

Wilderness Physical Therapy Educators, LLC and Idaho State University present

Traversing Wilderness Physical Therapy: An Outdoor, Hands-on Course



Idaho State
University

Course Overview

Duration: 2pm Friday, September 25, 2026 to 1pm Sunday, September 27, 2026

Location: Mink Creek Group Campground, Pocatello, Idaho

Description: This 2.0 CEU-approved (NC-APTA) course presents a unique opportunity for PTs who love the outdoors to learn how to use their skills in the rapidly growing field of Wilderness Physical Therapy. Using scenario-based teaching approaches onsite in the backcountry, this course will assist participants with problem-solving strategies and innovative treatment approaches for people who become injured or ill in backcountry environments. This course emphasizes clinical reasoning in the wilderness environment, knowledge for specialty practice, professionalism, leadership, and patient management. The instructors are professional educators and PT clinicians who have extensive experience in austere patient care as PTs and wilderness EMTs. This course can be used for partial completion of the [WPTE Wilderness PT First Responder Certification](#).

Cost: \$675.00 (2.0 CEUs)

Prerequisite: Course participants are required to complete our 5-hour (.5 CEU) online course '[Intro to Wilderness Physical Therapy](#)' prior to taking this course.

Materials: Handouts and skill cards are provided. We ask that participants bring basic first aid materials, outdoor gear, and a backpack. A full pack list is provided in this document. Participants who would like to camp must bring additional camping gear not provided in the pack list.

Lodging: Onsite camping is available to all course participants at no additional cost. Campers must supply their own gear. For those who would like to stay in hotels, there are numerous options in Pocatello about a 20 minute drive from the campsite.



Mink Creek Group Campground

Learning Objectives

Upon course completion, participants will achieve the following:



Identify the medical-legal and safety concerns relating to prehospital patient care in austere and wilderness environments.



Use core knowledge and skills as a physical therapist to apply sound clinical rationale for responding to wilderness emergencies and, when necessary, assume leadership of wilderness medical scenes.



Perform primary and secondary assessments during scenarios that are based on real backcountry emergencies.



Demonstrate approved techniques for the backcountry management of traumatic and medical conditions.



Understand and articulate the decision-making process for evacuation status and speed for ground and air evacuation of people who have medical problems or injuries in the backcountry.



Improve patient functional mobility in the austere environment by improvising unweighting and providing appropriate assistance and transport in rugged uneven terrain.



Schedule

Friday

2pm–6pm

- Using your PT skills in the backcountry
- Scene management, leadership, and group dynamics
- Medical–legal aspects of wilderness care
- Identification and treatment of immediate life threats
- Secondary assessment and the wilderness physical examination
- Communication and transfer of care

Saturday

8am–8pm

- Acute trauma and shock: general considerations, wound care and polytrauma
- Bleeding emergencies
- Regional considerations for trauma
- Field management of musculoskeletal injuries:
 - Dislocations and fractures
 - Splinting
 - SAM splints, vacuum splints, confabulated splints
 - Exercise, manual therapy, gait training
- Patient transport: lifts, carries, and rigs
- Search and rescue

Sunday

8am–1pm

- Environmental and medical issues in the backcountry
- Problem–solving stations/practical examination
- Discussion and course evaluation

Pack List

Attire

- ☐ Comfortable clothing that can get dirty (Some scenarios will require lying on the ground.)
- ☐ Backpack

Optional Backpack Contents

- ☐ Poncho
- ☐ Small Tarp (for shelter construction)
- ☐ Rope (for shelter construction)
- ☐ Change of clothing

Backpack Contents

Bring your packed backpack each day.

- ☐ Foam camping pad
- ☐ Rain gear
- ☐ Jacket
- ☐ Bandana
- ☐ Headlamp (and extra batteries)
- ☐ Sleeping bag or quilt
- ☐ Water
- ☐ Lunch
- ☐ Snacks
- ☐ First aid kit (*see First Aid Kit contents*)
- ☐ Writing pad
- ☐ Pen

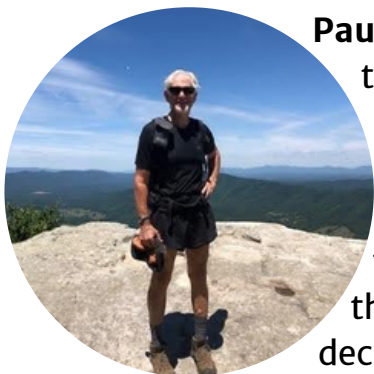
First Aid Kit

Pack kit in a large baggie.

- ☐ 1-2 Ace bandages
- ☐ 1 Roll Coban elastic dressing
- ☐ Small roll duct tape or adhesive tape
- ☐ 2 rolls of 4 or 6-inch Kerlix gauze
- ☐ 5 or more pairs of non-latex disposable exam gloves
- ☐ 2 or more surgical face masks
- ☐ 1-2 bandanas

Those who are camping, come prepared with your camping gear.

