Professional Development Funding Recipient:

Wilderness First Responder Recertification Course

A large body of water surrounded by trees

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I received MES Professional Development Funding to participate in a Wilderness First Responder (WFR) Recertification course. This was a 3-day class held in Leavenworth Washington through the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS)’s Outdoor Medicine Institute. The course was held at the Wenatchee River Institute November 2-4, 2018. WFR certifications emphasize patient care in remote settings where definitive medical attention is hours or days away. A WFR is required for a variety of outdoor jobs, like climbing rangers, trail crew leaders, guides, camp directors, and more. As a field biologist, any medical training is a huge advantage especially when conducting field work in the backcountry where you can be miles from a trail head. Having and maintaining a WFR is very beneficial for biology or ecology technician positions.

WFR certifications are valid usually 2-3 years with a year grace period, depending on the organization. This was my first recertification, and I learned an immense amount. Both instructors hold EMT licenses and were extremely knowledgeable, organized, and efficient. This was a fast-paced course where patient assessment, treatment, and evacuation topics were reviewed. Each class also has a session on improvising in the backcountry, making splints out of various outdoor gear like jackets, rope, and sleeping bags. There were practical scenarios combined with classroom style lectures to best teach students medical updates and changes. Medicine is a dynamic field, updating every year with new advances and best practice. I highly recommend considering a WFR certification if you work in field positions.

Bella Timmons is a 2nd Year MES Student. She is currently working on her thesis, studying Western toad distribution in the Chehalis Basin.

A close up of a pond of water

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