

Katie Rouse

Field Camp, Eastern Illinois University

June 1-July 11, 2009, this summer: May 30 - July 10, 2010

Locations: based in Spearfish, SD in the Black Hills; work in the Black Hills and Wyoming

The Black Hills are an ideal location for conducting a geology field camp because of the variety of accessible rock types exposed. However, in order to provide students with an even more comprehensive sampling of western United States geology, the field camp also spends 10 days studying the geology of Wyoming. On this trip, major geologic provinces such as the Laramide Rocky Mountains, the fold-thrust belt Rocky Mountains (Sevier Orogeny), the Yellowstone Hot Spot, and the Basin and Range are visited, thus complementing student work in the Black Hills. Highlights of the Wyoming trip include studying the geology of: Devil's Tower, the Powder River Basin, the Big Horn Mountains, the Big Horn Basin, Sheep Mountain Anticline, Heart Mountain Allocthon, the Absaroka Mountains, the Bear Tooth Mountains, Yellowstone Caldera, the Grand Tetons, the Gros Ventre Slide, Fremont Glacial Lake, the Green River Basin, the Wind River Mountains, and the Leucite Hills. In Yellowstone National Park, students assist faculty from EIU and Wilkes University collecting data as part of an ongoing caldera monitoring study. We also made a trip into Montana to tour the Stillwater Platinum/Palladium Mine.

Prerequisites: Introductory Geology, Historical Geology, Mineralogy, Petrology, and Structural Geology are required courses. Geomorphology, Sedimentation, Stratigraphy, and Paleontology are strongly recommended. In special cases, permission of the Field Camp Director is required.

I had not taken Min/Pet or Structure and was still one of the best/most prepared students in term of field awareness and experience. I was just at a loss in terms of mineral ID and igneous/metamorphic rock knowledge. This didn't hinder me at all overall

Brunton Compasses are provided for you, as well as map boards, GPS devices and radios.

My Experience:

Spearfish, SD is a small university town with decent amenities. The camp is based at Black Hills State University, lodging is in a school dormitory. Food while on campus is provided by the adequate cafeteria and field bag lunches. Food while travelling must be bought individually. While on the road we stopped mainly for fast food. After each intensive week of lectures and mapping project, student get Sunday off as a day to rest and unload, explore the area, and go on occasional optional trips to pegmatites, the Black Hills Institute (lots of amazing fossils!) and so on. The two EIU vans can be taken out if enough students want to go somewhere.

Dr. Craig Chesner, volcanologist, has been running this field camp for 12+ years and it is evident in his clear expectations and smooth execution. Most mapping projects are done with partners (one or two individual projects) that are randomly selected for each new project. Students come from a variety of schools and experience, making each mapping project a new learning or teaching experience. Doc, as we fondly referred to him, had two assistants during field camp, each for 2-week periods within the 6-week program.

With little experience using a Brunton and a keen sense of what field geology entails (way to go, Whitman Geology Department!) this field camp remained very challenging, in a highly productive and satisfying way. I would recommend it to anyone looking for an early camp that keeps you on your toes, but not always "on point" to use ballet terms.