

Minnesota North College – Vermilion Campus

Backcountry Guide

Academic Year 2023-24
Certificate (16 credits)

Required Coursework

Group A – 13 credits	Prerequisites	Credits	Hr Lc/Lb
EMSV 1275 – Wilderness First Responder (spring)	(CLR)	3	(1/4)
OUTL 1245 – Leave No Trace Trainer Certification (spring)	(CLR, CLW)	1	(0.2/1.6)
OUTL 1251 – Outdoor Pursuits 1 (fall)	(CLR, CLW)	3	(1.5/3)
OUTL 2250 – Outdoor Leadership Capstone (spring)	(OUTL1251; PREC1241)	3	
PREC 1241 – Introduction to Parks, Recreation, and Tourism (fall)	(CLR, CLW)	3	
OR WILD 1265 – Introduction to Wilderness Management (fall)	(CLR, CLW)		

Restricted Elective Coursework

Group B – 3 credits (minimum)			
Students may take restricted elective credits from one or both Topic Areas to complete the 16-credit certificate. Before selecting course options, students should speak with the program coordinator to choose courses which would best suit their career goals.			
Outdoor Leadership Topic Area	Prerequisites	Credits	Hr Lc/Lb
EMSV 1761 – Technical Rescue 1 (fall)		2	(0.5/3)
EMSV 1762 – Technical Rescue 2 (spring)		2	(0.5/3)
OUTL 1210 – Backpack Expedition (spring)		2	(0.5/3)
OUTL 1230 – Canoe Expedition (fall)		2	(0.5/3)
OUTL 1252 – Outdoor Pursuits 2 (spring)	(OUTL1251)	3	(1.5/3)
OUTL 2210 – Theory and Practice of Teaching Paddlesports (fall)	(OUTL1230; OUTL1251 or instructor approval)	3	(1/4)
OUTL 2225 – International Internship	(2.00 GPA; instructor approval)	2	
OUTL/PHED 1122 – Backpacking (spring)		1	(0.4/1.2)
OUTLPHED 1128 – Canoeing (fall)		1	(0.2/1.6)
OUTL/PHED 1134 – Dogsledding (spring)		1	(0.2/1.6)
OUTL/PHED 1146 – Rock Climbing (fall)		1	(0.2/1.6)
OUTL/PHED 1152 – Winter Camping (spring)		1	(0.2/1.6)
Naturalist Guide Topic Area	Prerequisites	Credits	Hr Lc/Lb
BIOL/NRT 1445 – Mammal Tracking (spring)		1	
BIOL/NRT 1446 – Field Biology (fall)		2	(1/2)
BIOL/NRT 1465 – Intro to Wolf/Deer Ecology (fall)		1	
BIOL/NRT 1466 – Black Bear Ecology (spring)		1	
BIOL/NRT 1467 – Beaver Ecology (fall)		1	
BIOL/NRT 1468 – Moose Ecology (fall)	(CLR, CLW)	1	
BIOL/NRT 2449 – Ecology and Management of Northern Fishes (fall)	(BIOL1200 or BIOL1561)	2	(1/2)

Program Description

The Backcountry Certificate consists of 16 credits of outdoor leadership, parks and recreation, wilderness, physical education, biology, and health courses. The certificate is designed to give students academic and technical knowledge related to the field of guiding trips, excursions, and recreational activities in a backcountry or wilderness setting. Students can choose from a wide variety of courses unique to Vermilion Community College.

This certificate is intended to complement another degree in a student's training and education. This certificate has been designed as a sub-credential of the Outdoor Leadership A.S., Outdoor Leadership Professional A.A.S., Wilderness and Park Management A.A.S., or Wildland/Wildlife Law Enforcement A.A.S. at Vermilion. There are two distinct topic areas that a student may pursue. The Outdoor Leadership topic area is designed for those students who wish to pursue opportunities relating to wilderness and outdoor adventure leadership while the Naturalist Guide topic area is designed for those who wish to pursue opportunities relating to environmental interpretation and education.

This certificate is embedded in the Outdoor Leadership Professional A.A.S. degree. It also serves to augment other degree programs at Vermilion such as the Wilderness and Park Management A.A.S, Fisheries and Wildlife Management A.S., Natural Resources Technology-Forestry/Wildlife A.A.S., Water Quality Science A.S., Watershed Science A.S., Wildland/Wildlife Law Enforcement A.A.S, and the Liberal Arts and Sciences A.A.

Backcountry Guide Certificate

Occupational Titles

Students completing this certificate may find positions with titles such as Wilderness Guide, Fishing/Hunting Guide, Outdoor Instructor, Outfitter, Trip Leader, and others.

Program Learning Outcomes

Graduates of this program will:

Interpersonal and Intrapersonal Skills

1. Assess their strengths and challenges, how they make decisions, and how they cope with adversity in the field.
2. Demonstrate the willingness to be responsible for themselves and others by understanding and practicing expedition behavior.
3. Understand how to work with and reach out to various types of learners and populations which they may encounter in professional settings.

Environmental Awareness and Ethical Land Stewardship

4. Develop their own environmental ethic.
5. Understand the principle of Leave No Trace (LNT) backcountry ethics for a variety of course areas and seasons.

Outdoor Leadership and Education Program Delivery

6. Define and implement concepts of outdoor education and the experiential learning model.
7. Develop and deliver lesson plans for a variety of outdoor technical skills.
8. Assess risk and develop risk management plans for the wilderness setting including various methods of human powered travel, seasons, and course areas.

Outdoor Technical Skills

9. Develop proficiency in a variety of human powered outdoor activities (canoeing, kayaking, snowshoeing, hiking, rock climbing, skiing, dogsledding, etc.).
10. Demonstrate proficiency in navigation (maps, compass, GPS).
11. Gain professional certification in Leave No Trace (LNT) backcountry ethics.
12. Gain American Canoe Association assessment and/or certification.
13. Gain Wilderness First Responder certification.
14. Manage and maintain their own and student health and hygiene in the field by staying warm and dry, cooking, personal hygiene, and energy control.

Program Faculty Contact

Mark Carlson (mark.carlson@minnesotnorth.edu or 218-235-2141)

Mission

Minnesota North College prepares lifelong learners and engaged citizens through inclusive, transformative experiences reflecting the character and natural environment of the region.



Minnesota North College, a member of Minnesota State, is an affirmative action, equal opportunity employer and educator.

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