Freshman Wilderness Experience FAQ's

What is FWE?
The Freshman Wilderness Experience is an extended orientation program offered through the University of Montana Outdoor Program and The Wilderness Institute. The experience consists of a 4-day, 3-night backcountry trip in the wildlands/waters surrounding Missoula led by UM students. The program is intended to provide incoming freshmen with an opportunity to make friends, develop a sense of place, and gain backcountry confidence as they begin their years in Missoula.

Who can participate?
F.W.E. is available to any incoming freshmen, however, space is limited and priority is given on a first come basis.

Are there prerequisites?
HIKING: No. Students do not need prior backcountry or camping experience.

How large are the groups?
Groups will consist of 10 freshmen and 2 student leaders.

Are groups co-ed? Is there a single-sex option?
All trips are co-ed. Students have the options to stay in single gender tent groups.

Who are the leaders?
Leaders are UM students who have backcountry leadership skill, wilderness medicine training, and are excited to welcome new students to UM.

How do students apply?
To apply go to the registration website: www.umt.edu/fwe and follow steps to complete registration and payment, or, contact the University of Montana Outdoor Program (406) 243-5172.

Is there an academic component?
There is no academic credit awarded for participation in this program. The goal is to give students a sense of place and community at the very start of the college careers. We do want the focus to be on community and exploration rather than grades.

How do students get more information?
Students looking for more information are invited to explore our website [www.umt.edu/fwe], or call the Wilderness Institute at (406) 243-5361.

Is food provided? What if I’m allergic, vegan, picky, etc.?
Food is provided. Leaders will be planning and providing the meals. This means it is essential that participants clearly outline their allergies and/or dietary restrictions on the medical form. Feel free to call us at the Wilderness Institute (406) 243-5361 to outline these concerns.

Where does all my other stuff go while I’m on the trip?
Students are responsible for storing any belongings not going on the trek. Refer to the chart on the right that outlines the Residence Hall options.

Where are these trips going?
Trips will be based in Wilderness areas/rivers in western Montana. One component of the Freshman Wilderness Experience is fostering a sense of place- local trips are essential to this goal. Each trip will be in mountain ranges or on a river in the region.

What is the policy on drugs/alcohol?
As a University of Montana programs there is zero-tolerance of drugs or alcohol. Anyone found in violation of this rule will be removed from the trip immediately.
How much does the Freshman Wilderness Experience cost? What paperwork is required and when is it due? Refunds?

The programs fee of $200, payable through the UM Outdoor Program (406) 243-5172 or via the website www.umt.edu/fwe. All paperwork (med form with insurance info and signed by doctor, as well as and acknowledgment of risk from is due to the Wilderness Institute by July 1. Refunds will be considered until July 10, 2017. After that point, the fee is not refundable.

How are medications administered?

Students with prescription medications must disclose their medication on their medical forms. Students are adults and can administer their own medications but it is important that leaders be aware of all prescription or over-the-counter medications. In the unfortunate event of an accident this information is essential.