

Jack Mountain Bushcraft Catalog




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Jack Mountain Bushcraft is a private for profit institution owned by Tim Smith.

GI Bill  is a registered trademark of the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). More information about education benefits offered by VA is available at the official US government website at www.benefits.va.gov/gibill.

Faculty and Office Staff

We're professional educators; we've been teaching and guiding full time, year-round, since 1999. Our instructors are registered and master Maine Guides licensed by the state. Our experience running long-term immersion programs is unmatched. As this field explodes with new schools and instructors, we've got 18 years and 35 long-term immersion programs behind us. Experience matters. Our programs and methods are based on our extensive experience, not untested theories. No other school has our level of experience. No school has been doing it longer. No school has run as many long-term programs.

Tim Smith, M.Ed.- Tim grew up on a lake in a small town in New Hampshire. From a young age he was camping, fishing and learning how to get around in a canoe.

After earning an undergraduate degree, a B.A. Cultural Anthropology, he fulfilled a childhood dream and moved to Alaska where he fished and lived for a year in a 12-foot trailer before returning to the lower 48 and getting a master's degree in education.

Tim spent years learning the craft of guiding and traditions of the north woods from Master Maine Guide Raymond Reitze and studied extensively with Mors Kochanski. He spent significant time in both summer and winter traveling with and learning from native Cree people in northern Quebec. Highlights of his background include a 30-day primitive living experiment in the Alaskan bush, an 11-day walkabout with no food in Alberta, and numerous solo trips in the woods and on the rivers of Maine, New Hampshire, Quebec and Alaska.

Tim taught bushcraft and guided part-time for several years before founding the Jack Mountain Bushcraft School in 1999. He's been at it full-time since then.

Paul Sveum, B.A.- Paul grew up in the glaciated lands of southern Wisconsin, home to hardwoods forests, rich black soil and placid inland lakes. It was amongst the fields of corn and urban sprawl of nearby Madison that Paul learned to canoe, fish, hunt and appreciate the small wonders of Nature.

After high school Paul spent time traveling the country with his long time canine friend hiking mountain trails from the Sierra Nevada to the Absaroka-Beartooths, living day to day on whatever food could be caught, found, or gathered, and learning what it means to live without in a country of excess.

After spending a few unsuccessful days attempting to replicate a friction fire lighting technique he saw in a movie, Paul decided that trial and error was not the way to relearn thousands of years of accumulated knowledge. He enrolled in the Wilderness Bushcraft Semester, which proved to be the catalyst that drove him to pursue a path as an educator.

Paul lived in a canvas wall tent for 26 consecutive months before building a cabin on his homestead on the south shore of Lake Superior near Cornucopia, Wisconsin.

Paul has been a residential instructor for the Wilderness Bushcraft Semester since 2013.

When not in the northeast, Paul works as an instructor for the Lost Creek Folk School in Cornucopia, Wisconsin.

Jennifer Smith- Jennifer Smith is our office manager. If you call about taking a course, you'll speak with her.

7 Elements of Jack Mountain Programs

Skill – Journey – Craft – Nature – Culture – Sustainability – Self

Drawing on the philosophies of bushcraft we've developed over almost 20-years of field courses, the traditions of Maine Guides that go back generations, the Cree concept of miyupimaatisiium (translated as "being alive well") and the Scandinavian idea of friluftsliv (translated as "open air life"), the following seven elements comprise the components of our semester and yearlong programs.

- 1. Skill** – Learn by doing. Too much of modern education is theoretical, abstract and sedentary, where the head is engaged but the hands are not. We depart from that norm with a tangible, hands-on approach that emphasizes being an active participant in the natural world and in life. Our 21-point curriculum focuses on necessary skills for the professional outdoors person.
- 2. Journey** – Travel through remote parts of the north woods alongside professional guides, directly experiencing what you're learning. Live in the bush for extended lengths of time where the focus isn't simply how-to, but living with efficiency and grace that come with extensive experience.
- 3. Craft** – Explore the world with your hands. Build useful items from materials gathered on the landscape. Man needs tools to live. Making these necessary items from materials gathered from the landscape bonds you to the land and makes you self-reliant.
- 4. Nature** – Learn the language of the world around you. Study the weather, edible/medicinal plants, fungi, mammals and their tracks, birds, fish, mollusks, insects, amphibians, reptiles, rocks, minerals, soil, water, ice, celestial bodies and ecology.
- 5. Culture** – Culture is the human element, or soft skills, which make or break an expedition. Learn management and leadership skills crucial to the professional guide and outdoor leader, as well as how to instruct effectively.
- 6. Sustainability** – Life is different with minimal infrastructure. Learn the techniques of living a simple, low-tech life with minimal inputs by living them every day. Compost everything that will rot, grow food, reuse and repurpose resources, care for the land and leave it healthier for future generations.
- 7. Self** – Learn your specific needs and boundaries. In a world of generalizations, it's important to know exactly what you need to function well. How much sleep do you need to function? How much water? How much of a bed do you need to make in order to sleep well? This is about intimately knowing yourself and what you need to do to keep your body alive and well. The only way to learn it is to live it.

Field School Calendar

2016	Field School And Expedition Programs	Open Spots	Registration Deadline	College Credits	GI Bill Approved	Tuition
7/17-7/22	Summer Woodsman	full	6/15	–	No	\$900
7/17-8/12	Wilderness Canoe Expedition Semester	full	5/15/16	6	Yes	\$3600
8/21-10/22	Wilderness Bushcraft Semester Session 2	3	7/15/16	12	Yes	\$7100
12/4-12/10	Trapping Camp	6	11/15/16	–	No	\$700
12/11-12/16	Winter Woodsman	8	11/15/16	–	No	\$900
12/17-12/19	Frozen 48	6	11/15/16	–	No	\$250

2017	Field School And Expedition Programs	Open Spots	Registration Deadline	<u>College Credits</u>	GI Bill Approved	Tuition
1/30-2/10	Boreal Snowshoe Expedition Session 1	8	12/15/16	5	Yes	\$2050
2/20-3/3	Boreal Snowshoe Expedition Session 2	8	12/15/16	5	Yes	\$2050
4/17-6/17	Wilderness Bushcraft Semester Session 1	14	3/15/17	12	Yes	\$7100
6/26-7/21	Wilderness Canoe Expedition Semester Session 1	10	5/15/17	6	Yes	\$3600
7/24-8/18	Wilderness Canoe Expedition Semester Session 2	10	5/15/17	6	Yes	\$3600
8/20-10/21	Wilderness Bushcraft Semester Session 2	14	7/15/17	12	Yes	\$7100

Courses are based at our field school in Masardis, Maine.

If there is a holiday while class is in session, class will be held on that holiday.

Enrollment Policy

There are two steps to secure a spot on one of our programs: fill out the registration form and pay a deposit.

Registration Process:

1. Fill out our online registration form.
2. Pay a deposit. Your spot is secured when we receive your deposit.

Registration Details:

Minimum Enrollment: If a minimum enrollment is not met by the application deadline, those signed up have two options. The program can be run with below minimum enrollment, but with an increase in tuition (to meet the minimum enrollment level), or the program may be cancelled and the full tuition (including the deposit) will be refunded.

Rolling Admission:

We have a rolling admission policy for all of our programs. You may apply at any time up until the deadline for each specific program. When all spots are taken, the course is full and we place subsequent applicants onto a waiting list.

For Wilderness Bushcraft Semester Only- Please email a short essay to tell us about you and why you want to participate in the program. Length is unimportant; helping us learn something about you is.

