

# WMSO

## Wilderness Medical Special Operations

### Student Course Guide



**June 15-19, 2026**  
**EKU's Maywoods Lodge**  
**Crab Orchard, KY**

## About RedSTAR

Organized in **2015** by veterans of Kentucky's SAR and EMS communities, RedSTAR was previously the volunteer wilderness special operations unit of Kentucky's Powell County Ambulance Service, covering the Red River Gorge. Comprised of professional Paramedics, Nurses, and Physicians who donated their time and skills, RedSTAR supplied wilderness-capable medical providers to embed with area search and rescue teams to provide high-quality patient care during their operations. In 2025, we became a training organization primarily, but still supply personnel to other response agencies.

We are proud of our pioneering legacy. In **2019**, RedSTAR conducted the first helicopter hoist rescue in Kentucky history with the 238<sup>th</sup> MEDEVAC. In **2021**, our members conducted the first high angle insertion of the 123<sup>rd</sup> Special Tactics Squadron's search K9 on a Kentucky deployment. RedSTAR members have been instrumental in defining the qualifications, educational requirements, and scope of practice for Kentucky's Advanced Practice Wilderness Paramedics, and in building the WP-C IBSC exam. We provide high quality wilderness medical and rescue training to a range of local, state, federal, and military clients.

Your course tuition helps sustain our operations, allowing our members to remain active in a wide range of response activities, including Kentucky Task Force-1, Kentucky State Police Air Rescue, and local search and rescue teams.



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## About This Course

WMSO blends the traditional wilderness medical model of simple interventions, often improvised, with the EMS model of organized, pre-planned, protocol-driven healthcare. We place a relative de-emphasis on improvisation in favor of thoughtful planning from the perspective of EMS systems of care.

Accordingly, WMSO goes beyond the traditional wilderness medicine model to include pharmacological therapies, rescue medicine, unique diagnostic equipment, and airway management. The course provides

approximately 42 contact hours of continuing education, which are accepted by NREMT as a state-approved training course. WMSO is also approved for 16 hours of WP-C review/recertification by IBSC.

## Course Location

This course will be held at Eastern Kentucky University's Maywoods Lodge, located approximately 30 minutes from EKU's main campus, at 447 Maywoods Road, Crab Orchard, KY 40419.

This 1,700-acre rustic facility includes indoor and outdoor classroom space, an extensive trail system, and a lake.

Cellular service can be spotty at times, but a landline is installed and wifi is available.



## Lodging

**Sleeping options** onsite include bunkhouse-style beds (2-4 per room) separated into male and female wings, with bathroom and showers in each wing. **If choosing to stay in the bunk house, you must bring your own bedding.**

Dispersed camping is also permitted. You must bring your own camping equipment to take advantage of that option.

**You must bring your own towel, toiletries and shower shoes for the bathroom facilities.**

**Please note that no laundry services are available on site.**

Your course fee covers the on-site lodging, in either the bunkhouse or your own campsite. The next closest lodging options are hotels in the cities of Richmond or Berea, approximately 30 minutes away from the venue.



## Suggested Gear

- Layers appropriate for cooler nights & air-conditioned classroom.
- A personal fan (battery powered or plug-in) for your bunk bed.
- Mechanix Wear or similar style utility gloves of any style/price.
- Personal comfort items such as chap stick, sunglasses, etc.
- Poison Ivy wipes.
- Camp chair.
- Coffee thermos/personal drink cup.
- Any personal or agency wilderness medical/rescue gear you wish to test.

## Required Gear

*To successfully complete this course, you must bring:*

- Personal food and snacks in appropriate containers (see Dining section of this guide, below).
- A set of clothing which you would not mind being being **moulaged or destroyed**.
- Headlamp capable of being aimed. Non-aimable brim-style headlamps not acceptable.
- Spare batteries for headlamp.
- Sunscreen.
- Bug spray.
- Non-slick, closed-toe footwear.
- Clothing appropriate for hot and humid environments and which may get dirty.
- Rain shell.
- Water and portable hydration capability.
- Small notebook and pen.
- Shower Flip Flops.
- Bedding (sleeping bag, pillow, etc).
- Personal bath towels.
- Shower toiletries.

