

Information for Participants
in:

Ecological Methods

&

Research in Reptile Ecology

Summer 2002

Course Instructor:

**Roger Anderson
Department of Biology
Western Washington University**

Getting to Bellingham:

If you are not within easy driving distance, the round-trip plane flights to and from Seattle can be fairly inexpensive; you may even be lucky enough to catch a plane to Bellingham at no extra cost. If you cannot get the "free" flight from Seattle to Bellingham, you may want to choose the cheapest option—a bus from the airport to the greyhound station in Seattle (800 231 2222) then a greyhound bus to Bellingham (360 733 5251). You may choose a more convenient or enjoyable option for travel between Seattle and Bellingham such as the Airporter Shuttle (369 733 3600), or Amtrak (800 872 7245).

Accommodations:

During your stay at the beginning and end of the course you will have to arrange for a place to live. In addition to on-campus housing (360 650 2950) there are other options such as subletting from local students, a local youth hostel (\$11/night, 360 671 1750), or even weekly motel rooms.

When we are camping near Fields, Oregon, everyone is expected to be an industrious camper; that is, chores, including preparation of delectable meals and deep latrines, must be performed by each person without any prompting by the course instructors. The following accommodation-option is not recommended, but may be permissible, under some circumstances. If you do have inordinate funds available, and if you are driving your own relatively new and mechanically reliable car, then you have available the option of renting a room at Fields Station (541 495 2275) in Fields, OR, 97710, for some portion of your stay in the Alvord Desert.

Travel during the Course

You may want to take along some traveling amusements: roadside geology field guides, other field guides, geographical-historical guides, novels, musical instrument, traveling board and card games, walkman, postcards and stamps. Note that where we camp and where we drive can be dusty and hard on electronic devices.

If you use your own vehicle for transport during the course you will not be reimbursed for your costs; you may want to ride-share, so the cost may not be prohibitive. Your vehicle should have relatively low mileage and be very well maintained; we cannot take the time to accommodate someone's car troubles.

We will rideshare and use the Biology Department van. Legal and cautious driving is mandatory. We can fit only 10 passengers per van. Damages to the vehicles are charged to the trip (\$500 deductible). We need to keep the mileage traveled as low as practical, so we must consolidate our trips for supplies and phone calls. We should be very attentive to fuel level, oil pressure level, and cooling system temperatures. We also need to be sure to avoid running down the vehicle battery when in camp.

Meals:

We will have quasi-planned group meals at the field site; we do our best to accommodate even vegans. You may want to choose and pay for your meals when we travel to and from Oregon, although we may have some sandwich foods available. You may want to pack snacks and drinks to help sustain you on the drives. If you are finicky about the type of coffee you drink, then you will want to pack the amount you will consume during the field trip.

Often, the only fully cooked meal we will have time for each day will be dinner. We do heat water in the morning, so coffee and oatmeal and cold cereal are generally available for breakfast. Sandwiches, chips, apples, carrots, are some typical lunch foods. Powdered drinks such as gatorade, lemonade, ice tea will be provided. There will be very little room for personal coolers (unless you take your own vehicle). We have room only for the water coolers and coolers to hold some perishable foods for our meals.

General Comments on the Daily Field Routine

Field research occurs on a fairly tight schedule. Each day we will arise by 0700 and begin fieldwork 0745. On hot days some of you may have to retreat for a little while from your field work, to avoid the heat of the early-mid afternoon. For some students on some days dinnertime may not happen until close to 2030 hrs. Others may have the opportunity to eat earlier. On especially hot days we may eat dinner early and spend the last 2-3 hours before sunset in the field. We will be in primitive camping conditions in drylands, so creature comforts are minimal: refrigeration is limited to ice-coolers, and taking showers daily is possible, but it takes more than minimal effort. About one day per week, students routinely participate in some recreational activity (such as exploring Steens Mountain and the famous Malheur National Wildlife Refuge).

Caveats:

Please be aware of the following field hazards: sunburn, painfully dry lips, dry, bleeding nasal passages, and dehydration-caused cramps in legs and stomach; non-potable water; heatstroke and sunstroke; stings of hymenopterans, centipedes, and scorpions; bites from ticks, spiders and rattlesnakes; itching nettles, poison oak, and chiggers; mine shafts and cliffs; wild fire, flash flood, and lightning; thorns, barbed wire, and grouchy or loquacious colleagues.

Most of these problems are relatively easy to avoid or ameliorate, given a modicum of "common sense."

Drugs:

You may want to bring along some topical pain reliever for stings and punctures, and Benadryl or Allegra for allergic reactions. Your favorite headache remedy may be good to take with you.

If you are on prescription drugs, we need to know potential side effects, and how they affect your driving. If you have a private vehicle and transport yourself and fellow students to town on your day off, we suggest you avoid drinking alcohol. If your judgment is the least bit impaired by alcohol, driving on open range is particularly dangerous because cattle can enter the roadway into your lane in an instant. Inebriation will not be countenanced. Moreover, severe dehydration is an inevitable consequence of drinking alcohol to excess.

