



SUMMER SCHOLARS

Wilderness Wisdom: Strength, Grit, and Growth in the Sierras **June 16 – 20, 2025**

Program Overview

Backcountry travel is the perfect way to immerse participants in the environment. It provides a forum for group bonding and personal growth as participants share in the splendor and challenge of the wilderness. Participants will study ecology and wilderness travel and find this program intellectually and aesthetically stimulating while challenging personal boundaries. Participants develop confidence as they use their outdoor skills to navigate, set up camp, prepare meals, and meet the demands of wilderness living. This experience is an adventure in learning, a search for knowledge gained through individual and group effort, and a journey toward a broader understanding of self, others, and the natural world.

This Sierra Nevada backcountry expedition will use Sequoia National Parks and the Jennie Lakes Wilderness to expose participants to one of the country's greatest natural and cultural resources and offer excellent opportunities for studies in mountain ecology, national lands management, and landscape geography. The trip includes exceptional and inspirational backcountry travel which provides participants with the opportunity for personal reflection and growth.

Experiential learning activities and lessons are stimulating and challenging. Instructors give participants the tools to promote personal discovery and self-direction in learning while supporting them with information about the topics being explored.

The Sierra Nevada program includes instruction in mountain ecology, geological processes such as mountain building, plate tectonics, glacial dynamics, plant and animal identification, and other related subjects. Activities include nature awareness games, reflective journaling, backpacking, and evening programs that bring closure to the day.

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Activities include:

- Backpacking and day-hiking
- Lessons in biology, geology, weather, and natural science
- Team-building initiatives and group development challenges
- Journal writing and creative assignments
- Early sunrise hikes, stretch circles, or yoga
- Small group presentations
- Free time, recreation, and fun games

- Map & compass, orienteering & land navigation
- Environmental awareness games & lessons
- Classes in outdoor survival skills, alpine ecology, native plant use, and many more

Evening programs occur in large groups or smaller “trail groups” and include:

- Campfires with skits, songs, stories, and s’mores
- Town Hall Environmental Resource Use Discussion
- Astronomy observation and lessons
- Native American history and culture
- Council meetings & group topical discussions
- Talent show and “coffeehouse” discussions
- Night-hikes focusing on nocturnal animal adaptations

Goals:

- To build character, confidence, and life skills through outdoor adventure activities
- To foster responsible environmental citizenship and ecological sustainability in the lives of program participants
- To facilitate group cohesion, teamwork skills, and positive group development
- To learn outdoor science, including natural history and ecology
- To develop communication and problem-solving skills, independence, and leadership skills
- To have fun!

General Itinerary

Day One

Participants arrive at trailheads and are welcomed by Boojum staff. The group receives an orientation that includes a risk management briefing, an introduction to the environment, expectations of conduct, a schedule overview, staff introductions, and brief ice-breaker games. An orientation to backcountry travel will include the following topics:

- Expedition mentality and group travel
- Setting learning goals
- Safety awareness and hazard avoidance
- Camping and hiking techniques
- Checking of participant equipment
- How to pack a backpack for maximum room and comfort
- First aid concerns and how to take care of yourself in the backcountry
- Introduction to low-impact camping skills
- Introduction to equipment and equipment maintenance
- Overview of itinerary
- Assessment of participants' hiking and backcountry abilities

Groups stay at the camp trailhead for the first night. The evening is spent acclimating to the environment, setting up camp, and cooking the first night’s meal.

Day Two through Four

Groups travel in the backcountry carrying their own gear. Professional instructors use “teachable moments” as well as structured lessons to teach natural history, outdoor living skills, Leave No Trace wilderness travel skills, environmental education, and field science concepts. Groups can adjust the itinerary as needed based on participant preparedness. A certain amount of free time is offered. An evening program rounds out each day. On the final evening, trail groups have closure activities.

Day Five

On day five groups return to trailheads, unpack backpacks, turn in group equipment, and enjoy large group review and closure activities. A review of the program's significant learning moments occurs in a large-group format: a favorite activity is the "Boojum relay," a fun review game where participants go over the course's environmental and social lessons while completing an obstacle course. The last moments of the program are spent in small groups bringing closure to the experience.

Program Logistics

St. Margaret's will provide transportation to and from the field. Outdoor Adventures by Boojum provides the group with outdoor equipment, tents, field staff, and food.

Participants are responsible for their clothing, personal gear, sleeping bag, and a bag in which to pack items. Packs and sleeping systems are available for rent through either our program partner Boojum or outdoor recreation stores. See a [complete gear list](#) and potential rental companies

Boojum Field Team

Boojum instructors are experienced teachers in the outdoor education field. Our team is comprised of outdoor education professionals who have a passion for introducing young people and adults to new ways of looking at the world. Field team members possess a blend of interpersonal and group dynamics facilitation skills required to provide the best possible experience for educational groups. Outdoor Adventures by Boojum is dedicated to the continuous improvement, training, and professional development of its team. Boojum provides one lead instructor for approximately every 10-15 participants, most backpacking experiences have two instructors for each small group and one Course Director per program.

Risk Management

At Outdoor Adventures by Boojum, risk management is the priority at all times. Outdoor Adventures by Boojum has a history of providing high-quality outdoor education programs. Boojum instructors have specialized medical training and are trained in CPR and First Aid, which may include Wilderness First Responder or Wilderness EMT certifications. We welcome further inquiries into specific policies and procedures regarding risk management and preparedness for Boojum programs. The Association for Experiential Education is an organization that promotes best practices within our industry. For several years Boojum has been an active member and an accredited organization.

Please note, responsible backcountry travel requires an awareness of potential risks. The following describes some, but not all, of those risks:

The event takes place at least in part outdoors, and exposure to natural elements can be uncontrollable and may be harmful. The participant may be exposed to extreme or inclement weather, including rain, snow, lightning, cold, heat, and intense sunlight. The participant can be injured by natural hazards including animals, insects, toxic plants, falling rocks or trees, flooding, ice, and snow. The participant may engage in strenuous and/or prolonged physical exertion which may reveal previously unknown health problems or make known health problems worse. The event, or part of the event, may take place in a remote location where there are no medical facilities, physicians, or healthcare providers other than Boojum staff first responders, and there may be no immediate means of communication or rapid transportation. There is a risk that medical care for accidents or illnesses may be significantly delayed and that the first responder care provided by Boojum may be inadequate for a serious accident or illness. In events that include hiking: participants will be walking over loose rocks, steep slopes, and in rugged terrain while carrying personal and/or group gear. They risk injury from falling down slopes or off rocks, as well as abrasions,

ankle and knee injuries, and fractures. In events that include camping: participants will be setting up camp and sleeping in tents or outside, preparing meals and cooking over camp stoves, being around an open campfire, and using primitive toilet facilities. They risk extended exposure to heat or cold, falling onto tents, equipment, or campfires, burns and cuts from cooking, and exposure to infection.

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