

Wilderness Orientation Program – Frequently Asked Questions

When is the program?

The Wilderness Orientation is 8 days, from July 19th-26th. Students will meet at APU on July 19th and prepare for their trip, pack, and meet the participants and course instructors. The group will stay on campus and depart the next morning for a week of adventure, including rock climbing, backpacking, and a 24 hour solo experience in the Ansel Adams Wilderness just outside Yosemite National Park. The group will return on July 26th in the afternoon. You may arrive the day before your trip or stay afterwards, there is housing available on campus.

Does this take the place of New Student Orientation?

No. Students must attend NSO to obtain information about registration and living on campus. The Wilderness Orientation program adds additional elements designed to further prepare students for entering Azusa Pacific University.

What does the cost cover?

The \$350 fee covers all of your food during the trip, transportation to the course area, group equipment as well a backpack and sleeping bag, and trip guides. Cost does not cover personal equipment (boots, clothing, etc.) and snacks you might buy on the road.

Do I need any special equipment?

We will provide all the group camping equipment as well as backpacks and sleeping bags to those who need them. See the [What to Bring List](#) and [Personal Equipment Detailed Information](#) for more information on the personal equipment we will be asking you to provide.

How many students will be on this trip?

We will be in a small group of 8-10 incoming freshman and transfer students, as well as three leaders. Small groups work well for group dynamics, permits, and safety considerations.

Who will be our Course Instructors?

Outings will be lead by APU staff that are wilderness leaders with our Outdoor Adventures Program and hold certifications in wilderness medicine, rock climbing instruction, and backpacking. Leaders have an extensive background in wilderness leadership skills and teambuilding, and will provide a safe and fun environment for personal growth.

How can I be best prepared both physically and mentally for this trip?

Our goal is for you to enjoy your experience in the Sierra's while being challenged physically. While no backpacking experience is necessary, we ask that participants engage in some type of regular physical activity in preparation for the trip. See our [Physical Preparation Guide](#) for a detailed fitness plan. Trip leaders will adjust the hiking pace to the physical abilities of the participants; however your commitment to physical conditioning will make your experience much more enjoyable. Also, be mentally prepared for all kinds of weather (i.e. sunshine, rain, snow, cold, etc), and an inclusive group experience which will require cooperation, compromise, flexibility, and a positive attitude.

What kind of things will we be doing each day?

Every day will be a little bit different. Normally we will hike between 5-10 miles a day. The evening times will center around group time, cooking meals together, and sharing our life stories with one another. Towards the latter half of the week you will get to experience a 24-hr solo. Other options might include making a summit attempt on one of the peaks in the area.

What is a solo?

For many participants this experience is one of the highlights of their week. Each participant will get the opportunity to spend 24 hours alone, within a safe distance of base camp. This is a time to spend some quality time with God, journal, read, reflect on the week, and think about your transition to APU. Participants will have their own solo "campsite" and be equipped with the basic essentials. Participants will also have the opportunity to fast during this time if they choose to do so.

Can I be reached while on the Wilderness Orientation in case of an emergency?

Participants must plan to not utilize cell phones during the Wilderness Orientation, including the van ride to and from the course area. In

the case of an emergency APU will facilitate communication between parents and students. Trip leaders will carry satellite phones.

What about storing extra belongings?

We will have storage available for belongings which you will not be bringing with you on the Wilderness Orientation. Also, we have storage available for clean clothes for the ride home.

Will my group get together during the year?

Yes! We have arranged for the wilderness orientation participants to be in an Alpha group together as part of their freshman Beginnings course.

Are there other opportunities like this for APU students?

Yes, APU's High Sierra Semester program is a great opportunity for students who are interested in the wilderness orientation. For more information check out <http://www.apu.edu/highsierra/>