



# Denali's Mosses and Lichens



## Dates

August 14-16, 2026



## Difficulty

Level 4



## Elevation Gain

Up to 1500 feet



## Hiking Distance

Up to 5 miles per day

## Course Description

Interior Alaska is a landscape defined by its lichens and bryophytes such as mosses and liverworts. Over 1,000 species inhabit the trees, tundra, and rocky slopes of Denali National Park and Preserve. This course is designed for curious outdoor enthusiasts and educators who wish to understand these diverse yet often overlooked organisms. Join Denali botanist James Walton to learn the basic biology, life histories, and ecology of bryophytes and lichens through a combination of landscape-scale exploration and focused study. We'll strike out into a variety of habitats to observe these organisms in their natural settings and learn to recognize common and charismatic species while identifying their specific microhabitat preferences. No prior experience with bryophytes or lichens is needed, though a keen eye for detail and a passion for discovering the park's 'hidden' biodiversity are highly encouraged!

## Difficulty Level 4

You must be physically prepared to hike off-trail up to 5 miles each day, at a comfortable pace, with climbs up to 1500 feet. Expect uneven footing, wet boggy tundra, dense undergrowth, loose rocks, and stream crossings less than knee height. Good coordination is recommended.

## 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 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](mailto:courses@akgeo.org) or call 907-771-8485