Registration Packet

Before the start of each course or trip all participants are required to fill out and sign the documents listed below. We will have copies at the beginning of each course, but you can also print, fill out, sign and either scan and email or send a hard copy through the mail. Even if you plan to sign them immediately prior to the program, please read through them in advance so there are no surprises. Completing this paperwork is mandatory before participation in any program.

- Jack Mountain Bushcraft School Policies (pdf)
- Liability Release (pdf)
- Acknowledgement Of Risk (pdf)
- Medical Form (pdf)

General Requirements:

- Applicants must generally be 18 years of age, however other ages will be considered on a case by case basis.

- Entrance requirements specific to a course are listed in that course description.

GI Bill® Information

The Jack Mountain Bushcraft School is approved by the Maine State Approving Agency for Veterans Education Programs for the use of GI Bill benefits as a non-college degree institution for training GI Bill recipients. To learn more about GI Bill benefits or to apply for GI Bill eligibility visit www.benefits.va.gov/gibill.

GI Bill Approved Jack Mountain Bushcraft School Programs:

- **Wilderness Bushcraft Semester.**
- **Boreal Snowshoe Expedition.**
- **Wilderness Canoe Expedition Semester.**

Application Procedure

To apply Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits to our programs:

1. Fill out our registration form.
2. Pay a deposit to hold your spot on the course. This deposit will be repaid to you 100% when we receive your tuition from the VA. Beginning after the fall, 2016 Wilderness Bushcraft Semester course, deposits for GI Bill students will be the same as for non-GI Bill students. To pay a deposit, visit our Tuition page.
3. Email us a copy of your certificate of eligibility (sometimes called letter of eligibility).
4. We'll fill out form 22-1999 and send it to the Eastern Regional Processing Office in Buffalo, NY. We'll need to get your social security number to fill out the form. We'll do this over the phone.

Deposit Policy: Your spot on a course is not secured until we receive your deposit. Deposits are non-refundable and non-transferable in case of cancellation. If a course is already full, we will refund 100% of your deposit. Your deposit will be repaid to you 100% when we receive your tuition from the VA. Spaces are filled in the order applications are received, so register early.

Methods of Payment: We accept Dwolla, checks, money orders, cash (in person only, never send cash to us or anyone else), wire transfers and credit cards via PayPal. If interested in a wire transfer, contact us for details. **Our preferred method of payment is Dwolla, a payment network that allows you to move money securely from your bank account without credit card fees.**

If the GI Bill does not pay 100% of the tuition, the individual is responsible for the balance. We will figure this out in advance of the course.

GI Bill Benefits: For more information on GI Bill benefits and their rates, visit the GI Bill site.

Attendance Policy

100% attendance and participation for our courses is mandatory. All of our courses are immersion programs which means for the entire course you will live in the woods and spend every day actively learning. We believe that to learn you need to immerse yourself in the course and actively participate, “you learn by doing”. Sitting on the sidelines and watching is not an option. Lessons and skills that you learn are reinforced every day as part of the lifestyle. If, at times, you choose not to participate you may not successfully complete this course or may be disenrolled.

If you are not satisfied with a course you are free to leave at any time but you will not receive credit for that course.

Standards of Progress Policy

Programs are pass/fail. Students are continually evaluated and provided feedback by instructors. Students are evaluated based on the intended learning outcomes for each program. While efforts are made by our staff to ensure student success, we reserve the right to academically dismiss students who are not meeting minimum standards for participation and safety.

We assess students through our logbook and portfolio assessment system. It records what a student has accomplished instead of placing them in competition with their peers. Students keep a daily logbook during the program to record what they’ve done. These, along with crafts they’ve made, projects they’ve worked on, photographs they’ve taken, and everything else they’ve done during the program, are assembled into individual student portfolios.

Your portfolio is a factual record what you’ve done. This way, if someone were to ask if you knew how to start a hand drill fire, instead of saying you took a course on how to do it you could volunteer your logbook and state that you’ve done it “X” number of times. If they wanted to know about your skill with a specific craft, you could show it to them, as well as photos or video of you making it.

To verify that the content of your logbook is accurate, an instructor will regularly sign off on it. This can be weekly, bi-weekly, or at the end of a course. As a minimum, the logbook will be signed off on midway and at the end of the program. Students who successfully meet all program requirements will receive a certificate of completion. Student records are maintained in our main office.

Student Conduct and Dismissal Policy

When at the field school we're all business. We reserve the right to dismiss a student for any reason including but not limited to bringing drugs or alcohol onto school property, smoking outside of designated areas, fighting, and disruption of learning. Before registering, please read all of our School Policies.

Schedule of Fees

Wilderness Bushcraft Semester

Tuition for the Wilderness Bushcraft Semester is \$7100, of which up to \$6100 may be financed.

Tuition Details and Payment Schedule

- There is a deposit of \$1000 needed to hold your space, due upon acceptance into the program. Deposits are non-refundable except when courses are already full, in which case we'll refund your deposit or put you on a waiting list (your choice).
- Spaces are filled in the order applications are received, so register early.
- If paying in full, balance of \$6100 is due 30 days prior to start date.

Deposit for the Wilderness Bushcraft Semester– \$1000

Boreal Snowshoe Expedition

Tuition for the Wilderness Bushcraft Semester is \$2050, of which up to \$1550 may be financed.

Tuition Details and Payment Schedule

- There is a deposit of \$500 needed to hold your space, due upon acceptance into the program. Deposits are non-refundable except when courses are already full, in which case we'll refund your deposit or put you on a waiting list (your choice).
- Spaces are filled in the order applications are received, so register early.
- If paying in full, balance of \$1550 is due 30 days prior to start date.

Deposit for the Boreal Snowshoe Expedition – \$500

Wilderness Canoe Expedition Semester

Tuition for the Wilderness Canoe Expedition Semester is \$3600, of which up to \$2600 may be financed.

Tuition Details and Payment Schedule

There is a deposit of \$1000 needed to hold your space, due upon acceptance into the program. Deposits are non-refundable except when courses are already full, in which case we'll refund your deposit or put you on a waiting list (your choice).

Spaces are filled in the order applications are received, so register early.

If paying in full, balance of \$2600 is due 30 days prior to start date.

Deposit For The Wilderness Canoe Expedition Semester – \$1000 via Dwolla (preferred)

Tuition for Immersion and Certification Programs: For certification and immersion programs, tuition covers only the time spend with us in the field. Additional requirements necessary for certification are required, but are completed while at home or location other than the field school and as such we don't charge tuition for them.

Weeklong, Trip and Short Course Deposits

Tuition for specific courses is listed on individual course pages and on our calendar. A deposit of 1/2 of the program tuition is necessary to hold your spot. The balance is due 30 days prior to the program. Click on the Dwolla or Paypal buttons and enter the appropriate amount.

What is included with the tuition: Included in the tuition are all camping fees, group meals, instruction, and group gear.

What is not included with the tuition: Not included with the tuition are personal gear, items from town and any foods other than those specified.

Refund Policy

Cancellation And Refund Policy – With cancellations more than 60 days in advance of the course or trip, the tuition, less the deposit, will be refunded. With cancellations less than 60 days prior to the start of the course all monies are non-refundable and non-transferable. These policies reflect the fact that we do not overbook and cancelled spaces are very difficult to fill at the last minute.

Refund Policy for GI Bill Recipients

The school will refund the unused portion of prepaid tuition and fees on a pro rata basis. Any amount in excess of \$10.00 for an enrollment of registration fee will also be prorated.

Description of Available Space, Facilities and Equipment

Our Bushcraft and Sustainability Field School is located on 61 acres in Masardis, Maine on the banks of the Aroostook River. Masardis is in Aroostook County, the northernmost county in Maine and larger than Connecticut and Rhode Island combined. Known as “The County”, it's an area where the moose and black bears outnumber the people. Surrounded by Canada on three sides, it's a boreal forest biome characterized by thick woods and northern plant species.

