



WILD ROCKIES
FIELD INSTITUTE
THINK OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

UM SUMMER EXPLORATION: Environmental Ethics–Climate Change and Sense of Place

Gear & Clothing List

The following equipment list is intended to help you pack for your field days in Montana. It is important that you bring needed clothing and gear, yet do not bring too much, as space in our vehicles will be limited. **We will be camping in the “front country” for four days and three nights, where you will have easy access to the vehicles, followed by backpacking in the wilderness for another four days and three nights.**

WRFI supports sharp shopping and saving money. We do not expect you to spend any more than necessary. For example, a \$.50 thrift store food bowl works just as well as a \$50 titanium one. Some of your gear may be purchased discounted or used, but it all should be high quality. For backpacking and hiking clothing, any non-cotton, quick dry athletic clothing will work. Brands like Under Armor, Nike, and Target’s athletic brand will work just as well as outdoor specific brands.

Much of this equipment can last you a lifetime of outdoor adventure. **If unsure about which item to buy, consider what will be most useful to you after the course and consult with WRFI staff.** Where to shop? Buying from local shops often provides the best service and supports your community. Some larger chain stores have greater selection and excellent return policies. WRFI has a small selection of loaner items such as backpacks, a few sleeping bags, and outerwear options. Please email wrfi@wrfi.net if you are unable to purchase or borrow the necessary gear and clothing and we will reserve items for your use.

Please bring a copy of this document with you as you pack or shop for gear. It is essential to your safety and comfort that you are well-equipped and supplied. Please let us know if you have questions. We recognize this is a lot to plan for and we are happy to help! WRFI Office: 406-549-4336.

Individual equipment supplied by WRFI

- WRFI travel mug—yours to keep!
- Clean WRFI t-shirt at course end

Group equipment supplied by WRFI

- Ingredients for breakfasts, lunches, dinners, and snacks* for the seven field days of the course
- First aid kits
- Emergency communications (satellite phone/texting device)
- Tents & group tarps
- Stoves, fuel, cookware, and utensils
- Water treatment (for the backcountry hiking days)
- Dromedary bags for group water storage in the backcountry
- Plastic cubes for group water storage in the frontcountry

- Trowels for burying waste in the backcountry
- Bear repellent spray
- Course library with place-based field guides and other books
- Maps
- KN95 masks in case needed in the field for public health considerations

**While WRFI will provide some simple snacks for the group, we encourage students to bring any additional snacks that are tailored to their personal preferences/needs—especially trail snacks like bars, trail mix, dried fruit, etc.*

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

- **Backpack:** Bring a high-quality internal frame backpack with a capacity of **AT LEAST 60 liters**. It is not necessary to buy the best brands (e.g. ArcTeryx or Osprey)—they are really nice, but not essential. It is most important that your pack is sized properly so weight is distributed well between your hips and shoulders when packed.
- **Sleeping bag:** With a temperature **rating of 30°F**, or 20°F if you get cold easily. Down is lighter, more compressible, and longer lasting than synthetic insulation, but must be kept dry and are generally more expensive.
- **Sleeping pad:** Closed-cell foam pads work well and do not puncture; lightweight inflatable pads (Therma-Rest or equivalent) are more comfortable and compressible, but require careful use to avoid punctures.
- **Day hiking pack:** Bring a small backpack with a capacity of between 20 and 30 liters. Day packs will store frontcountry clothes and other personal items in the vehicles during the backpacking trip.
- **Camp chair:** “Crazy Creek” style. You will spend a lot of time reading, discussing, and writing on this course. Chair “kits” (e.g. Therma-Rest trekker chair kit) that incorporate an inflatable sleeping pad are lighter and less bulky than those with built-in padding. However, they are also more vulnerable to puncturing.
- **Stuff sacks:** 1-2 medium/large size nylon bags with drawstrings for organizing gear and food. Avoid the ultra-light, (sometimes called “sil”) stuff sacks—they are expensive, tear easily, and probably won’t last the entire course.
- **Pocket knife:** Swiss Army style folding knife or multi-tool. 4 inch blade length maximum. Make sure this goes in checked baggage if you’re flying to Montana.
- **Bowl:** For all your eating needs. Durable plastic or lightweight metal food bowl. A securely sealing lidded bowl will allow you to keep leftovers – highly recommended!
- **Eating utensils:** Spoon or “spork.” Avoid the plastic spoon/spork combo—they tend to snap in half.
- **Water bottles:** 2 liters of total capacity. Be sure lids seal securely. Hydration system bladders can substitute for *one* bottle.
- **Headlamp and extra batteries:** Lightweight is more important than high power.
- **Wristwatch:** Waterproof, with alarm. This is essential for coordinating wake-ups and group meetings. Cellphones are heavy, fragile, and batteries will not last. Practice setting the alarm before the course starts.