Instructors



Paul F. Beattie PhD, PT, FAPTA, WEMT is a Clinical Professor Emeritus at the University of South Carolina, whose goal is to develop the role of physical therapists in the wilderness environment. As a child growing up next to the Appalachian Trail, Paul developed a lifelong passion for hiking and backcountry adventure. After high school, Paul served in the 101st Airborne Division in the VietNam war where he was exposed to the challenges of providing medical care in challenging environments and decided on a career as a physical therapist (PT). Upon his return from overseas Paul earned a BS and MS in PT and a PhD in Exercise Science while becoming a member of the first group of PTs to become Board-Certified in Orthopedic PT. Over his 45-year career as a clinician, professor and researcher Paul has published over 150 peer-reviewed papers and has been awarded the Catherine Worthingham Fellowship from the APTA. Paul is also a Wilderness EMT and wilderness medical instructor who currently serves as a seasonal volunteer backcountry ranger at Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming. Along with its other founding members, Paul is thrilled by the opportunity to share our experiences through Wilderness PT Educators.



Darren Hearn DPT, PhD, MPH, NREMT is a Physical Therapist who is more at home outside than in any clinic. Growing up hunting and fishing with his brothers and father, he learned to both love and respect the outdoors. Shortly after high school, Darren attended West Point and after graduating in 2002 was deployed to Iraq where he gained true respect for the desert environment. In 2005, he decided to pursue a degree in Physical Therapy after receiving it himself and developing a strong interest in helping others return to and optimize performance. Not long after graduation, he found himself happy to get out of the typical clinic and return to more austere environments with the Army's 4th Infantry Division. He trained with and then deployed with them to Afghanistan as a Brigade Combat Team PT serving over 20 remote locations in the mountains and valleys of the eastern part of the country. It was there that he found that bringing medical expertise to the most austere environments was his passion. He has continued that passion both academically and practically, volunteering with his local Search and Rescue Team, earning a PhD from UNC Chapel Hill in Human Movement Science, and most recently earning his EMT and Wilderness EMT specialty. He also continued his military service, currently serving in North Carolina at Fort Bragg. Darren understands the peace and challenge that the outdoors brings and is excited to share that with as many people as possible.



Darin Jernigan MS, DPT, WEMT has been a Physical Therapy educator at Idaho State University since 2002. He is currently the Director of Rehabilitative Programs and Department Co-Chair for Health Occupations within the College of Technology. DJ worked for Grand Teton National Park (GTNP) for 20 years as a seasonal Climbing Ranger, EMS Provider, and SAR Coordinator from 1998 to 2017. He continues to be an avid climber and mountaineer with over 35 years of experience. He has participated in hundreds of Search and Rescue missions

involving technical rescue techniques on rock, snow and ice, often with the use of a helicopter. During his career as a Climbing Ranger, he adapted and employed Physical Therapy techniques as an EMS provider in austere environments. He has been involved in SAR missions in Wyoming, Idaho, Colorado, Montana and Alaska. DJ has been a Physical Therapist for over 30 years and a Wilderness EMT for 25. He has been an EMS educator for GTNP assisting with yearly EMT refresher courses as an instructor. He has participated in multiple EMS and SAR related conferences in the intermountain west as a speaker and educator.

Climbing Resume:

- **Wyoming:** Grand Teton National Park (many peaks/routes, too many to name). Wind River Range – Gannett Peak, Pingora, Wolf's Head, Sharks Nose. Devils Tower
 - **California:** Yosemite – El Capitan (Big Walls) Salathe', Nose, Washingtons Column. Mt Shasta. Mt Whitney – East Buttress
 - **Alaska:** Denali – West Buttress, West Rib (30 day NPS Patrol)
 - **Mexico:** El Pico de Orizaba, La Malinche
 - **Utah:** Zion National Park – (Big Walls) Lunar Ecstasy, Moonlight Buttress, Space Shot, Prodigal Son, Monkey Finger, Touchstone. Fisher Towers – Ancient Art. Castleton Tower – Cor Engle's, North Chimney. Mexican Hat
 - **Washington:** Mt Rainier – Disappointment Cleaver, Kautz Glacier
 - **Oregon:** Mt Hood, Mt Jefferson, Three Sisters
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Karen Beattie, PT, RYT-500, WFR is a Physical Therapist, Wilderness First Responder and a 500 Registered Yoga Teacher. Living a fitness-based lifestyle is paramount in her daily life and as a Physical Therapist she has been given the opportunity to help others with physical challenges reach their goals. As a yoga teacher she aims to inspire those along their journey with guidance on how to move from a position of strength, imparting an experience of a mindful connection with one's breath. She considers the guidance for us to be mindful-not only on our

yoga mat-but also throughout our days, to be one of the many benefits of the practice and is an essential attribute when responding to Wilderness emergencies. Karen has combined her Wilderness First responder, PT and Yoga training in various outdoor environments including volunteering as Assistant Scout Master and Venture Crew Leader for Boy Scouts of America (BSA). She served as an adult leader and Medic for several 14-day backcountry treks at Philmont Scout Ranch in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains of Northern New Mexico and has assisted with instruction in Wilderness Remote First Aid Training and Wilderness Survival Training courses over the last decade. Karen serves as a seasonal Volunteer Backcountry Park Ranger (PT, wilderness first responder and yoga instructor) for park staff at Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming. Karen looks forward to sharing her passion and experience through Wilderness PT Educators.