

*Wildlife Tracking and Signs
Field Seminar Overview & Arrival Information
July 2 - 4, 2010*



Please read the entire information packet carefully. This important information will help you plan and prepare for your time with us. If you have any further questions after you have read this packet, please give us a call at (907) 683-1269. We are here to help.

Activities

This Murie Science and Learning Center (MSLC) course is active and field-based. Hiking will be moderately strenuous, covering distances of approximately 3 - 5 miles round trip and including as much as 1,500 feet of elevation gain. We will be hiking off trail on rough, uneven tundra, forest, and river bar terrains and will likely encounter wet tundra / forest conditions and stream crossings with water levels that are above hiking boots.

Participants should be in good physical condition.

Walk in the footsteps of Denali's famed wildlife biologist Adolph Murie as you learn tracking and observation skills. With expert tracker Tim Buechle and the Murie Science and Learning Center, we'll explore Denali much the way Murie did by studying tracks and other signs. Not only will we discover what animals were there before us, but also what they were doing! The landscape will come alive as we learn the basics of tracking such as identifying, timing, and interpreting tracks and other signs. We'll investigate the relationships between different wildlife species and how they are all connected within the ecosystem. We'll also take a look at how modern research techniques differ from those of Murie.

Tentative Daily Schedule

Our group will be staying together at the MSLC Field Camp. Schedules may be modified somewhat according to weather conditions and to fit the needs and interest of the participants and instructor, such as viewing unique wildlife sightings and/or spectacular scenery.

Friday	6:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. 6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. 8:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.	Check in at MSLC Introduction, orientation & overview Drive to MSLC Field Camp
Saturday	9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Exploration of Denali Dinner and evening discussions
Sunday	9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. 3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Continued exploration of Denali Return drive to MSLC

Weather

The entire course takes place outdoors and activities will continue rain or shine. Weather conditions are unpredictable year round in Denali and therefore you must be prepared for a wide range of conditions. Temperatures can vary from below freezing to 80 degrees F. Mosquitoes and other biting insects can be numerous anytime during the summer. Be prepared with adequate warm clothing, a hooded rain jacket, and rain pants. Dressing in layers is recommended. **Please review carefully the Clothing & Equipment List provided.**

Directions, Parking Area and Meeting Location

The entrance to Denali National Park is located at Mile 237 of the George Parks Highway. Follow the Park Road for approximately 1 mile to a roundabout, and make the first right turn off the roundabout. The MSLC is the first building on the right. However, because you will be parking overnight, **we ask that you park in the park concessioner's employee lot.** To get to this lot, pass the MSLC and continue to the second right turn. You will see a sign that says 'Service Road Buses Only'. Drive towards the bus yard and park in the first large lot on the left. This is a very busy area, so please yield to any buses or pedestrians. To walk to the MSLC, go back down the drive toward the park road and look for the MSLC in the direction of the roundabout. Please leave your overnight bags in your vehicle. We will load all bags directly into the MSLC van in the parking lot after our initial meeting in the MSLC.

Arrival

Beginning a half-hour before course start time, MSLC staff will greet you at the Center for check-in; your course begins at 6:30pm. The first evening will not include dinner, however a small dessert and drinks will be offered during the introduction.

Accommodations in Denali

Your group will stay at the MSLC Field Camp at the Teklanika River Campground at mile 29 of the Park Road. Our field camp is made up of six tent cabins, one large Yurt (a portable, covered, lattice-framed structure), and a small storage space for group gear. Up to four course participants share space in a tent cabin. Each tent cabin has two sets of bunk beds with foam mattresses and pillows. Each participant needs to provide their own sleeping bag and pillow case. There is no electricity, plumbing or any heated area, i.e., **no hot water and no showers.**

Lodging accommodations before and following the course are your responsibility. We do not endorse or recommend any particular lodge, cabins, or campground, but we are happy to provide you with a list of local accommodations upon request.

Meals

The field camp kitchen has a small propane stove, but no refrigeration. Simple yet hearty meals will be served family-style. Dining may be outside, weather permitting, or in the Yurt. Each morning, along with a breakfast buffet, a lunch spread will be laid out for participants to create their own bag lunches for the day. We have a limited ability to accommodate specific dietary requirements; therefore, **please notify the MSLC several weeks before the course of any specific dietary needs or restrictions.**

Transportation in the Park

We will be traveling as a group in a 12 passenger van when we go into the park. Due to the Park's backcountry limits we limit the number of participants to ten.

Your Denali Visit & Your Expectations

MSLC courses are designed to immerse participants in a particular subject area, and therefore course activities and destinations in the park will be devoted to the course content. **If you are interested in seeing more of the park, please allow for extra time before or after the course for further exploration via the shuttle bus system or on foot.** We particularly encourage first time visitors to plan for extra time, especially if this is a "once in a lifetime" trip. Please contact us for advice or visit www.nps.gov/dena for further information.

Cancellation Policy

Cancellations that occur 30 days in advance of the course start date will be refunded the course fee, less a processing fee of \$25 per space. For cancellations within 30 days of the course start date, the entire fee will be retained unless we can fill your space. Alaska Geographic memberships are non-refundable and non-transferable. If we have to cancel a course, your entire course fee will be refunded. To process a cancellation, please email us at courses@murieslc.org or call (907) 683-1269.

Refunds will be credited to the credit card used during the original transaction. Refunds may also be applied to course substitutions within the same summer season. Please contact us to process a substitution or refund.

Insurance and Liability

Participants should have their own health and accident insurance. Also please consider travel insurance in case you have to cancel your trip due to illness or injury. All participants will be asked to read and sign the enclosed Acknowledgment of Risk form and complete the Health and Emergency Contact form. Please bring these forms with you to the first day of the course. Please contact the MSLC if you have any questions or concerns.

Important Phone Numbers

For the entirety of the course we will not have access to phones or cell phone coverage. Emergency and non-emergency messages can be passed through the MSLC office phone number (907) 683-1269. The MSLC is open daily from 9:30a.m. – 5:00p.m. After-hours emergency calls can be directed to the Denali National Park & Preserve Law Enforcement Ranger Division at (907) 683-9555.

Professional Development Credit

Optional professional development credit is available for this course. By choosing this option at the time of registration, you are officially pre-registered and pre-paid with the University of Alaska – Anchorage. A registration form will be sent to you prior to the course. Please fill it out and bring it with you on the first day of the course.

Suggested Pre-Course Reading List

- 1) Murie, A. (1961) **A Naturalist in Alaska**. New York: Devin-Adair Co.
- 2) Halfpenny, J. (2007) **Scats and Tracks of Alaska**. Helena, MT: Falcon Press Publishing.
- 3) Elbroch, M. (2003) **Mammal Tracks and Signs - A Guide to North American Species**. Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Books.
- 4) Kays, R. and Wilson D. (2002) **Mammals of North America**. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.