Wilderness Based Orientation

Get your Western career off to a strong start with Wilderness Based Orientation. You’ll meet other students new to Western, connect with upper-class instructors, build friendships and come to know the incredible recreational opportunities the Gunnison Valley offers.

Wilderness Based Orientation is a lot more than learning about a new sport. You’ll gain skills to succeed in college and confidence to go out in all kinds of conditions. Here in the Gunnison Valley, outdoor sports entertain us, as well as keep us physically and mentally healthy.

During the past 10 years, the retention rate for Westerns students who participate in the Wilderness Based Orientation program has been 11 percent higher than for other students.

Our finest student instructors lead the five-day trips. All are Wilderness First Responders and eager to share experiences with you.

You can move into on-campus housing before your trip departs, and you’ll be back in time for regular orientation. You won’t miss a thing.

Registration opens June 1 and fills quickly. Students who have registered for classes can sign up through their MyWestern accounts. Each trip costs $495, and scholarships are available.

To Contact Us:
WBO office, 970.943.7051.
Christie Hicks, director, 970.943.7107.

Trips

Rock climbing. Join in one of our most popular sports. This trip caters to beginner and intermediate climbers. Your trained instructors will take you through the basics of climbing equipment and technique.

Mountaineering. The Gunnison Valley is an ideal place to learn mountaineering. We’ll teach you trip planning, rock climbing, navigation, backpacking and alpine climbing. This trip requires carrying a large backpack at altitudes above 12,000 feet. Expect to be physically challenged, learn new skills and build an effective team.

Multisport Adventure. Having trouble choosing one sport? Enjoy a sampling on this trip. You’ll bike on world-renowned trails, explore desert sage and alpine environments, and try stand-up paddleboarding, to name a few possible options for your explorations in the amazing Gunnison area.

Whitewater Kayaking. Experience one of the fastest-growing adventure sports. Your instructors will train you in essential techniques and safety precautions. Beginner and intermediate paddlers are welcome. Register early. This trip fills particularly quickly and is limited to eight participants.

Sea Kayaking. Explore Blue Mesa Reservoir, Colorado’s largest body of water. You’ll carry all you need to camp along the water’s edge. Be prepared to paddle yourself several miles a day through the beautiful landscape.

Backpacking. Learn skills to enjoy camping and traveling in the backcountry, as you carry all you need in your backpack. Be prepared to hike several miles a day over passes and peaks at altitudes above 11,000 feet. And remember to bring your camera!