Staying in contact with the University and others while in the field:

Dr. Anderson will have a Biology Department cellular phone (360-961-2386 or 2381) for emergencies. University Van breakdowns can be discussed with the motor pool (360 650 3198). Every couple of days Dr. Anderson will check in with the Biology Department to see if any important messages have been relayed by friends or family via the Biology Department office (Barbara or Nancy, 360 650 3627) or the Biology Department stockroom (360 650 3644). You may be able to receive mail, via general delivery at Fields, OR 97710. There is a pay phone in Fields.

Dr. Anderson's suggested list of items to bring or share on the Oregon field trip:

Money: Traveler's checks, some cash: several dollars per day on snacks, drinks, laundry, and "whatever"
Credit Card (*e.g.* Visa or Mastercard): it is advisable to have one for unanticipated expenses
Medical Data (be sure sheet was filled in) Health Insurance Card, and Telephone Calling Card, Cell Phone
UV-blocking sunglasses (if you wear corrective lenses, beware dust on your contacts, have back-up eyewear)
Sunscreen (25 spf, without PABA), and UV-blocking lip balm, perhaps some insect repellent with DEET
Baseball cap, or visor, or narrow circum-brimmed hat
Lightweight 8-inch (or more) work boots (without vibram-type soles is best for walking on the field site, but you may want hiking boots for walking on Steens Mt); leather bottoms and canvas uppers may be preferable for staying cool, but may be less effective for avoiding snakebite
Canvas or otherwise breathable sneakers or low-top hiking shoes
Gaiters, or socks that reach to mid-calf and duct tape (bring 1 full roll) over boots & socks (worn with shorts)
Rubber sandals (for walking to hot springs and for the shower) and swim suit

Bandanas, work gloves, and gardening or basketball-type knee pads
Lightweight, loose-fitting, khaki (or sunscreen-rated synthetic material) field pants, 2 pair (no blue jeans)
Khaki field short-pants, boxer shorts and sports bras,
Cotton, front-button, short-sleeve shirts or loose fitting t-shirts, 3 or 4 (t-shirts don't tend to catch bees & wasps)

Lightweight front-button long-sleeve shirt (particularly if you are likely to get sunburned, or are otherwise sensitive to excessive sunlight; there are some expensive sunscreen-rated synthetic shirts that freely wick sweat)
Seven changes of socks (thick, cotton athletic or boot socks; perhaps 2-layers with polypro inners) and underwear (with our access to the laundromat in Burns, it is not necessary to have more than a week's worth of clothing)

Windbreaker and/or light goretex rain parka,
One set of semi-respectable evening clothes for a possible Saturday evening visit to town,
Bedding: sleepwear, pillow, 2 sheets, 1 blanket, or light sleeping bag, thermarest or air mattress, ground cloth,
One-person (or larger) mosquito tube tent, or small, cheap, back-packing tent, with extra cord and long stakes
Laundry bag, for dirty clothes,
Duffle bag to hold all of the above items (try to travel "light," there is not much luggage space in the vehicles),
Toiletries: 1-2 bath towels, 1-2 hand towels, washcloth, facial tissue, lotion soap, shampoo & conditioner, comb, sturdy hand mirror, tooth brush & paste, floss, deodorant, shave cream and safety razor, feminine care products.
Health care items: sun-block, skin moisturizing lotion, anti-itch ointment, analgesics, anti-histamines, antibiotic ointment, topical pain relievers (skin and mouth), anti-fungal cream, mole skin, gauze, waterproof tape & bandages, tweezers, fingernail clipper, snakebite and insect sting kit; some of these items will also reside in a group first-aid kit,
Sewing kit and tent repair kit, including extra cord,
Pocket knife (*e.g.*, Swiss army knife),
Folding hand trowel (*e.g.*, U-dig it brand),
Belt-attaching water bottle, a water-filter pump is a good idea,
Digital wrist watch with chronometer (perhaps also travel alarm clock for night data collection sessions),
Small flashlight (hold in mouth), perhaps head-lamp or hand-held lantern with spare bulbs and spare batteries,
Folding stool or chair (small, compact if you are not driving your own car),
Belt pack or daypack or field belt with field pouches (in Forestry Suppliers or Ben Meadows catalogs),
Single lens reflex camera or handycam, and plenty of film and a complete set of extra camera batteries,
Binoculars,
Small waterproof = dust proof field box or bag (two, with one larger than the other may be good),
Field guides and charts (*e.g.*, plants, insects, reptiles, stars),
Orienteering-mapping compass and quadrangle maps or state atlas and gazetteers
Field notebook (Dura-rite or Rite-in-the-rain), journal, and slim 3-ring binder notebook for field data sheets,
Waterproof ink pen (*e.g.*, Staedtler pigment liner 0.03 or 0.05), pencils and erasers, colored pens or pencils,
Lined, graph, and tracing paper, 8 ½ by 11 Vellum, map board with binder clips or long rubber band, ruler,
Hand calculator or small laptop computer, perhaps a portable printer; but heat and dust can be disastrous...
Magnifying hand lens (7X or 10X, small, foldable),
Lizard noose pole (stiff, 2-meter, 2-piece fiberglass or graphite fishing rod), stump ripper or snake tongs