Our camp is rustic. Drinking water comes from a hand pump and we've got no electricity other than what's generated on-site. With a campsite on the river and one in the woods, it's a perfect place for those seeking an authentic north woods experience.

Directly across the only paved road on our side of the river is the North Maine Woods, a large (3.5 million acre), uninhabited working forest. It's about 90 miles due west through working forest to the Canadian border. In that space there is no pavement, no towns, and no permanent residents.

The Aroostook River is the main artery of the area, and gives us water access to its headwater lakes, St. Croix Stream, the Blackwater River, the Big Machias River, Munsungan Stream, Millinocket Stream, Mooseleuk Stream and Squapan Lake and stream. The Aroostook crosses into New Brunswick and joins the St. John River, which empties into the Atlantic at St. John, New Brunswick.

We're a short drive from the Allagash, St. John and Penobscot (East and West Branch) Rivers. We can also get there by water, but the route is challenging.

The next town downstream is Ashland, Maine, known as the gateway to the North Maine Woods. Ashland is home to a diner and a grocery store. The nearest large town is Presque Isle, about an hour's drive, where there is lots of shopping as well as airline and bus service.

Housing

During our spring, summer and fall courses students stay their own tent. They also build a variety of different shelters and stay in them for several days, or for the duration of their stay if they choose. You will not be carrying your tent any distance, so plan to get one that's comfortable even if it's heavy and bulky. During the winter program, students stay in woodstove-heated shelters while at our home base, and in woodstove-heated wall tents in the bush.

Bringing or buying an extra tarp to keep your gear dry, both at the field school and on trips, is a great plan. We have no inside storage.

In extended periods of wet weather, your tent should be large enough so that your sleeping bag doesn't touch the tent wall. If it touches, it gets wet, regardless of how much you spent on your tent. If you're taller than 5'6", consider getting a 4-person tent to use solo. 2-person tents often don't work that well for tall people.

Bathing and Hygiene

Everyone is expected to maintain an acceptable level of hygiene during the course. This is accomplished by swimming in the river (without soap or shampoo), bucket baths (with soap and shampoo) and sunshowers.

If you'd like to have your own personal hot shower whenever you want it, consider bringing a sunshower. (There are numerous models running from \$10-\$40.) Fill it in the morning and by afternoon you'll have 5 gallons of hot water to use in our shower enclosure.

A big step up from a solar shower bag is a Pump-up solar shower. We've used one of these and they work great. You pressurize it so you don't have to hang it; it sits on the ground. They're also much easier to fill with hot water than a solar shower, making it a great option when the weather is cloudy.

There are also modern, indoor showers available down the road at Blackwater Outfitters, as well as at Dean's Motor Lodge and at several locations in Presque Isle.

Composting Toilet System

Before their course begins, each student is encouraged to read [The Humanure Handbook](#). This introduces the composting toilet system we use, and will answer any questions the student might

have about procedures, pathogens and safety. We've been using this system since 1996, and have experienced no problems with it. It's simple, odorless, uses minimal inputs and is the basis of our thermophilic composting system. Keep in mind that we don't have an alternative to the humanure system. If using a composting toilet makes you significantly uncomfortable, then field school programs are probably not a good option for you.

We have four outhouses at the field school. If you want to upgrade your personal accommodations to include your own private toilet for your tent or shelter, consider bringing your own toilet seat and 5 gallon bucket (or 2 buckets). These Luggable Loo toilet seats clip onto a bucket. You can also improvise your own seat or build a toilet box like the ones we use based on the instructions in the Humanure Handbook. Other options include making one of these milk crate toilet boxes or buying one of these plywood toilet boxes.

This scalability is one of the benefits of the humanure system. With a conventional toilet system, the collection locations (ie. toilets) are centralized because they have to be connected to pipes. With the more advanced humanure system, the collection locations can be decentralized, with the processing facility (ie. compost pile) being centralized.

Laundry

Laundry is done at the laundromat in town or by hand.

Phone

We are completely off the grid and don't have a landline phone. Past students who wanted to be in constant telephone contact have used cell phones to do so. We get good cell phone reception at the field school, as there is a cell tower several miles away (currently leased by Verizon). If you want to stay in touch but don't have a cell phone, consider a prepaid cell phone. Past students have used TracFones and had good reception. Both Verizon and AT&T phones work well (5 bars), as does Straight Talk. One past student from Europe brought a T-Mobile phone and it didn't work at all. Sprint phones have also not worked in the past.

Internet

Verizon and AT&T smartphones work at the field school. If you need to have internet connectivity for a laptop consider bringing a hotspot. Verizon and Straight Talk have mobile hotspots that work at the field school. We have used a Verizon hot spot to run our field school office for the past several years. Note: The office internet connection is **NOT** available for student use. Because it runs off the cell tower it is metered, and everyone checking their email and Facebook would quickly use up the available bandwidth we need for our office. If you need to log on, plan ahead.

On the days that it is open, the Ashland Community Library has a computer with internet access available for use. They do not have wifi.

The Turner Memorial Public Library in Presque Isle has an open wifi connection. There are several other spots in Presque Isle that have wifi, including Tim Hortons and McDonalds.

Charging Batteries, Electricity

Our field school is off the grid. We have a small solar system for our needs, but it is **NOT** available for students to charge their cell phones, etc. If you need electricity, plan ahead. There are numerous small solar panels and hand-crank generators that will keep your devices charged. We've had good luck with Goal Zero products, but there are lots of portable solar panel and battery combinations that work well.

If you're planning on driving to the field school, plan ahead and get an inverter for your vehicle. These plug into the cigarette lighter and outputs through a standard AC plug. Part of living off the grid is that whenever your vehicle is running, you're charging something. If your vehicle is running and you're not also charging something, you're wasting energy.

Parking

Parking is available on-site at the field school. Many people bring extra gear and leave it in their vehicles. It's better to have it and not use it than need it and not have it.

Food and Meals at the Field School

We provide no meals during field school courses, but we do provide the staple foods listed below that students can cook for themselves. We believe that learning how to cook, feed and take care of yourself in the bush is one of the most important skill sets to learn. Students should plan to be self-sufficient with regard to food preparation.

There is ongoing instruction covering a variety of outdoor cooking techniques, including cooking over a fire, with a reflector oven, dutch oven, solar oven, fireless cookers, bean holes, fermentation (sauerkraut, kombucha), baking with sourdough, etc., but ultimately it is up to each individual student to make sure their food needs are met. At the beginning of each course we prepare and clean up after meals as a group so that everyone learns our systems for cooking, food storage and dish washing.

Cooking takes place over an open fire, in a solar oven, or on wood-fired rocket stoves. We have an outdoor kitchen and a variety of pots and pans that are available for student use, although bringing a small pot with a bail handle (for hanging over the fire) for personal use is strongly recommended. We have a propane stove available for student use, but we do not supply the propane for it in order to incentivize using the renewable-fueled rocket stoves. Propane is available in town. We also encourage people to bring their own propane or backpacking-style stove if they want to cook at their shelter. No open fires are allowed in the shelter area.

Food is stored next to the outdoor kitchen in bins and critter-proof containers; we encourage people to bring their own cooler to keep perishables. We occasionally have porcupines, raccoons and skunks in camp, and we almost always have squirrels, so we make sure that everything is cleaned up and put away before dark.

While there is a very strong likelihood that we will be sampling a variety of wild foods, we will not be attempting to live off of them.