## Dining Information

The Maywoods Lodge is in a rural location, approximately 30 minutes from the closest significant centers of restaurants and grocery stores in Richmond and Berea. However, the Lodge features a well-equipped commercial kitchen with generous food storage, prep, and cooking equipment. A grill is also available on the rear deck.

You should plan to bring your own food and drinks to last you the week, and be prepared to make your meals in a shared cooking environment. A Dollar General store with basic groceries is located 15 minutes away, and evenings usually permit a trip to big box stores in Richmond or Berea.

**Your food must be clearly labeled as your own**, in a container such as a large Tupperware bin, reusable shopping bags, or similar. Please bear in mind that you will be sharing refrigerator/freezer and shelf space with numerous other students, and that in a very rural setting, preventing animals/pests from being attracted to open food is an imperative.



A group kitchen/lodge cleaning schedule will be enforced. All students will take turns completing light chores each evening in order to keep the kitchen, dining, bath, and classroom facilities clean.

## Sample Course Schedule

(example based on prior courses, subject to change as needs/content dictate)

MON		Hrs	Format
900	Welcome & Housekeeping	1	Lecture
1000	Intro to WildMed	1	Lecture
1100	Fundamentals of Care	1	Lecture
1200	<b>LUNCH (90 mins)</b>		
1330	Low Resource Assessment	1	Practical
1430	Monitoring Techniques	1	Lecture/Demo
1530	<b>BREAK</b>		
1545	Spinal Care	1	Practical
1645	Ankle Taping	1.25	Practical
1800	Extremity Splinting	0.75	Practical
1845	Dislocation Reductions	0.75	Practical
1930	<b>END OF DAY</b>		
<b>TUES</b>			
900	Hyperthermia	1	Lecture
1000	Hypothermia/Frostbite	1	Lecture
1100	Avalanche	1	Lecture
1200	<b>LUNCH (90 mins)</b>		
1330	Patient Packaging Stations	3	Practical
	Hypo Wraps	0.75	Practical
	Baskets	0.75	Practical
	Improvised Litters/Carries	0.75	Practical
	Skeds	0.75	Practical
1615	<b>BREAK</b>		
1630	Airway Management	0.5	Lecture/Practical
	Surgical Crics Station	0.5	Practical
	SAVe II Vent Station	0.5	Practical
	Safe Bagging Station	0.5	Practical
1900	Wilderness Intubation	1	Practical
2000	<b>END OF DAY</b>		

<b>WED</b>			
900	HEENT	1	Lecture
1000	Wound Management	1	Lecture
1100	Pain Management	2	Lecture
1200	<b>LUNCH (60 mins)</b>		
1300	Animal Bites & Stings	1.5	Lecture
1430	Basic Ropes	2	Practical
1600	<b>BREAK</b>		
1700	PFC/Pharm/Med Math	2	Lecture/Practical
1930	<b>DINNER (60 mins)</b>		
2100	Night Scenario	2	Practical
2300	Debrief	0.5	
2330	<b>END OF DAY</b>		
<b>THURS</b>			
1000	Altitude Illness	1	Lecture
1100	Dive Medicine	1	Lecture
1200	Submersion Injuries	1	Lecture
1300	<b>LUNCH (60 mins)</b>		
1400	Water Disinfection/Antibiotics	1	Lecture
1500	<b>BREAK</b>		
1515	Lightning	1	Lecture
1615	Skill Stations	2	Lecture
<b>FRI</b>			
0900	Course Wrap Up	2	
	<b>Total CME Hours:</b>	<b>41.5</b>	

## Instructors



**David Fifer, MS, FP-C, WP-C, FAWM** is RedSTAR's founding Coordinator. Currently Assistant Professor of EMS & Director of the Center for Wilderness Safety at Eastern Kentucky University, David also chairs the Kentucky Board of EMS Wilderness EMS Task Force, is the Manager for the KY TF-1/KSP Air Rescue HART team, and deploys with the National Disaster Medical System IMT. Along with Drs. Jeff Thurman and Seth Collings Hawkins, he led development of the IBSC's WP-C (Wilderness Paramedic-Certified) exam. He is a Fellow in the Academy of Wilderness Medicine, a contributing author to several textbooks on wilderness medicine, and teaches austere medicine around the world and to numerous local, state, federal, and friendly nation agencies. With Dr. Hawkins he hosts the Remote, Austere, and Wilderness (RAW) Medical podcast.

