“A Week in the Woods” For Educators
ED F595P-F03, June 29-July 3, 2013 - plus one more meeting TBD
2 credits

Instructor: John Manthei, Instructor/Director, 907-455-4547
Web Page for “Week in the Woods”: www.weekinthewoods.org

Contributing Instructors/Staff
- Richard Barnes
- Toni Kaufman
- Jan Dawe
- Rebecca Levey
- Philip Marshall
- Charlie Mayo
- Marianne Stoltz
- Carolyn Parker
- Arvid Weflen
- Mary Calmes

Prerequisites: Teaching certification or baccalaureate degree or permission of instructor. “Week in the Woods” is a rugged outdoor program. Participants will need to be resourceful, have a desire to work with their hands, not be afraid to get dirty, and be familiar with basic camping conditions in Interior Alaska. Everyone will be expected to set up their own living quarters, supply their own water and feed themselves for five days and four nights.

One pit toilet and one fire pit will be built cooperatively for use during the program. Participants have to be prepared to keep themselves warm and dry in rainy conditions, as well as stay comfortable with mosquitoes and flies.

Location: A relatively isolated upland forest outside of Fairbanks with no facilities or power. The camp will most likely be about ¼ mile up a hill, off a dirt logging road.

Dates and Times: 9am, Saturday to 4pm Wednesday for both sessions. Students are required to spend all five days and four nights onsite and participate fully in projects and discussions. In addition they will be required to prepare a lesson plan based on their camp experience. The lesson plans will be presented at a meeting of the group at an agreed upon date, time and location after the close of “Week in the Woods.”

Course Reading/Materials: No reading materials are required. Students are encouraged to bring tools if they have them; i.e., crooked, hook or straight knives, gouges, adzes, hatchets, saws, sharpening supplies, pencils, etc.

Course Description: This course will provide educators or other professionals the opportunity to investigate a hands-on approach to learning that is enhanced by environmental, historical, and cultural information. Augmented by the instructors’ knowledge and expertise, students will work in the natural environment with treasures
from the forest to construct projects that interest them. This camp offers a unique occasion to learn skills while working side by side with students from 7 to 97 years.

**Course Goals and Outcomes:**

Students will explore the creative process in the boreal forest environment.

Students will be exposed to new ways of seeing, experiencing and appreciating the woods so that they can develop methods of instruction that will effectively communicate the knowledge and skills of “woods” craft and natural history to children.

Students will experience the connection between natural history and the creative process, or as many others have said it “science and art”. Understanding this connection will enable students to incorporate art into their existing biology curriculum.

Students will explore the unique characteristics and treasures of several different forest types and the influence that man, animals, fire, wind, disease and age have on these forest systems. Once students become familiar with these characteristics, they begin to internalize and personalize Alaska geography in a way that makes it easy to share with their pupils. Students will begin to feel the connection between the resource they are using in their projects, and the source (its immediate environment). Feeling this connection will stimulate curiosity and creativity and it will expand their comfort level in the woods. This familiarity will inspire creative lesson plans and will help students find avenues to expose children to Alaska geography, natural history, and ecology.

We hope, in the end, students and *their* students will want to return to the woods again and again not only to “go shopping” but for inspiration and solace.

**How We Hope to Achieve These Goals**

Students will stay in the woods for five days and four nights allowing the energy of our urban lives to be replaced by a more peaceful energy of the forest. Through the process of creating objects from forest treasures students will learn joinery, riving, hewing, carving, weaving, lashing, cord making, birch tar making and more. Students will explore old and new techniques and hand tools from many cultures.

Students will repeatedly go on guided excursions learning how and where to find specific treasures by learning the unique characteristics of forest types and recognizable situations within those types (plants, animals, colors, smells, sounds, textures, moods, moisture levels, etc.) They will harvest small quantities of bark, roots, branches, crooks, foliage, dry and green wood of all species, burls, galls, fungus and more.

Students will look for inspirational treasures and create objects around them. They will search the forest for particular treasures to fill specific needs of their developing projects.

Students will also study edibles and medicinals and their current and historical uses.

Each student will be expected to design a project using the introduced techniques and knowledge. Socratic instruction and mentorship will provide students with a framework to build successfully. Students may choose to focus on one thing or sample some of everything.

While collecting, creating, and living in the woods students will be absorbing lessons of botany and natural history. Students will be taught to appreciate everything they utilize from the woods in its environmental context. Students will also take part in
discussions about the historical context of using forest resources.

Instructor demonstrations will be for the purpose of teaching technique or process and not necessarily for the creation of a specific product. We hope students will use what they have learned as a guide along a new path and not necessarily as a pattern to reproduce what they have seen.

Specific projects we may attempt depending on time and interest
- Sharpening
- Carving
- Riving and Shaping
- Post and Rung Construction
- Steam Bending
- Several Decoration Techniques
- Water Hauling Yoke Making
- Twig Figures
- Spruce Branch Buttons, Chip or Coins
- Birch Bark Knife Handles
- Birch Bark Knife Sheaths, Mats and Baskets
- Aspen Bark Baskets
- Birch Tar Making
- Fans and Roosters
- Shrink Boxes
- Spruce Root Digging and Techniques
- Lashing

Electronics and cell phones will not be allowed except for emergencies.

**Instructional Methods:** Lab, discussion, demonstration, socratic instruction. Instructors will be available for students from 9am to 9pm each day.

**Course Calendar**
7:00 - 9:00am Breakfast and chores
9:00am Blackboard meeting
9:00 - 12:00pm Guided activities
12:00 - 1:00pm Lunch
1:00 - 5:30pm Guided activities
5:30 - 7:00pm Supper
7:00 - 9:00pm Presentations, guest speakers, projects, games
9:00pm Done for the day!

The 6th and Final Day will consist of curriculum development for the classroom. Time and date will be chosen by consensus.

**Course Policies:** Students are required to spend all five days and four nights at camp and adhere to the schedule as closely as possible especially with regard to start times for projects and walks.

**Evaluation:** Evaluation will be based on participation in demonstrations, projects, discussions, and walks. Preparation for and attendance at the 6th day is essential. Staying
in the woods 24/5 is also essential.
This course will be graded Pass/Fail.
   A pass grade will require that a student achieve 80% of the following criteria:
      60% Attendance
      30% Participation
      10% Lesson Plan Development
   Receiving less than 80% will determine a failing grade.

**Continuing Support:** Instructors will be available by appointment after “Week in the Woods” to assist students as well as follow-up collaboration in the classrooms.

**Disabilities Services:** The Office of Disability Services implements the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and insures that UAF students have equal access to the campus and course materials. We will work with the Office of Disabilities Services (203 Whit., 474-7043) to provide reasonable accommodation to students with disabilities. Realize, however, that this is a “field” course and all students must be prepared to meet those challenges.