We encourage students to eat together in order to save fuel and resources. With this in mind students have usually made one-pot meals with the staple foods provided as the main ingredients. During the 20+ past semester courses, some groups of students have opted to cook as a group to

share the workload, while others have cooked individually. Both approaches work, and we leave it up to the students to figure out what works best for them.

Plan to bring or purchase any food items not on the staple foods list. As we're off the grid and don't have refrigeration, consider bringing a cooler as well for personal perishable items. In lieu of ice, you can use the water from our well to keep food cool – it comes out very cold, even on the hottest summer day. There is a grocery store in Ashland, 9 miles away, and a local source for fresh eggs. There is also a farmer's market in Presque Isle every Saturday, as well as several large grocery stores.

Staple Foods Provided (Subject to change without notice)

- Rice
- Rolled Oats
- Beans
- Lentils
- Split Peas
- Pasta
- Flour (white, unbleached)
- Sourdough Starter
- Vegetable Oil
- Vinegar
- Sugar
- Black Tea
- Baking Powder
- Baking Soda
- Salt
- Black Pepper

The majority of foods on this list are the traditional, nonperishable foods of the north woods that people have used for hundreds of years on traplines, to winter over in cabins and to journey through the forest. Supplemented with a few vegetables, some animal fat and the occasional fish or meat, this diet provides ample nutrition for a wilderness lifestyle. That being said, we encourage students to eat whatever diet they choose.

Meats. Participants are on their own for providing meat (and other perishable items). One of the grocery stores in Presque Isle (Steaks N' Stuff Market) sells meat packages and will vacuum seal and freeze it, allowing it to keep for a week or two if kept on ice in a cooler. Many students and instructors have taken advantage of this in the past.

Food on Trips. Effective spring, 2015, we have a new policy for food and meals on trips away from the field school. Students create trip menus, complete with ingredients and amounts, in

order to learn the process of provisioning for trips. Menus are checked, then food is packed into dry boxes. In the field we build a group kitchen and all cook over a central fire. On our first trip, students plan and provision individually. On subsequent trips, students have the option to break into cook groups with others or to continue to plan and provision on their own.

Three things to think about with regard to food:

1. Plan ahead. Foods such as whole grains and beans are not convenience foods; they require lengthy periods of soaking and cooking. You'll need to be organized and plan ahead in order to eat. We have great tools for accomplishing this, including solar ovens, insulated boxes, bean holes, etc., so while there isn't a lot of work involved, there is a significant amount of lead time.

2. Learn at home. If you've never cooked before, learn how to prepare such items as beans and grains at home before you arrive at the field school. Doing so will allow you to experiment where the variables are controllable, and will serve you well when you begin cooking over an open fire.

3. Be self-reliant. No one is going to be cooking for you or making sure that you eat. If you wait to the last minute to prepare a meal like many do at home, you'll probably go hungry. You need to be responsible for your own well being and plan ahead.

Water

In 2011 we had a well drilled, and it's outfitted with a hand pump. The water comes out cold, even in the heat of the summer. We're also right on the Aroostook River, for swimming and fishing.

When we're in the field (meaning on trips away from the field school), we're low-tech by choice and boil river water to purify it for drinking. Water boiled over a fire can have a smoky taste. Consider bringing a water filter if this is a problem for you. Because we boil water for drinking when in the field, **you should plan to bring enough water bottle capacity for a full day's worth of drinking water.** This allows you to fill up in the morning and not need to fill up again until we boil up in the evening. In the past people have brought one small water bottle, which is empty after a half hour of hard paddling. Then either they became dehydrated or we had to stop and boil more drinking water. Don't let this happen to you. Bring enough wide mouth water bottles for a full day's supply of drinking water. With narrow-mouth bottles, you spill more water than you fill them with, so be sure you get wide mouthed bottles.

Courses and Descriptions

Wilderness Bushcraft Semester

Course Info

- Length: 9-Weeks/720 clock hours
- Sessions: 2
- Max. Size: 12
- College Credits: A potential of 12 credits

- GI Bill: Yes
- Americorps: Yes
- Scholarships: Yes
- Tuition: \$7100

Immersion Course in Traditional Wilderness Skills

Professional Training For Instructors & Guides

College-Accredited, GI Bill Approved

Fall 2016: Our 37th Semester Program

The Wilderness Bushcraft Semester is our flagship course, and our most popular. It's a college level, residential course focusing on the practical, hard skills of living and traveling in the boreal forest. For 99% of human history what we teach has been the core knowledge of our species. During the semester we live it every day, focusing on the tangible, practical skills that make up the tool kit of the professional guide and instructor.

Our experience running long-term immersion programs is unmatched. As this field explodes with new schools and instructors, we've got 18 years and 35 long-term immersion programs behind us. Experience matters. Our programs and methods are based on our extensive experience, not untested theories. No other school has our level of experience. No school has been doing it longer. No school has run as many long-term programs.

There is a lot of information about the program on this page, but it's important to consider what's not on it. You won't find anything on the smells of the northern forest after a rain. You won't read about how difficult and physically strenuous some of the things we do are. You won't get a sense of the kinship or camaraderie that builds during a course. And you won't understand the sense of accomplishment upon completing it. To get these things, you have to do it.

We offer the WBS in the spring and fall. They are the same course. One is not a continuation of the other. They have the same curriculum and cover the same material.

Course Format: Wilderness Immersion

We call our course an immersion program because **for the entire experience you live in the woods at our 61 acre field school in northern Maine.** You also spend 2-3 of the 9 weeks on remote trips a long way from cell-coverage. The lessons learned are reinforced every day as part of the lifestyle.

There are other programs that also describe themselves as immersion programs, but they meet one weekend per month, or for six hours per day, three days per week. This seems a bit disingenuous to us and more like a part-time program. It's simply a different experience cooking every meal for 9 weeks over a fire than living in an apartment and packing a lunch. They're probably great programs with valuable lessons to teach, but they're fundamentally different from us in what they try to achieve and how they go about it. We're all about the experience, and it's that experience that sets our program apart from the others.

Think about it like learning a language (because that's really what it is); are you more likely to learn, absorb and retain it if you studied it three days a week for 6 hours, or if you lived it 24 hours a day, 7 days a week? Pretty simple when put this way, right?

Curriculum: Deep Knowledge Based On Experience

Unlike short courses, the WBS is not a show and tell type of program. Students receive intensive instruction, but then it's used and lived until it becomes second nature. The emphasis is on doing. Our curriculum is designed as a cumulative sequence of learning experiences where the resulting outcome is greater than the sum of the parts. This is a much different approach than assembling a collection of random skills and activities. Our goal isn't just that a student is able to "do" a skill. Instead it's to develop their knowledge, attitude and physical skills into a cohesive whole. We draw on:

Bushcraft. (200 clock hours) The art of living in wild places with minimal gear, or life without infrastructure. Includes building shelters, making fires, using axes, knives and saws, cooking over a brush fire, living out under the blue sky, etc. Become comfortable being part of the landscape. A subset of bushcraft is wilderness survival. Learn the skills needed to survive in the forest during all seasons.

Ecology. (200 clock hours) We're not talking about skimming the surface; we're talking about getting deep. You learn edible plants by identifying them in the field, then incorporating them into your diet. You learn about mammals and their tracks then identify them in the field. You study the weather and learn to predict it using observational forecasting. You study the night sky and learn to navigate using it. You learn static knowledge, then put it into action.

Outdoor Leadership & Guide Training. (95 clock hours) The soft skills are what make or break a trip. Learn the skills of group dynamics, decision making, risk management and more. More important that the individual skills, learn to think and act like a leader by modeling after professional guides who have led hundreds of trips, both summer and winter.

