

So. Rocky Mountain Field Studies

May 2012 FAQ's

This is updated as of Thursday, Sept 7, 2011. Information is still subject to change.

First Meeting is Sunday eve. 7-9 pm, February 19, 2012 in Achatz 111

Q: When do we go and how do we get there?

A: We may leave as early as **on Monday, May 14 and return to Ft. Wayne as late as Sunday, May 27**. I have given this window to our travel agent to determine the best route, times and cost for our travels. Normally we are gone for 11-12 days. More info will be given as it becomes available. The cost of all transport is covered in the trip fee.

Q: What else is covered in the trip fee?

A: Most everything that is not personal gear and even some of that. **Your trip fee does NOT cover tuition** (but you do not have to be taking the trip for credit to go) and tuition can be included in the 18 hour umbrella for full time students if credit is taken as a spring course. **It does cover all transport, all Entry Fees, Camping Fees, Permits, The hotel in Phoenix on Friday before our return, a guidebook made especially for the trip, and experienced instruction and leadership.** We usually go out to a nice TexMex place on the last night in Vegas and that is paid individually. We stop at a few places where food can be purchased inroute but folks are ALWAYS welcome to eat out of the group coolers. Ask around and past trip takers will tell you we strive to keep everyone well fed, dry and with plenty of sleep. Trust me, it makes it easier on the leaders if you are all the above.

Q: What is the cost?

A: **The cost will be approximately \$1250** (I'll know soon the exact amount but we are still getting quotes from the van rentals and the final hotel night in Denver). You can save \$50 by paying in full by **March 19, 2012**. There are a fair number of places on this trip to pick up souvenirs. If you tend to buy "stuff" you may want a bit more spending \$\$\$\$. I get by with around \$75 usually. Keep your eyes open for announcements outside Achatz 117, the display case near Achatz 120 & outside the BIOL Dept. office. **ALL \$\$\$ is due in full by Monday, April 9!**

Q: How can I get credit and when?

A: **BIOL 256 is the 3 hour class called Southwest Field Studies (until the New So. Rocky Mountains Field Study course is approved, we will continue to use this to sign up for the course with fall registration for spring courses.** . It is taught by Dr. Larry Wiedman. As the catalog says, it covers the biology, geology, ecology, culture, and history (and mostly how each has affected the others) in this unique setting. You may sign up for the course during the regular Spring term so that your Financial Aid can help with TUITION. Normal add/drop dates are then in effect. You can also take either course for credit as a May Trip Course. You may take the trip for NO CREDIT and come along just for fun, if there is room after student registration . We ask of these folks only one thing...to be enthusiastic full participants.

Q: Where are we actually going?

A: We visit many National Parks, Monuments and Forests including the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park, Mesa Verde NP, Great Sand Dune NP, Pike's Peak, Garden of the Gods, Rocky Mountain NP and travel through several Native American Reservations.

Q: How do I get signed up?

A: You can register for the courses during registration for spring 2012 classes in Nov, 2010. You should also sign up with Carolyn Exner, Admin. Asst in Achatz Hall of Science. cexner@sf.edu or (260) 399-7700 X 8200 so we have a count.

Q: What else do I need in the way of gear? Do we really walk all the way across the desert?

A: Let's reverse the order for answering. We day hike a lot (about 15-30 miles total for the trip, some in the desert, but mostly in the mountains. Remember that this is over the course of many days and we will

advise you to prepare before the trip. **Some of you will even take our advice, others will hurt!** We will be in 3-4 different Biome environments and 3-4 wilderness areas on the trip. We have done this before...lots...and know comfort ranges, challenge ranges, and torture ranges for typical groups like us. We strive to challenge folks physically but not torture. You may decide to push yourself to new limits, and that is part of the education of the course/trip. Most folks have never asked themselves to do this. **Your safety is always first in our thoughts.** We have never had a serious injury, though we have made trips to the ER on the May trips. Mostly do to stupid things against advice. But, people have died where we will be doing what we will be doing! We can not be with you the whole time, it's impossible, and most of you would not want that anyway. We will be in wilderness. That means, no bathrooms, trails that are not groomed, some climbing, and stream crossing that require getting very wet. **Temps have ranged (and most likely will this year) from over 100 degrees F at Mesa Verde to below freezing at the pass over the Rockies in Colorado.** The places we go are also the homes of some impressive critters. We see lots of elk, occasional rattlesnake, spiders, and scorpions, a few marmots, picas, coyotes, and maybe wild sheep, **and could see wolves, bears, and even mountain lions. They live here! Yes, they can be dangerous. Human contacts and problems are rare with the last list, but they are possible and we need to be prepared.**

GEAR: You will need to pack in soft (no rigid luggage) packs or suitcases. They are easier to pack in the vans. You **HAVE TO HAVE GOOD, STURDY HIKING BOOTS!!!** No, **tennis shoes will not work here.** Twisted ankles and blisters are among the most common problem we face and we are often miles from any roads. No one will carry you. **Get the boots early and break them in.** These can cost \$80-200 but will last for years and can be worn even to class (they are great in lousy weather at USF). You need to put at least 100 miles on them before the trip or you will hurt. USF will supply camp/backpack stoves, pot/pans and water purifiers (the two most costly items). **You will need sleeping things (bag and tent (share with a partner) and a sleeping mat), personal eating utensils, and water bottles.** We will discuss these in class and how to cut costs without cutting needs.

Q: What if I don't want to or can't hike?

A: Sorry, but because of the nature of the material and the course, we can not accommodate many special needs, ask if you have Q's. Some special diets, vegetarian for instance, can work if advanced notice is made. You may be asked to secure a doctor's permission to go on the trip. This course is designed to push most of your physical limits, it will be a great source of satisfaction when done, but a challenge during. Most able bodied students can accomplish this with no/few problems, but, if you have are not sure ask your doctor their advice, then heed it.

Q: I heard that there are assistantships, true?

A: Maybe. There are no free lunches here. Grants are worked off in advance helping with Biology Dept/trip needs at a generous rate if funds are available

Q: What faculty/staff are going this time?

A: Dr. Larry Wiedman (Director), for sure, and Jenny Maldonado, perhaps others. Several have expressed interest.

Q: What are the other class meeting dates?

A: Sundays March 25, April 15, 22, 29 and if needed, May 13, 2012; Achatz Hall 111 7-9 pm

Q: What if I have Q's not covered here?

A: Ask **Dr. Larry Wiedman (Doc)** lwiedman@sf.edu (434-7482 or 8214) in the USF Dept of Biology in Achatz Hall .