

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION, WILDERNESS MEDICINE ELECTIVE**

Wilderness Medicine is the practice of medicine in an austere or backcountry environment. Backcountry emergency care is defined as care implemented one hour away from definitive medical care. One of the cornerstones of the discipline is improvisation of accepted medical therapies when standard medical facilities and equipment are unavailable. Also important for the practitioner are the outdoor skills necessary to be self-sufficient in wilderness settings. Wilderness Medicine training prepares health care personnel to be useful in disaster and humanitarian settings. The goal of this elective is to prepare participants to function as health care providers anywhere in the world, under any circumstances, with or without hospitals.

## **ABOUT THE WILDERNESS MEDICAL SOCIETY**

The curriculum follows the recommendations, precedents and general framework set by the Wilderness Medical Society for a wilderness medicine elective. Founded in 1983, the Wilderness Medical Society (WMS) is the world's leading organization devoted to wilderness medical challenges. WMS also fosters Student Interest Groups (SIGs) on seventy-one medical school campuses.

## **FACULTY**

**Lynn E. Yonge, MD, FAAFP, FAWM**, serves as the primary faculty member and course director.

**Raymond Maguire, MD** is an ER physician with extensive outdoor experience. He assists with the wilderness expedition.

**Luke Adams, MD** is a radiologist with extensive outdoor experience.

## **CURRICULUM OVERVIEW**

This senior elective curriculum was approved by the USA College of Medicine and has been taught for the past four years.

## **EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES**

- Act as a medical group leader in backcountry or other remote settings
- Advise a wilderness travel group concerning care and evacuation of ill or injured members
- Plan for the medical support of wilderness and adventure travel experiences
- Manage common illnesses and injuries in an austere environment with limited resources
- Understand the physician's role in search and rescue
- Identify and plan for special hazards in a variety of extreme environments

- Demonstrate basic competence in exotic travel and wilderness survival skills

## **CURRICULUM COMPONENTS**

- Wilderness First Aid certification, (16 hours)
- Special Wilderness Topics, (12 hours)
- Knot Tying/mentorship day (8 Hours)
- Canoe Training (6 Hours)
- Controlled Burn/Wilderness Conservation weekend (30 hours)
- Wilderness Expedition, 5 days (104 hours)

Total Hours (approximate): 176

## **GRADING**

The grading system is Pass/Fail, for USA students and letter grade for ACOM students. It is based upon completion of the WFA certification, participation in outdoor and training activities, and completion of the 5-day canoe trip. Dr. Yonge will administer a WFA course in accordance with guidelines established by the Wilderness Medical Society, with course certificate presented by the Alabama Wilderness Medical Association.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

**Applicants must have some camping skills and equipment and should be in sufficient physical condition and health to complete a 5-day overnight field experience as a requirement for successful completion of the elective.** 4th year medical students, residents, and allied health profession students from accredited schools are accepted.

All US and international medical students in their 4th year (senior year) of medical school, residents, and students in allied health professional schools (PA and Nursing) during the time of the elective may apply.

## **COURSE LOCATION**

The classroom portions of the Wilderness Medicine Elective will be taught in Fairhope at Dr. Yonge's camping gear barn. Some classes will be taught at Longleaf Farm in Washington County, AL. The knot tying class will be taught at the Baldwin

County Pathway campus near Lottie, AL. The canoe-training course will be taught at Chickasabogue Park, near Mobile (river levels permitting).

The camping component of the course will be conducted either in the Mobile Tensaw Delta or on the Escatawpa River. Weather and river water levels will contribute to the decision. The Escatawpa River travels along the west side of Alabama, then meanders over into south Mississippi. The take out point is Airport Blvd. in Mobile. The Escatawpa is one of the most pristine un-dammed black water rivers in the US. The paddle can be up to 70 miles.

Of the Mobile Tensaw Delta, Harvard's E.O. Wilson says: "That's one of the few wilderness areas left in the United States, in the eastern United States that is an authentically wilderness area". "This is one of the richest areas biologically in the United States. Among the largest number of freshwater fish, reptiles, including turtles, salamanders, of plants, it's a wonderland." Paddle distance will be over 50 miles and take out will be on the Causeway.

## **LOGISTICS and EQUIPMENT**

Dr. Yonge will provide all canoes and camping gear needed for the expedition. Students will be provided a list of all personal gear required at course start. Staff will review the gear list with each student to be sure what they have is appropriate for wilderness travel.

## **COURSE DATES**

The elective will be conducted primarily in March. This is an exceptional time to camp. It is often warm enough to swim, but cool enough to have reduced insect counts and comfortable night times sleeping. The March date allows students to be in town for Match Day. Most classes will be conducted over the weekends in March, so students should be aware their only weekend off is Match weekend. Most weekdays are free.

## **FEES**

Course price is \$700. Fee will cover equipment and boats needed for the expedition. Students will be responsible for their own food for the camping expedition.

## **Special Topics List:**

Wilderness Medicine Overview  
Water Purification and Hygiene  
Wilderness Medical Advisor

Wilderness Dermatology  
Large Animal attacks in the Southeast  
Wilderness Wound Care  
Wilderness First Aid Kits  
Personal Camping Gear  
Tents and Group Camping Gear  
Shark Attacks  
Tree Stand Injuries  
Living or Dying at the Wildland Urban Interface