- **Sunglasses & sunscreen:** UV protection and SPF 30+
- **Contacts or glasses:** Spares are a good idea.
- **Journals, pens/pencils:** At least 6 x 8 inches, spiral bound or Moleskine style preferred. Unlined paper is nice. Colored pencils or very small watercolors are enjoyable, but optional.
- **Toiletries:** Travel size toothbrush and paste, lip balm, feminine hygiene products, and biodegradable soap. **Small** containers that can be refilled are best.
- **Hand sanitizer** (60-95% alcohol): Just a small bottle for personal use to maintain proper hygiene when running water/soap is unavailable. We'll refill this as needed.
- **Prescription medications:** Bring enough for the entire course—pharmacies are few and far between. Double check the expiration dates!
- **Simple first aid:** Basic supplies, such as blister bandages and small roll of athletic tape. WRFI provides a large group first aid kit with everything else needed
- **Zip-lock freezer bags:** Smaller ones for food and personal trash, larger ones (2 gallon) for books
- **Bandanas:** 1-2 recommended for hygiene or sun protection.
- **Small whistle:** Need one that you can remove from pack.
- **Face mask:** 1 face mask that adequately covers your mouth and nose (for meetings on the Blackfeet Nation and as may be needed).

OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT

- **Trekking Poles:** Old ski poles can suffice.
- **Binoculars or hand lens:** Dramatically helps your natural history observations – both close up and far away. Light, cheap, and small models are best.
- **Camera:** Be sure to have a good case for this delicate item. Don't forget batteries/charger/memory cards. **Phones may be used for camera function, but we'll ask that they aren't used in the backcountry for other functions—backpacking is a great opportunity to minimize screen time!*
- **Compass:** Simple models with rotating housing and clear baseplate.
- **Mosquito head net:** Best paired with a baseball cap to keep it off your face.
- **Quick-dry towel or hand towel:** Can be helpful for showers in town.
- **Additional stuff sacks:** 1-2 to organize clothes, books, etc.
- **Phone:** For use only during free time, and not during program activities.

Do NOT bring: Coolers, excessive magazines or books, slacklines, or other large, fragile, or generally unnecessary items because our vehicles will be very full!

Dress for Success!

Expect highly variable weather including: hot sun, high winds, rainstorms, and even snow. Sunscreen and sunglasses are essential to protect your skin and eyes from burning at high elevations, and in clear air.

REQUIRED CLOTHING

- **Hiking Boots:** Must provide ankle support. Soles do NOT need to be extremely stiff, but should be thick enough to protect your feet from sharp rocks. Wear your boots as much as possible before the course to break them in and prevent blisters.
- **Footwear for camp:** Sport sandals (e.g., Chacos or Tevas), flip flops, or old sneakers for wearing in camp while not hiking.
- **Hiking socks:** Wool or wool blend, 2 pairs. NO cotton! High quality socks make for happy feet.
- **Underwear:** Stretchy lycra shorts are comfortable and prevent chafing while hiking. Cotton underwear is nice for around camp and sleeping.
- **Sports bra:** Synthetic for wet and cold, cotton for comfort on dry days and at night.
- **Nylon quick drying pants:** 1 pair. Those that are convertible into shorts can be handy. NO denim or cotton!
- **Nylon quick drying shorts:** 1 pair for hiking, NO denim or cotton.
- **T-Shirts:** 2 quick-dry synthetic shirts for backpacking. 1 cotton shirt for sleeping. WRFI will provide another one at course-end.
- **Fleece or wool jacket/sweater**
- **Insulated jacket:** Lightweight down, synthetic, or wool.
- **Long underwear:** One set of mid-weight, synthetic or technical wool top and bottom. Waffle underwear is often made of cotton—double check!
- **Rain jacket & PANTS:** Must be **waterproof** and have a hood. Gore-Tex or equivalent preferred. (Coated nylon is not typically waterproof.) Must be durable.
- **Warm hat:** Wool or fleece—check the tag to make sure it's NOT cotton.
- **Sun hat:** Baseball cap with bandana or wide brimmed crushable sun hat.
- **Town clothes:** Presentable and comfortable shirt and pants/jeans/skirt for travel and meetings. Cotton OK. Two sets.

OPTIONAL CLOTHING

- **Fleece pants, down jacket, and liner gloves:** For those who get cold easily.
- **Liner socks:** Thin synthetic, 1-2 pairs (if you are prone to blisters)
- **Gaiters:** To keep sand, snow and rocks out of your boots.
- **Wind shirt or light softshell jacket:** Breathable but wind-resistant nylon.
- **Long sleeve sun shirt:** Light fabric, light colored. You can buy special “desert shirts,” or you can find cheap dress shirts at the thrift store. A thin synthetic zip-neck can substitute. Cotton OK.