Round River programs are more than an outdoor classroom. Our students live, work, and study in the field, contributing directly to efforts promoting the conservation of fragile ecosystems. In Botswana, you will be immersed in the globally significant Okavango Delta, working with local people to research the dynamics of Africa’s diverse wildlife populations. In Patagonia, you will visit massive glaciers and explore unknown valleys with guardaparques in the Chilean Fjords in search of wildlife. In Belize, you will rise to the sounds of the rainforest and assist local communities and rangers with monitoring the largest living reef. In British Columbia, you will watch a mother grizzly and her cub fish for salmon and hear the stories of local elders. In Mongolia, you will explore the vast taiga on foot in search of elusive wildlife species and learn from local park rangers about this fragile ecosystem.

Our programs are immersive - join the Round River team to experience adventure science at its finest while gaining an understanding of the human element of conservation and connection to place. You will embark on an unforgettable personal journey in some of the world’s most beautiful landscapes. For over 25 years, Round River students have shown the passion and dedication that leads to lifelong inspiration and stewardship of our shared global ecosystems.

WHY ROUND RIVER?

“It didn’t feel like I was just a student; I felt like I was a researcher in something much bigger than a class or an individual project that lasts a few weeks.”

– Isabel, The College of William and Mary, Patagonia ’18
SKY ISLAND BORDERLANDS
U.S. – MEXICO BORDER

Although we are well known for our international conservation successes, Round River’s roots come from the American West and its defenders of wilderness. We are thrilled to be partnering with Sky Island Alliance to present a program that brings us closer to home in the wide-open spaces of the Borderlands where small student groups will camp, research, and study in the rugged transboundary Madrean Archipelago of southern Arizona (note: once travel restrictions are eased, we’ll be working in Mexico as well). A world biodiversity hotspot, this is where the jaguar and black bear meet, where bromeliads grow in the arms of maple trees, and spicy chiltepin pepper and sweet Arizona canyon grape grow side-by-side.

Students will help monitor wildlife movement across the U.S.-Mexico border using camera traps, survey perennial springs that provide life-giving water in the desert, and study the elevational distribution of key species like the saguaro cactus. Conservation efforts in these areas are timely, active, and gaining traction. Join us to get your hands dirty, sleep out under the desert stars, and experience a real connection to land and people.

FALL & SPRING SEMESTERS
COURSES TAUGHT (15 CREDITS)
• Natural History of the Sky Island Borderlands
• Applied Conservation Biology
• Intro to Field Methodology
• Humans and the Environment
• Applied Ecology

PROGRAM COSTS
• Summer Program Costs: $10,100
• Semester Program Costs: $18,730
• Scholarships Available

SUMMER TERM
COURSES TAUGHT (9 CREDITS)
• Natural History of the Sky Island Borderlands
• Applied Conservation Biology
• Intro to Field Methodology

“ I wish I could do it again! It was one of the best decisions I’ve made in my college career so far. Everything about it was awesome – even considering the challenges of COVID-19. Academics were the right amount of challenging and theoretical and hands on. Field work was my favorite, as I hadn’t done a lot of that before and feel more confident about going into future situations even without skills beforehand and knowing I can adapt. ”

– Olivia, University of Vermont ‘21
BELIZE
MAYA GOLDEN LANDSCAPE

In partnership with Ya’axche’ Trust, Round River operates in the Maya Golden Landscape of southern Belize, an ancient socio-ecological system that harbors many of the region’s iconic species such as Jaguar and Harpy Eagle. Ya’axche’ co-manages three protected areas, including Bladen Nature Reserve, one of the wildest forest tracts in Mesoamerica, Maya Mountain North Forest Reserve, where they hold a concession for cacao cultivation in an innovative project aimed at discouraging illegal activity, and Golden Stream Corridor Preserve.

Students will support Ya’axche’ with a diverse set of conservation initiatives, from scientific research and monitoring to agro-forestry production to environmental education in local Mayan communities.

