

WILDERNESS EXPEDITIONS, INC.

PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK

Wilderness Expeditions, Inc.

Wilderness Expeditions, Inc. (WE) is a Christian based guide and outfitting service headquartered in Salida, Colorado. Since 1989, WE has dedicated itself to unique wilderness adventures and outdoor programs with a spiritual purpose. Wilderness Expeditions is one of the largest commercial outfitter in the state of Colorado with a US Forest Service outfitters permit. Its excellent performance has earned a positive image and a continued opportunity to offer quality Christian outdoor programs.

Wilderness Expeditions programs are designed to encourage spiritual growth while enjoying the challenge of outdoor sports in Colorado. The services provided set Wilderness Expeditions apart from other outdoor experiences. WE programs challenge and inspire through experiential application and unique growth opportunities while teaching the value of teamwork, the strength of encouragement, empathy in shared experiences, and the character to accept a challenge...and overcome it!

Expedition Fees

The per person fee is indicated for each program/activity and is for all participants who meet the required payment deadlines. If you are registering with a church, your church will collect the registration fees from you and then will pay Wilderness Expeditions.

Wilderness Expeditions requires everyone to be paid in full by May 1. Your church may allow you to pay later than this, however, we are not able to provide refunds for anyone who decides to “back out” after May 1. Your church will have to pay for you whether you go or not. Please keep this in mind as you are making decisions for your family.

The fee covers all expenses for your participation (unless otherwise indicated), which includes the services of the guide/outfitter (equipment, Forest Service permits, staff leadership, food, and base camp use), program costs, passes to the Salida Aquatic Center (for showers after Trek) etc. No discounts are available for bringing your own gear. Participants may have additional expenses, particularly for travel and lodging to and from the base camp.

Regarding Tips

Our guides and staff work hard to provide excellent service. Although tips are customary and extremely appreciated, they are not included in the participant fees.

Regarding Food

Meals during Trek are included which provide necessary calories for a week-long backpacking adventure. Trail food is by necessity a high carbohydrate, high caloric diet. It is high in wheat, milk products, sugar, corn syrup, and artificial coloring/flavoring. If these food products cause a problem to your diet, **you will be responsible for providing any appropriate substitutions** and advise the staff upon arrival. Your youth minister can help you know more about foods while on trail.

Safety

Wilderness Expeditions makes every effort to ensure the safety of each individual. WE programs and activities include a certain element of risk. The Field Guides and Staff are current in First Aid and CPR and understand the unique situations that may arise in the wilderness or on any of the various programs/activities offered. As a result, they are trained in procedures for getting injured or ill people to medical facilities as quickly as possible. Wilderness Expeditions has a thorough safety policy and an excellent safety record. You may read and/or download a copy of the safety policy from our website.

Insurance and Emergency Medical Situations Wilderness Expeditions does not carry medical insurance for its participants. **Each participant is financially responsible for medical costs.** You must complete all medical information on the Registration Forms, as this information is critical in the event you would need medical attention. Nearby towns have emergency facilities and the staff is trained in emergency evacuation procedures. In the rare case of a life-threatening situation, our Field Guides can arrange for emergency helicopter rescue by radio. In the event you must return to base camp because of injury or illness, another member of your group will be required to accompany and care for that individual until your group returns from their program/activity. **Note:** The staff will not administer any type of medication, including aspirin, Tums, Tylenol, etc. If you need any over-the-counter medications, you must provide them. Be sure to let your staff know which medications you are taking.

In the event of an emergency at home, you will be able to leave a message at the following phone number. We will make every effort to pass the message on as soon as possible. **Emergency contact: 1-719-651-0906.**

Physical Fitness and Conditioning

One of the biggest challenges you may face is the actual physical activity associated with many of our programs. WE often uses the physical challenge found in the wilderness to encourage spiritual growth. For example, you will be carrying a 40-60 pound pack up and down mountain trails at high altitudes. This is why it is **necessary** for anyone who wants to take full advantage of the experience **to be “in shape”**. Considering WE policies, some of the activities may require all participants to have the ability to participate, and in some cases, all participants may not be able to complete an activity based on the lack of physical fitness of one or more participants.

