Students start their climbing training with ground school where they learn about traditional climbing gear, gear placement, anchor building, static line rigging systems, belaying and belay devices. When students demonstrate appropriate proficiency they are sequenced through mock leading in a top rope setting to leading traditional climbs of appropriate difficulty grades. Various subsequent climbing trips are taken to further develop experience and skill proficiency in preparation for participation in the A.M.G.A. Single Pitch Instructor course. These subsequent trips could take place in Utah, New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming or other locations.

Certifications & Certificates

[SOLO - Wilderness First Responder](#) - a medical training course that consists of 72 to 80 hours of medical knowledge, skill practice, and examination. This program is focused on caring for injuries and illnesses in backcountry extended care situations.

[AMGA - Single Pitch Instructor Course](#) - a climbing course that consists of 24 hours of skill assessment, training, skill practice, and practice delivering instructional content.

[ACA - Level 3: River Safety & Rescue Skills Course](#) - a river based rescue course that consists of 8 hours of instruction in river hazard identification and avoidance, rescue skills, and skill practice.

[Leave No Trace Trainer](#) - an environmental stewardship course that consists of 16 hours of instruction, skill practice, and teaching. This course prepares you to educate clients and students in outdoor stewardship principles.

Assessment and Evaluation

To ensure that students receive the most out of our courses, and that they are consistently progressing towards achieving the objectives of the program, we maintain a culture of continual assessment and evaluation of students and their skills through:

- One on one meetings with instructors
- Periodic skill checks to ensure retention
- Certification training courses and exams

One on one's allow students to receive prompt feedback about their skills and abilities including what areas they are excelling in and any potential areas where they need to make progress.

Teaching Opportunities

To accomplish the objective of helping students develop their ability and technique as instructors and educators we offer students multiple opportunities to teach various technical skills and outdoor industry related topics. The opportunities are incorporated into our various trips, trainings, and certification courses. Each of these opportunities will offer peer and instructor feedback to provide a profitable and constructive learning environment.

Course Texts

Provided Texts: These books are provided for you out of course tuition.

- Harvey, M. W., & Simer, P. (1999). *The National Outdoor Leadership School Wilderness Guide: The classic wilderness guide*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Gaines, B., & Martin, J. D. (n.d.). *Rock climbing: The AMGA single pitch manual*.
- Black, D. (2013). *Canyoneering: A guide to techniques for wet and dry canyons*.(2nd ed.). Falcon Guides.

- Sire, J. (2009). *The Universe Next Door*. 5th ed. Downers Grove Ill.: InterVarsity Press.
- Tozer, A. *The pursuit of God*.
- Bonhoeffer, D., Doberstein, J., & Bonhoeffer, D. (1954). *Life together*. New York: HarperOne.

Optional Texts: These books are highly recommended and are not provided.

- Luebben, C. (2007). *Rock climbing anchors: A comprehensive guide*. Seattle, WA: Mountaineers Books.
- Books, T. M. (2010). *Mountaineering Freedom of the Hills 8th Edition. ; 50th Anniversary 1960 - 2010*. Mountaineers Books, The.

Instructor Qualifications

Scott Chapman - Director

Education: B.S. Biblical and Theological Studies from John Brown University

Certifications: Wilderness First Responder, [A.M.G.A. Rock Guide](#), AIARE Level 2, Leave No Trace Trainer

Experience: Director of Wilderness programs for [Camp Eagle](#), [Glorieta Camps](#), and now [Wilderness Trek](#) for 12+ years.

Hunter Parrott - Course Leader

Education: B.S. Political Science - Minor: International Studies from Stephen F. Austin State University

Certifications: Wilderness First Responder, AMGA Certified Single Pitch Instructor, AIARE Level 1, Leave No Trace Trainer, Red Cross Instructor

Experience: Guide Semester Course Leader 4+ years, Wilderness Guide (Seasonal) 3 years, Whitewater Raft Guide (Seasonal) 2 seasons, Extensive personal long distance backpacking & climbing experience.