FALL AND SPRING SEMESTERS
COURSES TAUGHT (15 CREDITS)

- Natural History of Belize
- Applied Conservation Biology
- Intro to Biological Field Methodologies
- Humans and the Environment
- Applied Ecology

PROGRAM COSTS
- $20,030
- Scholarships available

“I chose Round River because of their emphasis on making a tangible difference. I knew I wanted to be outside, exploring and interacting with the land, but Round River promised that our work would aid the local community – and they held that promise.”

– Mark, Carleton College, Taku ’17
BRITISH COLUMBIA
TAKU RIVER WATERSHED

The Taku River watershed, located in the far northwest corner of British Columbia, is a place of great beauty and ecological significance. This landscape and the people of the Taku River Tlingit First Nation have taught us much about how to integrate field research with the needs of first peoples.

Since 2003, our students have been a vital part of Round River’s conservation work in the Taku that has culminated in over 7 million acres of protected land. Students have contributed to research projects with grizzly bear, wolf, woodland caribou, and all five species of Pacific Salmon. Early programs focused on wildlife surveys, documenting Tlingit oral histories and Traditional Ecological Knowledge, and habitat studies and mapping. We have continued to evolve over a generation of time spent on the land, and today students explore the immense wilderness surrounding Atlin, B.C., trekking into remote alpine and subalpine areas to monitor critical habitat, wildlife populations, and vegetation in the face of climate change. A highlight of the summer is a 9-day backpacking trip into the Taku Watershed along a traditional Tlingit trail used for fishing and trade. Together we study and celebrate the natural history of an intact northern wilderness.

SUMMER TERM

COURSES TAUGHT (9 CREDITS)

- Natural History of Northwestern British Columbia
- Applied Conservation Biology
- Intro to Biological Field Methodologies

PROGRAM COSTS

- $10,100
- Scholarships available

“...It was pivotal for me as a young adult and has changed me for the better. I am forever humbled and honored for what the Taku revealed to me during that time.”

– Matt, UVM, Taku ‘08
In partnerships with the Ulaan Taiga Protected Areas Administration and the Mongolian Wolverine Project, Round River conducts research in three newly formed protected areas of the taiga of northern Mongolia. Situated in the Huvsgul province, these protected areas comprise 1.5 million hectares of mountains and high-elevation boreal forest, contiguous with the vast Lake Huvsgul National Park to the east.

Students assist with multi-species carnivore monitoring in the Darhad Valley, studying fire dynamics, high-elevation wetlands, grazing impacts, permafrost distribution, and river systems. Student field crews conduct research on breeding and migratory birds, steppe and talus-dwelling pikas, large mammals and culturally significant medicinal plants, while exploring ways to incorporate local communities and community needs into park management.

**FALL SEMESTER COURSES TAUGHT (15 CREDITS)**
- Natural History of Mongolia
- Applied Conservation Biology
- Intro to Biological Field Methodologies
- Humans and the Environment
- Applied Ecology

**SUMMER TERM COURSES TAUGHT (9 CREDITS)**
- Natural History of Mongolia
- Applied Conservation Biology
- Intro to Biological Field Methodologies

**PROGRAM COSTS**
- Summer Program Costs: $10,100
- Semester Program Costs: $20,030
- Scholarships Available

“I not only learned immense amounts about environmental research and conservation, but also about Mongolian perspectives toward other people. It was extremely inspiring, challenged me to do things outside my comfort zone, and provided me with conservation research knowledge - but most importantly it exposed me to a culture vastly different from my own.”

– April, Carleton College, Mongolia ’18
Botswana is teeming with wildlife. Exotic birds and elephant herds range through acacia forests, lions hunt the savannah, and hippos bob in wide rivers. The Okavango Delta, one of the largest inland deltas in the world, was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2014. For reasons yet unknown, many of its iconic wildlife populations are in decline. To begin to understand these declines, Round River students are assisting the Okavango Community Trusts with wildlife surveys and rare and threatened bird monitoring. Working closely with local instructors and guides to accomplish these important wildlife and habitat studies, students also assist with training, capacity building, and community outreach activities.