If you have any questions regarding the physical requirements for a particular activity, we strongly encourage you to talk to your youth minister. **Ignoring the implied physical requirements and guidelines for various programs may place you and your entire group at risk for a medical emergency.**

WE strongly recommends a conditioning program for the more strenuous activities it offers. This should consist of aerobic exercise that builds up lung capacity (especially important at high altitude), and weight bearing exercises that build up strength and stamina. For example, consider walking or exercising with a weighted backpack to simulate a more genuine experience. Keep in mind that a summit hike might take as long as 10 hours.

It is wise to begin gradually and build up to the desired goals. Don't try too much too soon. It is better to develop stamina than speed. Be consistent. Get into a routine and stay with it. If you want to climb a mountain you need to be in shape.

Provided By the Outfitter

For all multi-day programs and some other activities, when indicated, the outfitter provides a variety of equipment and supplies. Such items often include: external frame backpack, sleeping bag, sleeping pad, tent, stove, fuel, cooking equipment, dining fly, rappel equipment, first aid kit, and food. Each Person is responsible for the care of equipment that is issued. **If equipment is damaged or lost through abuse, or negligence, the individual will be responsible for repair or replacement of the item(s).**

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WHAT TO BRING

This is a list of recommended clothing and personal gear to bring on your trip. The list is based on a typical 6 Day adventure and is designed to minimize the weight and size of your pack. Those participating in other programs may still find the list helpful. You may choose to bring things not included in the list, but you will be responsible for carrying all of your “extras”.

Clothing

4 pair socks – 2 lightweight and 2 heavyweight (wool or synthetic blend, Non-Cotton) An adequate supply of underwear Long underwear – top and bottom Swimsuit

2-3 T-shirts (Non-Cotton) Long sleeve shirt (Non-Cotton) Fleece pullover or zip-up 2 shorts – or 1 pair shorts and 1 pair pants that zip off to shorts 1 long pants – for warmth (Non-Jean) Rain pants (quality) Rain jacket (quality with hood, NOT an emergency poncho) Jacket with hood 2 hats - 1 for sun protection and 1 for warmth Gloves Hiking boots or Hiking shoes (waterproof) Second pair of closed toe shoes (for camp or if your other shoes get wet) Fall, Winter, Spring trips: WE recommends ski-type jacket and pants, warmer gear, and gaiters.

Personal Gear

Daypack, like a school backpack (large enough for food, water, gear, and extra clothes) 2 **one quart** or more water bottles or a water bottle and a water bladder Sunglasses Sunblock with high SPF rating (travel size or share with a friend)

Lip balm with sunblock Medicines (labeled) **Note:** If you need any over-the-counter medications, you must bring them with you. Insect repellent (travel size or share with a friend) Deodorant (travel size) Toothbrush and toothpaste (travel size) Toilet paper (unroll enough for a week and put in ziplock bag) Spoon/Fork or camping spork Large camping cup for food and drink, or small cup and plate Small flashlight or headlamp Whistle (required) Small Bible (preferably with old and new testament) Writing utensils Ziplock bags (to sort and carry personal gear) 2 or more 55 gallon trash bags (used to cover and keep packs dry) Camera and film (optional)

End of Program Articles

Clean clothes for the final evening’s activities and your trip home. Clean towel and swimsuit for the showers and/or aquatic center. **Note:** Plan to leave your luggage and all extra articles in the care of the outfitter. They will be kept secure and be available when you return at the end of your trip.

Items Not to Bring

Knives, firearms, fireworks, alcohol, tobacco products, illegal drugs, and electronic devices (music devices, games, cellular phones, etc.). These items may be prohibited by the Forest Service and/or could take away from the experience of a wilderness adventure. **If found, these items may be confiscated.**

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HOW TO BE COMFORTABLE

To really be comfortable in the wilderness, you must prepare physically, mentally, and expect to endure hardship. Plans may change, food may change, weather will change, tent mates may change, equipment may break, and accidents may happen. All you can do is try to plan ahead and prepare. Keep a good attitude.

