



Geology of Denali



Dates

July 13-15, 2026



Difficulty

Level 5



Elevation Gain

Up to 2000 feet



Hiking Distance

Up to 5 miles per day

Course Description

Look closely at Denali's stunning landscape and you'll find yourself inside a geological thriller. The park's deep geologic history is a saga of violent volcanic eruptions, crustal collisions that built North America's highest peak, and the powerful and persistent sculpting power of glaciers and rivers, all punctuated by dramatic earthquakes and landslides. Whether you're a casual geology enthusiast or a seasoned professional, Denali has a captivating geological story to tell - if you're ready to hear the tale. Join Denali geologist Haley Williams to investigate some of Denali's most notable geology sites. We'll explore permafrost-driven landslides and debris flow channels, learn hard rock and mineral identification, and use observational methods to study the rapid landscape evolution we're seeing as a consequence of climate change. Along the way, we'll explore how to think critically about the landscape and why it looks the way it does. Expect to get your hands dirty and go home filled with geological wonder.

Difficulty Level 5

You must be physically prepared for brisk, destination-oriented off-trail hiking up to 5 miles each day, with climbs up to 2000 feet. You should be physically conditioned to do these hikes comfortably. Expect loose rock, uneven footing, dense undergrowth, steep hillside traverses, and stream crossings lower than knee height. Good coordination is required.

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 Monday. The course begins at 6:30pm and will return to the park entrance area around 4pm on Wednesday.

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 cabins and outhouses. Meals are simple and healthy.

Professional Development Credit

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? Email courses@akgeo.org or call 907-771-8485