

2026 Adirondack Field Ecology Packing List – July 12-25

For over 75 years, thousands of Paul Smith's College students have enjoyed their outdoor experience and education in the beautiful Adirondacks. The Adirondack Field Ecology faculty, students and staff are all excited to share the PSC experience with you.

You will be active every day, including climbing one of the Adirondack High Peaks, so some preparation is helpful. Try to get some form of regular exercise before arriving to better enjoy your time. Most importantly, we ask you to come with an open mind and positive attitude about trying new experiences. You should find the course and field work both exciting and rewarding!

Each person will be responsible for carrying their own personal gear (clothing, food, camera, insect repellent, etc) each day. You will need personal clothing items and appropriate footwear for hiking and working in water. For the items you need, please review our equipment list below.

Special Needs: Previous outdoor skills and experience are not required, but this is a VERY active course. **Let us know in advance if you have needs or physical disabilities that involve special planning.**

PSC is located in a very rural setting. There are campus resources, including a small bookstore, but the nearest village is Saranac Lake, located 12 miles from campus. **Students are not allowed to leave campus unless arrangements are made prior to arrival, so plan accordingly.**

Packing List:

Gear cost should not be a deterrent for anyone! Please contact Mel with questions- many of these are recommendations, including from previous students.

Do not buy expensive equipment; go for comfort. If you find any of the gear on this list to be prohibitively expensive or difficult to acquire, ***please get in touch.*** We may have ideas for simple substitutions, and there may be some gear available from PSC (**make sure to ask in advance**).

For the residence halls:

- ☐ Bedding (pillows, extra-long twin sheets or sleeping bags). For comfort, a mattress topper is recommended.
- ☐ Alarm clock with batteries: you will be responsible for getting to each activity and module on time.
- ☐ Recommended: Cell phone (NOTE: Verizon is the only carrier that gets reception in this area.)
WiFi is available across most of campus, so video chat apps like Zoom and FaceTime are a good option.
- ☐ Cell phone charger and backup power bank
- ☐ Recommended: Fan (residency halls are not air conditioned)

Personal Items (see below about laundry facilities):

- ☐ All personal essentials: toothbrush/toothpaste, brush/comb, washcloth, towel, shampoo, soap, etc.
- ☐ Prescribed meds/personal first aid supplies: band-aids, moleskin, antiseptic cream, pain relievers, etc. (*Please make sure that all medical supplies are labeled with your information*)
Please note: students are responsible for managing their own routine medical needs, including prescriptions. There is no nurse on duty during the summer months, so any necessary medical care will need to be sought through the emergency room in Saranac Lake.
- ☐ Insect repellent! Many locals swear by local products like Bye Bye Blackfly and Wildwood (<https://allnaturalrepellent.com/>). My husband prefers DEET, I prefer Lemon Eucalyptus REPEL.
- ☐ Sunscreen, lip balm with sunscreen

- ☐ Sunglasses, hats with full brim or visor, etc.
- ☐ Extra contacts or eyeglasses

You need appropriate clothes for all types of weather: we will go outside in all-weather so be prepared!

- ☐ T-shirts and long-sleeved shirts
- ☐ 1-2 full-zip fleece jacket or other warm jacket.
- ☐ Underwear and Socks
- ☐ Bathing suit (optional)
- ☐ Shorts and Pants (quick-dry fabrics are MUCH better than jeans when wet, Zip-offs work great)
- ☐ Closed-toe shoes are REQUIRED foot protection for classes. No sandals/open-toed shoes!
- ☐ 1 pair hiking boots (See section below on fitting and breaking in boots).
- ☐ Bring a second pair of closed-toe shoes (sneakers, etc): your boots may get wet.
- ☐ Shoes for lake/stream modules: extra pair of old sneakers, water shoes or water sandals w/ankle strap (Teva, Keen...), but NO FLIP-FLOPS or Crocs.
- ☐ Optional: Mosquito head net or bug jacket

Recommended by previous students: Snacks!

We provide all meals and basic snacks, but previous students recommended that I add this to the list as options are limited. The mercantile also has some options. The residence hall has a small communal refrigerator, but **we do not bring coolers for the field modules**, so snacks should be backpack friendly.