Crafting. (60 clock hours) Where our hands meet the natural world. Learn to make useful items from forest materials. Projects include bowls, saw frames, backpacks, sleeping pads, rope, baskets, knives and crooked knives, and much more. Occasionally we cross paths with people who will refer to this as "arts and crafts". It's much more than that. It's building what you need from natural materials. It's what changes you from being a mindless consumer to being an enlightened producer. Nothing makes you more self-reliant than doing and making it yourself.

Expedition Canoe Skills. (150 clock hours) Many people have been in a canoe, but few have unlocked the potential of this ancient craft. Learn how to use your whole body to paddle powerfully, hour after hour, day after day. Learn the art of poling to travel upstream and down and have total control over a loaded 18 or 20 foot canoe. Learn to control your boat from shore in a big rapid by lining and tracking. The canoe is the most versatile watercraft ever invented. You'll learn its language as you travel a hundred miles on Maine's remote waterways, and it will forever become a part of you.

Sustainability. (10 clock hours) Our field school is a working off-grid homestead. There are countless lessons you'll learn by living the lifestyle. You'll also have formal instruction on

stationary and portable solar power systems, composting everything, planning, planting and keeping a garden, low-tech solar hot water, using the sun to cook food, using wood to cook on a rocket stove and wood-fired cook stove, drying and storing food, processing wild foods, and much, much more. If you want to learn to live without infrastructure and build or improvise your own, this is a great place to do it. And along the way you'll learn that it's a graceful process filled with fun, not suffering.

Fishing. (5 clock hours) We are passionate about fly fishing. You'll learn to cast, read the river, and a lot about fish and water.

For more detail on our curriculum, take a look at the [Jack Mountain Bushcraft Student Handbook](#) and [First Person Ecology](#). But be aware that **the outline in the student handbook contains is a list of all the topics we teach, not a syllabus for any individual course**. There is no way we could cover the entire outline completely in a single semester, so set your expectations accordingly. We are currently updating the student handbook for 2017.

Expedition-Based Learning

We have guided expeditions on Maine's remote canoe routes since the 1990's. During the semester we take several short trips and one long one traveling on Maine's remote rivers because it's better to get out and do it in the field than to talk about it in a classroom. On these expeditions you learn the details of how to manage a group in the field as well as developing travel skills.

We break large groups up into 2 smaller groups for the canoe expeditions. We favor the lesser-known canoe routes in the Aroostook river drainage. Travel by water is subject to weather and water levels. As such we reserve the right to change our itinerary in advance or at the very last minute.

NOTE: In the past we've had people participate in a semester class that didn't know we were going to spending a lot of time traveling by canoe. We are.

TRIPS ARE NOT OPTIONAL In past semesters some students have wanted to skip trips and stay in camp. This is not an option. We don't allow people at the field school without an instructor present. Instructors are scheduled to be with the group on trips. As such, if a student does not want to or cannot participate on the scheduled trips for the course, they will be removed from the course and sent home. Students are free to opt-out of any activity, whether at the field school or in the field. But they are not free to opt-out of trips in order to avoid negatively affecting the rest of the group. We travel as a group.

Intended Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the WBS, students will:

1. Demonstrate skill proficiency and extensive experience in a wide variety of bushcraft and primitive skills, including fire, shelter, outdoor cooking, observational weather forecasting, carving, basketry, cordage and natural bindings, navigation, and the use of the axe, saw, and knife.
2. Demonstrate knowledge and skill in traditional canoe skills, including paddling, poling, safely

running whitewater, portaging, and other related skills.

3. Make a variety of pieces of traditional gear, including a canoe paddle and pack basket.
4. Have a working knowledge of basic, intermediate, and advanced wilderness survival.
5. Assemble and maintain a tool kit with which they can make a variety of different crafts.
6. Navigate by map and compass, and also by using barehand methods.
7. Build a strong foundation of nature knowledge about the weather, plants, the stars and constellations, mammals and their tracks, fish, etc.
8. Have a working knowledge of 50 edible, medicinal, and otherwise useful wild plants.
9. Document daily progress with individual skills in their logbook.

Process, Not Product

Something students hear a lot around the field school is that it's the process that's important, not the product. We're process-driven. It's nice to have a good-looking bow at the end of the process, but we're more invested in people being able to replicate the process after the course.

Jack Mountain founder Tim Smith spent 2 years studying how people learn and best practices for teaching in graduate school, resulting in a Master's degree in education. For the ensuing 18 years he's operated his own educational laboratory (this school). Along the way we have discovered a lot of things that work, as well as a lot that don't. We're always adapting, innovating and trying to do it better.

Learning empowers people. In a single word, our educational philosophy and mantra is **CAN**.

Our Classroom: 61 Acre Off-Grid Field School & The North Maine Woods

Our field school is a working homestead located on the Aroostook River in Masardis, Maine.

Directly across the road from the North Maine Woods, a 3.5 million acre working forest that's like heaven for sportsmen and wilderness travelers.

You may be able to receive college credit for this program. Contact us or visit our website for more details.

The Boreal Snowshoe Expedition

2017 Course Info

- Length: 12 Days/144 clock hours
- Sessions: 2
- Max. Size: 8
- College Credits: A potential of 5 credits
- GI Bill: Yes
- Americorps: Yes
- Tuition: \$2050

Boreal Snowshoe Expedition
College-Accredited, GI Bill Approved

2017: Our 18th Year of Snowshoe and Toboggan Expeditions

Experiential Learning, Expedition-Based

Winter in the boreal forest is a magical time, when all the bugs and people have settled down for the season and the mercury is pooled in the bottom of the thermometer. The waterways and low-lying areas, when frozen and covered with snow, make ideal routes for travel. Snowshoes are the means of travel, and burdens are transported by toboggan much easier than by backpack. The increased capacity allows the traveler to become nomadic, carrying a woodstove and canvas tent and several weeks' worth of food. Home is where you set up camp, and while the cold and storms rage outside you can be snug and warm with the right knowledge, experience and a few well-chosen pieces of gear.

Snowshoe, Toboggan and Hot-Tent Winter Living

Our techniques and philosophy for the winter trail come from those who routinely spent entire winters in the bush, and differ dramatically from what is currently known as winter camping. It is better described as winter living. It isn't carrying everything you need for a short sojourn in the backcountry. Instead, it's learning the skills and techniques for an entire winter in the bush, and doing so in style. It is understanding winter's wisdom, and living in the cold with a grace and economy unheard of in the modern, high-tech style of camping that has spilled over from mountaineering.

But winter can also be cruel to those who don't know its ways. It is a season of narrow margins, and the effects of mistakes and bad judgements are magnified exponentially. Learning traditional winter bushcraft skills is the antidote to such events. Knowledge gained from experience guides you and keeps you safe.

The Boreal Snowshoe Expedition is a twelve-day immersion into these skills and lifestyle. Students learn traditional living and travel skills of the northern forest, not in a static classroom setting, but by actively living them on the trail.

How and What You Learn

Participants learn by doing. This is expedition learning where it isn't an option to sit on the sidelines and watch. We're living in the frozen forest, traveling day after day. By the end of the experience, they will have knowledge of and experience with:

- Bushcraft (30 clock hours)
- Ecology (30 clock hours)
- Winter Expedition Skills (30 clock hours)
- Leadership & The Guiding Arts (30 clock hours)
- Crafting (24 clock hours)

You may be able to receive college credit for this program. Contact us or visit our website for more details.

