

COURSE OVERVIEW

COLORADO MOUNTAIN CLUB MISSION STATEMENT

The Colorado Mountain Club (CMC) is organized to:

- Unite the energy, interest, and knowledge of the students, explorers, and lovers of the mountains of Colorado;
- Collect and disseminate information regarding the Rocky Mountains on behalf of science, literature, art, and recreation;
- Stimulate public interest in our mountain area;
- Encourage the preservation of forests, flowers, fauna, and natural scenery; and
- Render readily accessible the alpine attractions of the region.

WILDERNESS TREKKING SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

Wilderness Trekking School (WTS) is organized to educate and train CMC members to become competent, safe backcountry hikers in a pleasant, noncompetitive, and nonconfrontational setting. We seek to:

- Empower students with the **fundamental** knowledge and skills necessary to travel the backcountry confidently and safely;
- Offer students a safe and fun environment for learning and practicing these skills;
- Provide students with an opportunity to meet new people, take on new challenges, accept new responsibilities, and share their experiences; and
- Empower students with the ability to make sound decisions about how to hike safely in the backcountry.

WTS COMMITTEE

WTS is managed by a committee of volunteer Denver Group members whose goal is to ensure that the school provides students with a comprehensive, quality learning experience. Its responsibilities include:

- Establishing school policies, processes, and guidelines;
- Designing the educational program and determining the content of lectures and field days;
- Recruiting and retaining instructors and speakers;
- Tracking and managing student and instructor performance;
- Gathering and evaluating student and instructor feedback and implementing suggestions deemed to improve the program; and
- Ensuring the safety of all participants.

POLICIES AND REQUIREMENTS

Graduation Requirements

Students must meet the following criteria in order to graduate from WTS:

1. Attend all lectures and field days (see Make-up Policy below).
2. Complete all quizzes and homework assignments.
3. Demonstrate satisfactory proficiency in all classroom and field exercises.
4. Be recommended for graduation by their instructor team.

Graduation from WTS fulfills one of the requirements for obtaining a Denver Group “C” hiking classification. (For a complete description of hiking classifications, go to http://www.cmc.org/denver/info_Participating_signTrip_memberClass.aspx#Hiker.) It also satisfies one of the requirements to attend Basic Mountaineering School (if the student uses an ice ax during self-arrest exercises).

Make-up Policy

At the official end of each semi-annual WTS session, if a student has missed two or more field days and/or three or more lectures, that student must re-take the entire course including payment of full tuition. If a student has missed only one field day and/or two lectures, that student may make up those deficiencies within one calendar year without having to pay additional tuition. Students must coordinate these make-ups with the WTS Director.

Students can make up missed lectures within the current session. There are a limited number of pre-recorded videos of each lecture, and they can be checked out through the CMC office upon deposit of \$50. Failure to return a video within one week will result in the loss of the deposit. Students must inform their senior instructor when they make up a missed lecture.

Students may be able to make up a missed field day within the current session; however, there is no promise or commitment that WTS will be able to provide a make-up day for every field day. Make-up days will be available only if there are adequate and qualified senior instructors available to facilitate. Students must coordinate the scheduling of a desired make-up day through their senior instructor.

CMC Standard Refund Policy

Student/participant requests for refunds of tuition/fees must be requested in writing to the appropriate school or event director. Requests made prior to 30 days before the beginning of the school/event will be processed less a \$10 handling fee. Requests made within 30 days of the school/event will be refunded at 50% of the amount paid. No refunds will be made after the beginning of the school/event. However, a refund less \$10 can be obtained if a person is found to take the original student’s place in a school.

SAFETY RULES

All WTS students and instructors must comply with the safety rules listed below while engaged in any WTS activity. Students must also follow any additional safety procedures required by their instructor team.

- Each student is responsible for having the required clothing and equipment for each field day.
- Students cannot share essential equipment. Each student must carry his/her own essential gear.
- All hikes must have capable front and rear leaders designated by the instructor team.
- A student may not separate from the group during any field activity without permission from the instructor team.
- A student may not climb on a rock ledge or cliff face that is higher than his/her head.
- A student is not required to climb anything presenting more exposure to falling than he/she feels comfortable with and can safely handle.
- A student must promptly inform the instructor team if he/she feels impaired during any field activity due to injury, illness, or other condition.
- Students must wear helmets during all ice-ax exercises.
- WTS will not use snow slopes with significant avalanche potential or cornices for snow travel or self-arrest exercises.

Important: Failure to follow the WTS safety rules is grounds for expulsion of a student or replacement of an instructor.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT LECTURE NIGHTS

All lectures are held in the Foss Auditorium on the third floor of the American Mountaineering Center. All students must sign in at the check-in table, hand in their quizzes, and pick up any handouts. Each lecture begins promptly at 7:00 pm, and students should arrive in time to check in, find a seat, and not interrupt the presentation. There is staff at the check-in table by 6:30 pm.

There is a short break at the conclusion of each lecture, and then students gather with their instructor team and student group in separate meeting rooms for the remainder of the evening. Each night's activities usually end by 9:30 pm.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT FIELD DAYS

Each WTS field day is an exciting all-day event conducted in the mountains of Colorado. Students will practice and apply the information presented in the evening lectures, team meetings, and the student manual during an actual hike. Emphasis is on safety and “learning-by-doing” in a noncompetitive, team-oriented environment. Instructors demonstrate and explain the fundamentals while introducing each technique or skill. Students then have the opportunity to practice the technique or skill with the instructors close by to offer coaching and helpful advice.

Course Overview

Groups usually meet at a designated time and place to arrange carpools to the trailhead. Please observe the following carpool etiquette:

- Arrive at least 10 minutes ahead of the planned departure time.
- Wear comfortable shoes for the drive and carry your hiking boots in a plastic bag.
- Your car should have a full tank of gas in case you need to be one of the drivers.
- Each passenger should compensate the driver. Bring some small bills, as we do not expect the drivers to make change. The club's reimbursement rate is currently 10 cents per mile.

Each field day begins early in the morning and ends late in the afternoon. It is difficult to predict exactly when your group will return to town; therefore, please do not schedule any important engagements during the evening. We recommend that you get a good night's sleep the night before, and eat a healthy breakfast the morning of the field day. Bring snacks, lunch, and plenty of water to give you the energy to handle the physical and mental demands of the day. Bring extra layers of warm clothing, as the weather in our mountain "classrooms" is often unpredictable. (See *Chapter 2 – Gear* and *Chapter 3 – Nutrition and Hydration* for guidelines and suggestions.)

The level of difficulty varies with each individual field day, but no hike will go beyond the "B-difficult" classification level (up to 12 miles roundtrip and up to 2500 feet elevation gain). WTS field days differ from regular CMC day hikes in that there are frequent long stops throughout the day for instruction, demonstration, and practice. Bad weather rarely causes cancellation of a field day.

WTS strictly enforces the safety rules outlined above throughout each field day. Hiking with a group involves cooperation, compromise, and a positive attitude. Be considerate of each member's pace and abilities, as they may differ from your own.

Groups are strongly encouraged to stop for a post-hike celebration. It is a great opportunity to get to know one another and to discuss the events of the day.

For additional information about CMC hiking guidelines, go to http://www.cmc.org/members/members_activities.aspx.

For additional information about WTS, including a list of frequently asked questions, go to <http://www.wts.cmcschools.org/faq.htm>.