Materials for Modules and Trips

- ☐ Daypack: we hike quite a bit during modules, so comfort is important! Consider a backpack rain cover.
- ☐ Good Rain gear: Waterproof rain jacket & pants. (No ponchos or plastic jackets)
- ☐ Two water bottles: you will need to bring your own drinking water to the field. If you have a hydration pack, that will work as well.
- ☐ 1-2 Weatherproof field notebook(s) (available online or in the bookstore)
 - ☐ Your field notebook is a large part of your grade for the course. You want one that is comfortable for you to take notes and draw sketches in the field. (I personally like [this one](#))
- ☐ Pencils and pens (soft pencils and ballpoint pens work well with field notebook)
- ☐ Flashlight or headlamp (for night activities, headlamps with red LED light help maintain night vision).
- ☐ Recommended: clipboard for taking notes in the field
- ☐ Recommended: 10x hand lens (some available to borrow or for purchase in bookstore)
- ☐ Recommended: [Tree Finder: A Manual for Identification of Trees](#) by their Leaves (we have some available)
- ☐ Optional: Waders (only if you have them- we have limited numbers and sizes available)
- ☐ Optional: Binoculars

Other Equipment (Not required)

- ☐ Recommended: Laptop or tablet: Students will have access to the computer lab, but previous students have indicated it was helpful to have a personal laptop or tablet. ***See note above about cell phone coverage.***
- ☐ Optional: Camera: cell phones are not allowed for some modules (see below)
- ☐ Some students in the past recommended bringing a camp chair.

Camping trip: bring your own gear if you have it, or ask WELL in advance to see if we can provide.

- ☐ Sleeping bag, sleeping bag stuff sack, or hammock, hammock straps, and bug net
- ☐ Sleep mat or inflatable sleeping pad

- ☐ Camp Pillow
- ☐ Personal bowl, spoon, & mug (plastic or metal)

Please uphold the respect of your fellow participants and maximize your experience by leaving everything listed below behind. The items listed will be confiscated and may not be returned.

Not Allowed: Alcohol, non-medical drugs, firearms, tobacco products of any kind, pets or homesickness!

Items not allowed in the residence halls:

- ☐ Toasters, toaster ovens, single burners, electric pans, hot pots etc.
- ☐ Multi bulb lamps, Halogen Lamps, Candles or Incense, Extension Cords, Air conditioners/heaters, Dartboards, Wall tapestries, additional furniture, Amplified musical instruments
- ☐ Pets

Not Allowed during most modules: Cell phones, or other electronics. Camera phone use is allowed by **some** instructors, but phones will be confiscated if used during the module (texting, music, Snapchat, etc).

Boot fitting instructions: **Make sure they are broken in well before the trip to prevent blisters** “Breaking in” means wearing new boots around for at least a few hours at a time for about a week. If you do not do this, you will get blisters and your feet WILL HURT. You need a boot of sturdier construction, one that protects and cushions the foot and supports the ankle. Try on boots at the end of the day, when your feet are largest in size. Toes should have enough room to wiggle and should not touch the front of the boot when scuffed against a solid object. Your heel should be cupped in the boot and not feel like you are stepping in or out of the boot when you walk. You should not feel any rubbing or pressure on the heel or toes; having a roomy toe box in the boot is important for your comfort. You should waterproof them. If you tend to get blisters easily, get a thin pair of nylon socks to wear under your thick ones.

Mercantile: The college’s bookstore is small but offers a little bit of everything from clothing & college memorabilia to school supplies and food. The store accepts most forms of payment.
A NBT ATM is located on the main level of the Student Center.

Cell Phones: There is a Verizon cell tower on campus for cell phone reception and has the best reception. AT&T gets marginal reception. Without Verizon, you will need to use Wi-Fi calling to make or receive calls or texts.

- ☐ Wi-Fi is available throughout campus, so if you have a different carrier, you may prefer to use Zoom, Facetime, etc.

Laundry: Residence halls have washers and dryers at no extra cost. Bring your own laundry detergent.

Fire/Theft/Loss Insurance: PSC is not responsible for the loss or damage of personal belongings, including vehicles. Students must lock their doors while they are either in or out of their room.