The Wilderness Canoe Expedition Semester

Course Info

- Length: 4-Weeks/360 clock hours
- Sessions: 1
- Max. Size: 10
- College Credits: A potential of 6 credits
- GI Bill: Yes
- Americorps: Yes
- Tuition: \$3600

Four Week Guide Training Expedition in Northern Maine

Expedition Learning, Traditional Wilderness Living and Travel Skills

Wildernessing has changed dramatically in the modern era. While once the vehicle for long-term, long-distance exploration, the canoe has become one of many recreational crafts, indistinguishable from others based on how we use it, while its true strengths have slowly been forgotten. Most of modern canoeing has become driving to the headwaters and floating downstream to the takeout. It's fun, but so much of the heritage has withered due to non-use.

We believe there is still value in doing things the hard way, with minimal infrastructure. It maintains the traditions and keeps the skills and technique – the know how – alive.

To truly know a river, it isn't enough to just float downstream. Poling upstream, lining, carrying, drinking the water, and living with it until it is forever a part of you.

Expedition learning has been a major part of the Jack Mountain experience since the beginning. There's no substitute to getting out and doing it, learning by doing, and having a life experience you will never forget.

The 2016 Expedition

This year the summer canoe expedition crosses the line, literally, the political line between the US and Canada en route to the salt water at the Maine coast. Sitting around the guide shack one night this past winter we fell to looking at maps and talking about historic canoe routes of the northeast and how many of them are being lost to history as the ancient waterways have been replaced by highways and canoes have been relegated to hobby craft instead of the original sport utility vehicle that once connected tribes, families and individuals to each other and to the resources that made life possible.

The route this summer reflects our commitment to reestablishing a connection to our paddling past while also creating unique new canoe routes that challenge our abilities and push our concept of a wilderness expedition. The result is a hybrid wilderness/rural expedition that will

start at the Jack Mountain Field School outside of Masardis Maine and will take us all the way to Calais Maine at the mouth of the Atlantic Ocean. This trip has it all: wilderness and solitude, rural modern culture, white water, flat water, upstream, downstream, legend, lore and mystery.

The Route

We will portage all of our gear from the field school campus down to the Aroostook River where we will paddle roughly 80 miles through the cities of Presque Isle and Caribou to the confluence with the St. John River over the border in New Brunswick. **This border crossing will require all participants to carry a valid passport.**

Once on the St. John we will navigate the big river for around 60 miles until we reach the ancient Maliseet village of Meductic a few miles upstream from the modern day town by the same name.

Appropriately named, Meductic means “end of the trail” as it represented the end of the ancient Maliseet Trail the connected the waterways of the Penobscot and Maliseet nations via the Eel River. For us it represents the beginning of the trail as we will ascend around 30 miles of paddling, portaging, poling and pushing our fully loaded canoes up the whitewater on the Eel.

There has been much mystery and legend surrounding the Eel River, but all I will say is there may or may not be a piece of gold the size of a small cow supposedly buried along the portage trail, you can read more here: <http://www.maliseettrail.com/>

At the end of the Eel lies two large lakes, Grand and Spednic Lakes that will lead us to Vanceboro and the beginning of our downhill run all the way to the ocean on the St. Croix about 55 miles downstream.

This trip will require solid canoe handling skills in a variety of water conditions from Class 2+ whitewater to big waves and exposed water on the St. John and Grand and Spednic Lakes. In all we will be poling, portaging and paddling over 300 miles in a little under 28 days. All participants must be competent poling a loaded canoe up and downstream in Class 2+ whitewater and paddling a fully loaded 18 foot canoe in big waves, high wind using variations of the J stroke and also on moving water using prys, draws, sweeps and braces. Expertise will be learned, but competence is required.

How and What You Learn

Participants learn by doing. This is expedition learning where it isn't an option to sit on the sidelines and watch. We're living on the rivers and lakes of northern Maine, traveling day after day. By the end of the experience, they will have knowledge of and experience with:

- Expedition planning (8 clock hours)
- Expedition provisioning (8 clock hours)
- Group dynamics and people management (14 clock hours)
- Traditional canoe techniques, including poling, lining and solo paddling(190 clock hours)
- Fire lighting (if we can't get it going, we don't eat!) (20 clock hours)

- Remote campsite setup and management (30 clock hours)
- Reading the river (30 clock hours)
- Scouting and safely running white water (30 clock hours)
- Safe and efficient use of the axe in remote environments (30 clock hours)
- And much more.

We'll be living outside for the entire month, practicing bushcraft skills on a daily basis. If you're looking to take your skills, experience and confidence to the next level, living out for a month will do it.

Prerequisites

This is an advanced course not suitable for beginners. It is open only to graduates of our [Wilderness Bushcraft Semester](#).

There are three types of prerequisites for this expedition: gear, skills/experience and fitness.

Gear Prerequisites: Participants must bring a homemade canoe paddle to be used on the trip. All personal kit must fit into 2 containers (bags, barrels, etc.).

Skill/Experience Prerequisites: Participants should be experienced paddling, poling and lining a canoe.

Fitness Prerequisites: This trip is very physically demanding and will require a significant amount of upper and lower body strength. Participants must be willing and able to physically train for this experience. They must be able to solo lift and carry an 84 pound canoe half a mile.

Safety and Preparation

On our expeditions safety is our utmost concern. Part of the challenge is to complete the route in the time allotted. On prior expeditions, we've traveled only as fast as our slowest participant. There is the real possibility that there will be people physically unprepared for the difficulty of this experience.

We will be traveling and camping together, but if participants are unable to keep up with the group, they will be asked to voluntarily drop out of the trip after the first phase as the second phase is much more physically strenuous.

Our purpose in publishing this is threefold. First, we want to motivate participants to physically train for the experience. This includes both strength and aerobic training. Second, we don't want to penalize the rest of the group for an individual's lack of training and preparation. Third, we don't want any surprises, and we want each participant to know exactly what the stakes are if they don't prepare themselves physically.

Note: If participants are unable to complete the trip for any reason, no refund of tuition will be given.

If you're interested, start training

College Credit

Students can earn 6 credits from Western State Colorado University that can be transferred to their home school. Credits from Western State are in the following courses:

- Outdoor Leadership, 3 Credits
- Environmental Ethics, 3 Credits

Other students have completed independent studies through their home institution to receive credit. For more details visit the credit information page.

Our Educational Philosophy

Knowledge is power, but knowledge is constructed, not received. It is built incrementally, over time. If teaching were simply telling, then anyone who excelled in a field would be an effective teacher of it. But this transmission model of teaching isn't effective for most learners. Standing in front of someone and telling them what they need to know isn't facilitating learning. Especially when you consider the differences between visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning styles.

We subscribe to the learning model of teaching, where the role of the teacher is to create situations where learning takes place. Students build upon their knowledge daily, and by the end of the experience they've accumulated a storehouse of information and experiences. But the instructor must also make it relevant. It's easy to scoff at friction fire since matches and lighters are so readily available. But remove them from the equation and it's instantly relevant, and the desire to learn the subtleties of the hand drill takes on renewed importance.

Our students are actively learning, immersing themselves in the curriculum by necessity. An example of this is how we teach shelter building. You can learn something about a shelter by making one. You can learn more about it by sleeping in it. But to truly know that specific shelter, you need to spend four consecutive nights in it. In this way you're forced to deal with the consequences of shoddy construction or not paying attention to details. Maybe the first night is rough, but it teaches you what you need to do before the second night in order to shore it up and get some sleep. The second night is spent learning some of the subtleties that would make it more comfortable. The third night is fine-tuning it to your specifications, and the fourth night is enjoying the fruits of your labor. If you were to build the same shelter again, you could eliminate the learning curve because you'd know what to do from the outset. That's experiential education.