RedSTAR provider since our founding in 2015, and retired as a Captain for Frankfort, KY Fire/EMS. A alumni of Outward Bound and Prescott College's Outdoor Adventure Leadership program, Alan formerly guided whitewater rafting on the Russell Fork. And avid triathlete himself, Alan has provided wilderness event medical coverage for numerous adventure races, including the multi-state, multi-date 361 Adventures competition in far Eastern Kentucky/Southwest Virginia as an event medical specialist for RedMed, LLC. He serves on the Kentucky Board of EMS Wilderness EMS Task Force



**Jeff Thurman, MD, FAWM** is one of RedSTAR's physicians and practices emergency medicine at a community hospital in Louisville. He completed his training at the University of Louisville where he now holds a Grants Faculty position in the Division of EMS. He is the medical director for two EMS services in Louisville, and is the medical director for this course. Jeff is also a member of the Kentucky Board of EMS Wilderness EMS taskforce, the Wilderness Medical Society's Search & Rescue committee, the NAEMSP Wilderness EMS committee, and along with David Fifer and Seth Collings Hawkins leads the global IBSC project

to develop a WP-C exam. He is board certified in both Emergency Medicine and EMS. He is a Fellow in the Academy of Wilderness Medicine (FAWM) and a candidate in the Diploma in Mountain Medicine (DiMM) program. He has authored several articles on various EMS and wilderness topics.

**Jeremy Urekew, NRP, TP-C** lives in Kentucky's Red River Gorge, and has been a paramedic and EMS instructor for 18 years. A rock climber and one of RedSTAR's original founding members, Jeremy owns therescue training company Red River Rescue, LLC, teaches numerous rescue disciplines at FEMA's Center for Domestic Preparedness and is a member of Powell County Search and Rescue. He helped develop RedSTAR's High Angle Medical Rescue curriculum, and has led competition rope rescue teams around the world. Jeremy is an active provider with Powell County EMS, and has extensive experience teaching austere and rescue medicine to local, state, federal, and military customers around the nation.



*Additional members of the RedSTAR roster may be involved with delivering specific topics*

## Agreement and Waiver / Liability Release:

As a participant in WMSO, I hereby release and indemnify RedSTAR, Inc., their officers, agents, or employees as well as any other instructors invited by those entities, from any and all liability, claims, cost and causes of action arising out of or related to any property damage or personal injury (including death) that may be sustained by me, while participating in such activity. I acknowledge that the training course I have registered for involves physically strenuous and inherently dangerous activities in which I am capable of fully participating. I know of no physical or mental condition that would preclude my full participation in the training.

I certify that the information on this registration form is correct. I agree to abide by the rules, policies, and regulations of RedSTAR, Inc., EKU, and the WMSO course. I understand that falsifying information or violating rules, policies, or regulations may result in me being removed from the course, denied admission to the course, and/or loss of course credit and registration fees.

I understand that RedSTAR, Inc. is not authorized to provide travel, medical, or health insurance, and I verify that I or my agency maintain appropriate and necessary coverage of these. I understand that I or my agency will be responsible for any medical expenses that I may incur as a result of any injury or illness resulting from my participation in this program.

I understand that the nature of the tasks I may perform while involved in this training may require a moderate degree of physical fitness, agility, and dexterity, and that this may include exercises which require physical fitness, strength, and stamina. I am fully aware of the risks and hazards associated with wilderness rescue training, including but not limited to burns, cuts, abrasions, heat illness, heart attack, falls and other related injuries, and I choose to voluntarily participate in the activity with full knowledge that said activity may be hazardous to me and my property.

In signing this release, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the Release: and that I am at least 18 years of age. I am a fully competent adult and, if applicable, a member of a legally organized fire department, rescue squad, rescue related business or organization.

By registering for this course, I hereby give RedSTAR, Inc. permission to reproduce and publish my name and/or photographic likeness.

By typing my name in the Signature field, I am signing and accepting this agreement and waiver.

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Printed Name

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Signature

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Date