It is important to be comfortable and warm in what you wear. Footwear that is waterproof, or can be waterproofed (such as leather boots) works great. Other footwear may get soaked and require extra socks to keep your feet dry. Bring a large plastic bag for your shoes so they don't get the tent dirty or wet. Nothing dries as quickly as you would like. You need to bring an extra pair of shoes to wear while in camp, or while your other pair is drying. Polypropylene socks dry easily and keep the moisture away. Any type of wool blend will keep your feet warmer and dryer than cotton. Warm, dry, healthy feet will improve your outlook. In choosing outerwear like pants, shirts, sweaters, and coats, keep in mind the idea of layering. Layering allows you to put on and take off what is needed so you don't sweat and make yourself colder. The pants that zip off into shorts are great. They save you from bringing a second pair of shorts or pants and work well during a hike. Fleece, wool, and synthetics are great in the wilderness. A good waterproof top and bottom are right up there with footwear in importance. When it rains, you want to stay dry. With ponchos, rain will splash up and make you wet and miserable and cheap ponchos tear easily and prove to be quite useless. It is best to have a rain suit (parka with a hood, and pants) that you can put over clothes for protection and warmth. Go for quality. The Rockies can be unpredictable. The temperature may vary from the 30's to the 80's. There may be rain, hail, snow, clouds, or sunshine – all in a day. Snow is not unusual in July and it will rarely be hot. WE recommend you pack clothing in plastic bags to protect from the elements and treat your outerwear with water repellent. WE also recommend using synthetic (Non-Cotton) fabrics. You don't need to get the most expensive gear and clothing to have an enjoyable and comfortable experience. Many quality items can be found at the Army Surplus store, second hand shops, or local sporting goods store. Academy Sports often has fleece and quality synthetic athletic wear on the sale rack for under \$10. Have fun finding those great deals.

Sleeping warm is incredibly important for comfort. As soon as the tent is set up, get your sleeping bag out of the stuff sack and spread it out. This allows the bag to regain its loft and insulate better. When you go to bed, don't wear the socks you have been wearing all day. They have a lot of water in them and are compressed. Keep a pair of socks just for wearing to bed. Don't wear wet or dirty clothes to bed. Either use the mummy hood on the bag, or wear a stocking cap. Your head loses more heat than any other part of your body. You can put clothes in your sleeping bag to keep warm. This leaves less room for your body to heat. Bring a small pillow case to stuff with a jacket or clothes. Your sleeping bag will come with a pad meant to insulate you from the cold ground. This is not meant for comfort. You may wake up a lot, be cramped, ache, etc. You may want a pair of ear plugs for snoring tent mates. You can buy a better pad at an outdoor store (a wide selection of prices and styles). Anything that will cushion should improve your sleeping tremendously. Also, many pads have a chair-kit that allows you to turn the pad into a comfortable chair or a "crazy creek" type chair will work. This is well worth the extra money.

You need to commit to doing what is necessary to be healthy. It is important to eat everything provided. You don't need to pack a bunch of extras, but a few snacks are great for the trail. Adding a drink mix to your treated water is very popular. Drinking water is the most important aspect of staying healthy. With climate, altitude, and increase in exercise, the body requires more water than normal. Feel free to take ibuprofen etc. for aches and pains, and we recommend Tums to help with altitude. Do not take anything else, unless it is a regular prescription. If there is an emergency, your staff must know what kind of chemicals are in your system. Be clean! Brush your teeth. Wash your face, hands, arms, armpits, and crotch etc. Wet-wipes are great. Some hand lotion may be great for chafing areas like boot tops and under the pack strap areas. Powder is great for feet and other areas of moisture. Every little bit helps.

Do your best to plan ahead and prepare. Expect the unexpected and embrace the unknown. To be in the wilderness is a privilege that few people have. The more comfortable you are, the more you can relax and enjoy it!