"Experiential education is the process of actively engaging students in an authentic experience that will have benefits and consequences. Students make discoveries and experiment with knowledge themselves instead of hearing or reading about the experiences of others. Students also reflect on their experiences, thus developing new skills, new attitudes, and new theories or ways of thinking." (Kraft & Sakofs, 1988)

In addition to passing on traditional skills, we focus on using them to foster critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, curiosity, and a concern with ethical issues.

Summed up in a single word, our educational philosophy is this: CAN.

You may be able to receive college credit for this program. Contact us or visit our website for more details.

Yearlong Wilderness Bushcraft Immersion Program

2017 Course Info

- Length: 5+ Months
- College Credits: 23
- GI Bill: NO
- Americorps: Yes
- Tuition: \$12,750

5+ Months, Redesigned For 2017.

The Yearlong Wilderness Bushcraft Immersion Program (YIP) is a full-time, 5+ month immersion into bushcraft, guide training, primitive living skills and expedition training. It's a no BS, no new-age mumbo jumbo, no hand-holding experience that is heavy on academic work and accountability and definitely not for everyone. We're not trying to appeal to a large audience; we're looking for people who are determined, coachable, hard workers, and ready for a challenge.

It is not a calendar year. It is representative of living out in the northern forest in all four seasons.

The YIP combines the Wilderness Bushcraft Semester, the Boreal Snowshoe Expedition, the Wilderness Canoe Expedition Semester and the Primitive Wilderness Living Practicum. To participate in these programs you do NOT need to be in the YIP.

About The Academic Work:

Many people who matriculate to our school are not interested in academics; they only want the practical, hands-on approach we're known for. This is fine with us. But the full benefit of an education balances the academic with the practical and hands-on. Those who are dedicated to both realize the greatest gains. The YIP takes this into account and contains lots of reading, writing and research. If academics don't appeal to you, you probably won't be a good fit for the YIP. This isn't a problem, just stick with our regular programs. You'll be on the same field courses, just with fewer academic requirements.

By the time you graduate from high school you've spent twelve years learning the ways of our culture, but the vast majority of people are still strangers in the natural world that gave rise to it. They have no knowledge of how to take care of themselves. They don't know how to identify common edible plants, read the sky to forecast the weather, navigate by the stars, build a comfortable shelter out of natural materials, or make a fire without modern equipment. They don't know the simple, rural, outdoor life that most of humanity has lived.

Many people are motivated to learn and experience more, but most won't do anything except check out a few websites and learn some buzzwords. But this doesn't aid you significantly with regards to reaching your goal of being competent and comfortable in the bush in all seasons. If you're reading this you probably already have a few books that promise to give you all you need to live in the bush for an extended period of time. But they didn't deliver, so you're looking for

more. To really learn to be self-reliant in the north woods in all seasons, it takes time and experience.

But people in the modern world are lazy. Why do you think there are so many survival tools and gadgets that didn't exist a hundred years ago, when people spent their lives in the bush? Because everyone wants the easy way. Here's a news flash; there is no easy way. You can buy all the gear and fake it, but you'll know you're faking. Or you can go the hard way, the real way, and know deep inside yourself that you're the real deal. How will you know? Experience.

This program provides that time and experience. You spend your time in the bush living the life and pursuing an advanced course of study designed to make you a confident outdoor professional. Life is short. Do you want to let another year pass where you feel like an alien in the natural world?

Since 1999 we've been providing bushcraft courses and outdoor living experiences for the few who forsake the throng and seek the bush for what it has to teach. We keep alive the traditional skills of the north woods, and pass them along to the next generation. We invented the genre of immersion semester program in bushcraft and traditional outdoor skills. We've run more of them than any other outfit. And we stay small on purpose.

If there's a faster way to go from city slicker to competent outdoor professional let us know.

Redesigned For 2017: How It Works

We're updating this program for 2017. The old yearlong program was a combination of the Wilderness Bushcraft Semester, The Boreal Snowshoe Expedition and the Wilderness Canoe Expedition Semester. The updated program will include these, and also add a Primitive Wilderness Living Practicum.

The best place to begin is with the Wilderness Bushcraft Semester (spring or fall). Some people choose to begin with the Boreal Snowshoe Expedition, but it is much more challenging for those without significant outdoor experience. The Wilderness Bushcraft Semester is a prerequisite for the Wilderness Canoe Expedition, although in rare circumstances we let experienced paddlers participate.

This is a rigorous program: physically, intellectually and interpersonally. Maintaining motivation will be an ongoing challenge. **We reserve the right to wash people out of the program who have lost their motivation** or who become a distraction; who don't uphold the code of conduct we expect from our guides and instructors.

Who This Program Is For

Our yearlong immersion is for people wanting to become bushcraft and wilderness survival instructors, professional wilderness guides, ecotour operators, naturalists and outdoor leaders. It's also a good fit for people taking a year off after college, those looking for an amazing immersion experience into self-reliance, and those seeking a more intimate contact with the natural world.

Our Goal

To make our students equals. We work side-by-side to bring you up to speed as quickly as possible. You see how we do things and do them yourself. We aim to be the guide on the side, not the sage on the stage.

How We Accomplish That Goal

1. Knowledge Learn from working guides with a curriculum that's been refined over 18 years of running extended courses in remote areas.

2. Experience Experience is where our program departs from the norm. This is wilderness living, not just wilderness living skills. Spend your time living, traveling and learning outdoors, working together with master guides and instructors.

3. Documentation Keep track of what you learn with our assessment system. It keeps track of what you've accomplished, not just what course you took.

4. Verification Ongoing practical exams demonstrate your knowledge and competency in a variety of specific skills.

Application Process

Choose where you want to start and apply for that program. Also email us and let us know you're interested in the YIP.

You may be able to receive college credit for this program. Contact us or visit our website for more details.

Summer Woodsman

2016 Course Info

- Max. Size: 12
- Tuition: \$900

Bushcraft. Wilderness Expeditions. Professional Guide Training.

The Woodsman course is a comprehensive introduction to all that we do at the Jack Mountain Bushcraft School and is a good first course for someone new to bushcraft and survival. It's designed to teach you the most important and practical skills of bushcraft and survival in the northern forest. While the flora and fauna covered are specific to these regions, the skills and techniques are transferable to other regions and habitats.

- The information covered in the Woodsman course is important for anyone who hikes, camps, paddles, or spends any time in the backcountry of the northern hardwood or boreal forests. Topics covered include:
 - Wilderness Survival 101
 - Introduction To Bushcraft
 - Fire Making: The Five Stages With An Emphasis On 1-Match Fires
 - Primitive Fire: Fire By Friction And Percussion

- Bushcraft Tools: Axe, Knife, Saw And How To Care For And Maintain Them
- Basic Axemanship: The 4 Major Processes (Felling, Limbing, Sectioning And Splitting)
- Safe Knife Use And Carving
- Sawing Technique And Building Bucksaws
- Shelter Theory, Design, And Construction
- Navigation With Map And Compass
- Open Fire Cooking: Hanging A Pot, Baking In A Reflector, Using A Dutch Oven
- Cordage, Rope Making And Essential Knots
- Group Sanitation And Composting Toilets
- Purifying Water
- Principles Of A Simple Solar Power System
- Introduction to Field Ecology: Edible and Medicinal Plants, Mammal Tracking, The Night Sky, Weather Forecasting, etc.
- Optional final exercise of spending the night in a shelter you construct.

As this is a hands-on course, there are various crafts that participants have the option of making. These are useful kit items such as a bucksaw, not arts and crafts items like a beaded necklace.

The course runs from Sunday afternoon to Saturday morning. Maximum group size is 15.

Travel Information and Directions: After you register you will receive local driving directions to our site.

