

Department of Recreation, Parks & Tourism

Outdoor Recreation



Outdoor Recreation is one of three concentrations in the Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism at Radford University. Upon successful completion of the program, students can find employment in camps, state parks, federal agencies, resorts, outdoor education agencies, municipal parks and recreation systems, youth organizations, nature centers, and non-profit groups.

Students have academic opportunities to develop the skills to organize, lead, and evaluate a variety of outdoor adventure programs. Students will develop novice to advanced technical skills in rock climbing, caving, canoeing, kayaking, backpacking, and ropes course facilitation. Students who desire a wilderness leadership experience can take a five-week intensive summer course. The Wilderness Institute focuses on leadership development, group processing, adventure programming, and outdoor living skills. This course emphasizes leadership development in the field of outdoor recreation involving skill acquisition in hiking, orienteering, camping, backpacking, rock climbing, caving, and paddling.

Wilderness Institute students have the opportunity to obtain a Wilderness Education Association Outdoor Leadership Certificate. In addition, all outdoor recreation students have the opportunity to receive the Leave No Trace Trainer Certificate through several of their classes. Students also have the option to participate in a Wilderness First Responder training each year. A national provider is brought in to facilitate this program. The course is nine days of intensive training for emergency care in a wilderness setting. Topics covered include patient assessment, body systems, equipment improvisation, trauma, environmental medicine, toxins, back country medicine, and wilderness rescue.

Students have many unique opportunities to build technical skills and leadership ability. For example, students may be employed through RU Outdoors, the adventure programming component of campus recreation. Many outdoor recreation students serve as trip leaders for RU Outdoors or facilitate the indoor climbing wall located in Peters Hall.

RU ABLE, an experiential learning lab, offers ropes course experiences, team building activities, and adventure-based trips for people of all abilities and ages. Through RU ABLE, students operate an indoor and outdoor high ropes course and state-of-the-art helix climbing tower on the RU West Campus. This facility serves as the primary classroom for two classes, Ropes Course Programming and Advanced Ropes Course Programming. Students work their way from an apprenticeship level to senior facilitator. Students serve hundreds of campus and community clients year round.

Radford University operates the Selu Conservancy, which is located fifteen minutes from the main RU campus and provides a variety of outdoor and environmental opportunities. Selu has 380 acres of forest and grasslands and is named after the Cherokee Grandmother Corn Spirit. Outdoor Recreation students have participated in the construction of several trails, and operate a low ropes course for Selu guests.

For more information contact:

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