Join Round River to experience one of the world’s most abundant ecosystems. You will thrive on the invaluable educational opportunities of working alongside the stewards of this rich landscape, while surrounded by wildlife and immersed in the culture and its people.

**FALL AND SPRING SEMESTERS**

**COURSES TAUGHT* (15 CREDITS)**

- Natural History of Botswana
- Applied Conservation Biology
- Intro to Biological Field Methodologies
- Community-Based Natural Resource Management
- Humans and the Environment

**PROGRAM COSTS**

- $20,030
- Scholarships available

"The opportunity to be able to live in the bush and be a part of a real conservation effort was too good to pass up and it exceeded all of my expectations. Botswana is an incredible country and this field-based experience was one I’ll never forget."

– Henry, Colby College, Botswana ’17
CHILE
PATA
gonia

Patagonia is a dramatic landscape of ice fields, fjords, windswept grasslands, and glacial peaks rising from deep river valleys. Contribute to local conservation efforts by assisting our partners at Conservacion Patagonia and CONAF, a division of Chile’s Forest Corporation. Students spend the semester working in a variety of field sites: the grasslands of the Chacabuco Valley within Patagonia National Park, the misty, remote fjords of Bernardo O’Higgins National Park at the edge of the Southern Patagonia Ice Field, and the glaciers, lakes, and forests of the Los Glaciares region near Villa O’Higgins.

Students operate out of three field bases near the remote villages of Cochrane, Tortel, and Puerto Eden. You will become familiar with wildlife monitoring techniques, focusing on iconic Chilean mammals such as guanaco and endangered huemul deer, and an array of bird species including the lesser rhea. You will also participate in Southern Ice Field community-based conservation and environmental education, an ongoing sustainable sphagnum moss harvest study, compilation of the first-ever plant field guide for Bernardo O’Higgins National Park, and biodiversity assessments in remote regions of Aysén.

You will experience local Patagonian culture and enjoy ample opportunities to interact with guardaparques and gauchos. Weeklong homestays provide unique and special cultural experiences.

FALL AND SPRING SEMESTERS

COURSES TAUGHT* (15 CREDITS)

• Natural History of Patagonia
• Applied Conservation Biology
• Intro to Biological Field Methodologies
• Applied Ecology
• Humans and the Environment

*Spanish skills are strongly recommended, though not required.

PROGRAM COSTS

• $20,030
• Scholarships available

“This program was more than I could have imagined. We traveled to places people had never been before. The work we were doing and data we collected went directly to benefit national park formation and land conservation. The laughs, adventure, community engagement, and utter beauty of the classroom is unrivaled by any other program. ”

– Maya, Bowdoin College ‘18
APPLICATION INFORMATION
Participation is open to motivated students who possess a keen interest in conservation. Enrollment is generally limited to 8-10 students per term; these small crews ensure high quality instruction and research, and limit our ecological footprint. Students may apply online and are accepted on a rolling basis. We recommend applying as early as possible.

TUITION, SCHOLARSHIPS AND FINANCIAL AID
Total cost includes tuition, registration fees, research fees, room and board, emergency evacuation insurance, and ground transportation during the program. Air travel to/from program location and personal gear are not included.

Students can use federal financial aid toward Round River tuition and fees. Check with your home institution’s financial aid office for information about other available resources.

We are able to assist students and families with payment planning - we encourage students to contact us if finances are an issue. Round River offers scholarships through the Edward Abbey Fund; awards are based on merit and need.

ACADEMIC CREDIT
All courses are accredited through Westminster College and may be transferable to your home institution. Since 1991, students from more than sixty universities and colleges in the United States and Canada have participated on our programs.

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