Arrival and Departure: Plan to arrive on Sunday afternoon, between 4 and 6. We'll have dinner, a group introduction and a tour of the grounds starting at 6. The course is over on Saturday at 8 AM.

Accommodations: Bring a tent, tarp, or other shelter. It will be your home for the week. For summer programs please consider bringing a bug net if you don't have noseeum netting on your tent. There are also cabins available through Blackwater Outfitters, located five minutes away. They can be reached at: 207-540-4101.

Meals: For information on food and meals, visit our Food and meals page.

Cancellation and Refund Policies: Please visit our School Policies page for information on all of our policies.

Course Insurance: Adventure travel and wilderness education are not inexpensive, and anything can happen when we're in the bush. We recommend that all participants have medical insurance. We also recommend you protect your investment with travel insurance for trips and tuition insurance for courses.

Tobacco: Smoking is not permitted in or near any buildings. All cigarette butts are to be placed into the metal can provided.

Vehicles and Parking: We're located .6 miles down a gravel road. During the winter and spring the road can be impassable for 2-wheel drive vehicles, and sometimes for any vehicles other than snow machines.

Telephone: We don't have a phone or electricity. If you need to be in constant phone contact please consider bringing a cell phone, and if you need to charge a phone (or other electronic device), please look into getting a charger or bringing extra batteries.

Other: Please don't bring any pets, alcohol or illegal drugs.

Questions? Don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

We reserve the right to include or omit any of the course topics listed due to class interest, availability of materials, inclement weather, or other factor that makes them impractical or unsafe.

You may be able to receive college credit for this program. Contact us or visit our website for more details.

Winter Woodsman

2016 Course Info

- Max. Size: 16
- College Credits: 12
- GI Bill: NO
- Americorps: Yes
- Tuition: \$900

Boreal Winter Bushcraft, Survival and Guide Training Course

Our overview of winter bushcraft and outdoor living in the frozen wilds of northern Maine. Topics covered are snowshoes and snowshoeing, sleds and toboggans, canvas tents, wood stoves, shelter construction using wood stoves, ice fishing, tracking, axe, knife and saw use and safety, use of the ice chisel, understanding ice and ice safety, winter tree identification, outdoor cooking, making emergency snowshoes, and, in general, how to live safely and comfortably below zero. The goal is for participants to learn how to conduct themselves well in bitter cold.

Winter is a season of narrow margins in the north woods. The cold and snow quickly magnify accidents and poor decisions into life-threatening situations, and the stranded traveler quickly learns that the skills that served him or her well in warmer weather are sorely lacking when the temperature is frequently below zero degrees Fahrenheit for weeks at a time. But for those who would learn the skills of winter it is a magical time, when all the bugs and people have gone away for the season, leaving the quiet bush to those who would venture forth armed with knowledge and experience. You can gain both knowledge and experience in our Winter Woodsman course.

With our practical, hands-on approach you'll develop knowledge and experience that will serve you well whether you're forced to spend a night out at the end of hunting season or are planning a multi-week snowshoe trip.

Immediately following this course we run our boreal winter survival experience, the Frozen 48.

Course Content

- Defining survival and survival priorities
- Fire: 5 stages of fire, 1 match firelighting, lighting a fire by friction, percussion, refraction and modern firelighters
- Shelter: Concepts of shelter, hoop house, quad pod, dome, emergency open shelters that will keep you alive at 40 below zero and the role of snow as an insulator and when and how to construct snow shelters
- Water: The role of hydration in survival, winter water sources, melting snow
- Sleep: The importance of restful sleep in survival
- Dressing for the outdoors: The role of clothing in survival and such topics as the difference between wet and dry cold and appropriate footwear for each
- Tools: Knife, axe, saw, and ice chisel
- Identification of Useful wild plants of winter
- Identifying and understanding animal tracks
- Ice fishing with modern and improvised equipment
- Safe travel on ice
- Living on snow shoes
- Methods of increasing one's acclimatization to the cold
- Examination of myths and inaccuracies on winter survival that are prominent in the literature

Participants will have the opportunity to build a shelter and spend several nights in it, build a bush bucksaw, build a pair of emergency snowshoes and a simple but effective snowshoe binding, build a packframe and much more.

NOTE: No fish and game laws will be broken during the course. Snares will be constructed, explained, then taken down as snaring small game is illegal in Maine. Ice fishing will only be carried out by those with a valid Maine fishing license.

Gear List: You'll need a cold weather sleeping bag, cold weather clothing, a sheath knife and axe, snowshoes and personal eating kit. We won't have extras. A good place to start is with our Winter Woodsman gear list.

Travel Information and Directions: After you register you will receive local driving directions to our site.

Parking: We'll have a small plowed area next to the road. From there it will be a .6 mile walk to the field school. Snowshoes will almost definitely be required.

Arrival and Departure: The course runs from Monday morning to Saturday morning. Plan to arrive on Sunday afternoon, between 4 and 6. You can also stay locally on Sunday night and arrive Monday morning by 8 am. The course is over on Saturday morning.

Accommodations: You'll be staying in heated canvas tents and shelters. There are also cabins available through Blackwater Outfitters, located five minutes away. They can be reached at: 207-540-4101.

Meals: For information on food and meals, visit our Food and meals page. There is a grocery store in Ashland, about nine miles from the field school. We encourage you to bring any snacks you may not be able to live without.

Cancellation and Refund Policies: Please visit our School Policies page for information on all of our policies.

What is included with the tuition: Included in the tuition are all camping fees, group meals, instruction, and group gear.

What is not included with the tuition: Not included with the tuition are personal gear, items from town and any foods other than those specified.

Course Insurance: Adventure travel and wilderness education are not inexpensive, and anything can happen when we're in the bush. We recommend that all participants have medical insurance. We also recommend you protect your investment with travel insurance for trips and tuition insurance for courses.

Tobacco: Smoking is not permitted in or near any buildings, tents (unless it's your own) or shelters. All cigarette butts are to be placed into the metal can provided.

Telephone: We don't have a phone or electricity. If you need to be in constant phone contact please consider bringing a cell phone, and if you need to charge a phone (or other electronic device), please look into getting a charger or bringing extra batteries.

Other: Please don't bring any pets or illegal drugs.

Questions? Don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

We reserve the right to include or omit any of the course topics listed due to class interest, availability of materials, inclement weather, or other factor that makes them impractical or unsafe.

You may be able to receive college credit for this program. Contact us or visit our website for more details.

Primitive Wilderness Living Practicum

2017 Info

- Length: 21 Days
- Dates: 6/25-7/15
- Tuition: \$0

After a lengthy period as a student, there is nothing like getting out and doing it on your own to lock in everything you've learned.

During the Primitive Wilderness Living Practicum, participants travel away from the road and into the forest where they live with a skill set and technology level that is simple and austere. They bring some basics with them: sleeping bag, tarp, metal pot, some food, fishing kit, axe, knife, metal pot. They transition into using primitive technologies for their fire and shelter needs. They transition from brought food to gathered food, catching fish and gathering plants. This is not a guided trip. No instructors are present. It's self-guided. Students put what they've learned during the semester into practice. For tuition and insurance purposes, this is a student-guided activity, so there is no associated tuition. There is no instructor or guide on the trip. If you need your hand held, this experience is not for you.

You may be able to receive college credit for this program. Contact us or visit our website for more details.

Granting Credit for Prior Learning Policy

In accordance with the requirements of 38 US Code, Section 3676(c)(4), the institution maintains a written record of the previous education and training of the eligible person and clearly indicates that appropriate credit has been given by the institution for previous education and training, with the training period shortened proportionately and the eligible person so notified. However, given the unitary curricular of our programs, it is unlikely that prior credit would be awarded.