

Idaho State University Field Camp – Theodore Barnhart

I attended Idaho State University's field camp based out of the Lost River Field Station near Mackey, Idaho. The Field Station sits right on the Big Lost River and has stunning views of the Lost River Range and the Pioneer Mountains. In general I would say that the Field Station is great. The facilities are wonderful with a full time cook, GIS enabled computers, high speed WIFI, Trimble mobile mappers of various designs, woodstove, and a hot tub!!! The session I attended had about 25 people, but it was a big year. Students slept in canvas tents or could choose to bring their own campers if they wanted to / have them. I was very happy with the canvas tent, but I like to sleep out.

You will work hard at this camp. Assignments were due at 10 pm each night and we would leave for the field by 9 each morning returning around 5 or 6 pm for dinner. Academically the camp was excellent. The general model is that the field camp director (Paul Link) and the TA stay for the whole 4-5 weeks and a new professor comes up every week or so to head up different projects. We had sections on limestone/sandstone, geomorphic, volcanic, metamorphic, and then a concentrated section on structural mapping. I thought this system worked very well because the different types of strata necessitate different approaches to generating an accurate map. There was also a section of GIS mapping mixed in to get everyone's geotechnical juices going. The professors that came for each section were extremely knowledgeable and energetic about their projects, which was a real plus. After fieldwork we would turn out field maps and data into professional grade maps and cross sections complete with descriptions of the map units, correlation of the map units, and a concise geologic history of what was represented on the map. That really helped to contextualize what we saw in the field with general historical geology.

As for course work, I had only had intro geology, sed. strat., geomorphology, historical geology, and late Cenozoic geology and climate change. It would have been more helpful to have had structure and mineralogy, but I picked up everything that I didn't already know pretty quickly. All of the faculty was more than happy to bring me up to speed as long as I asked them to. There were only suggested course for this field camp, none required, but they may have changed since they had me.

The camp is mostly ISU students, who are a very fun group. We got one day off a week and took a 2 day trip to northern Idaho to look at some regional geology so that we all didn't burn out half way through the course. I would say that I had about as much fun as possible while also learning more than I ever imagined at field camp. Mackey also has a pretty sweet bar called Perk's and there was a pretty good beer culture at the camp.

Final thought: I had a great field camp experience and the roads to the field areas were crazy.

<http://geology.isu.edu/FieldCamp/>