

Discovering Denali's Micro Wilderness: Insects and Other Arthropods

Denali National Park and Preserve
July 18 – 20, 2025

Course Description

Denali is well known for its large mammals and big mountain, but a closer look reveals a vast micro wilderness waiting to be discovered. Denali's insects, spiders, and other arthropods play a critical role in Denali's ecosystems and have only recently been the subject of more in depth research. Join Jessica Rykken, former entomologist at Denali and now the Entomology Collections Manager at the Museum of the North, and Adam Haberski, former graduate student at UAF and currently Collection Manager at Mississippi Entomological Museum for a behind the scenes look at their five year arthropod study and an exploration of this fascinating world. We'll visit several sites along an elevational transect to learn about the different insects found there and the important roles they play in Denali.

Hiking Distances and Physical Fitness

Field courses are active learning experiences and take place off trail in Denali's wilderness. Hiking will be moderately strenuous over uneven tundra, forest, and river bar terrain, covering distances of up to 3 - 5 miles round trip with as much as 1,500 feet of elevation gain. We will likely encounter wet tundra / forest conditions and stream crossings with water levels that are above hiking boots. **Participants must be in good physical condition.** If you are uncertain about your physical ability for this course, please contact us for more information.

Times and Location

Participants meet at the Murie Science and Learning Center, located at mile 1 of the Denali Park Road. Check-in starts at 6:00pm on Friday. The course begins at 6:30pm and will return to the park entrance area around 4pm on Sunday.

Lodging and Meals

This course is based out of the Murie Science and Learning Center Field Camp, located 29 miles inside Denali National Park along the Teklanika River. The Field Camp includes rustic tent cabins and outhouses. Meals are simple and healthy.

Accreditation

The University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) offers one professional development credit (level 500) for an additional \$79 fee. You must register for the credit directly with UAA. Please see our website for registration directions.

Questions?

More detailed information about this course can be found by opening the other documents in the "course details" tab on the website. If you have other questions, please contact the Murie Science and Learning Center by email courses@akgeo.org or by calling (907) 683-9632.