6:15 PM – Please arrive early in order to complete any registration information, view recommended books, and answer questions. It is super important that you receive some fundamental information that will be presented at the very start of class. Like no other subject we teach, our wildlife class builds upon itself minute by minute.

**6:30 PM – Wolves, Cougars & Bears:** We will start the first hour promptly with a safety overview for living, hiking, hunting and foraging in wolf, cougar and bear country. It is important to understand large predators and their prey in order to keep yourself safe, and to keep them safe in the wild. That’s the crux of the matter: everyone wants to protect nature and themselves at the same time. The key is knowledge, and taking right action based on that knowledge. Also, wolves have returned to Washington & Oregon. So now, we have more than just cougars and bears to consider. That sounds scary, but in reality, there will be fewer cougars and black bears because wolves will be competing on the same territory. Wolves are statistically the least dangerous, but despite the insignificant chance of a dangerous encounter with any of these megafauna, your behavior when them should deflect their triggers. Each species has particular triggers to become aware of, and you should learn their “language” in order to avoid problems.

**7:00 PM – Wildlife Trackers Training:** We will continue with an overview of Wildlife Tracking in order to establish common goals and vocabulary which will be important in order to recognize tracks and other signs of animals. Kim & Chris will have arranged a “tracking scenario” consisting of track “cut-outs” to solidify your understanding of track identification, plus educated interpretation of what animals are doing based on their tracks. We will continue with a lecture on the track characteristics of mammal families present in our area. Finally, and super important to tracking, but something that takes a bit of childlike bravery, we will choose some volunteers to demonstrate “animal forms” which are the way animals move, as this is critical to really understand how tracks get laid on the ground.

**7:30 PM – Bird Songs, Calls & Alarms:** As a transition into birds, we will discuss their tracks since we are likely to find sign of Great Blue Heron, Canada Goose, various raptors, gulls and smaller shore birds along muddy areas. We will also have a fascinating lesson on scatology in hopes of dissecting scat, owl pellets, and other droppings we come across when we go outside later. But most important, we will overview the 5 categories of “bird language” which are key not only to identification, but to keeping yourself safe around predators in nature. That’s right, the easiest way to know that there are predators nearby is to listen to the birds!

**8:00 PM – Awareness in Nature:**  The most important skill in nature is awareness, whether it be for safety or discovering animals. We will head outside for the remainder of class, and start by practicing “wide angle vision” like owls do, plus “expanded hearing” like deer use to decipher whether sounds they hear in the forest are predators or friendlies, and the “stealth walk” like foxes teach us in order to move undetected in nature so we see more animals and experience their behavior as if we weren’t there. We like to say that if you bring home just one set of skills from tonight’s class, that these awareness activities are it. They will help you see more wildlife, and keep you safer, in city and wilderness, better than any other set of knowledge.

**8:30 PM – Questions & Review:**  Using the knowledge and awareness you have developed thus far in class, we recommend joining us for our upcoming weekend tracking workshops to discover live “sign” of all kinds. In order to help you open to a world of evidence that animals leave whereever they move, we’ll look for and discuss scrapes, lays, burrows, latrines, larders, nests, partial tracks, pressure releases, vegetative cuttings, and everything else we can find – even the condition of feathers to determine exactly how or if a bird might have been killed or injured.You also have to be able to trail animals if you want to find them, so now that your eyes are adjusted to seeing sign, we’re going to train you in the kind of trailing that real animal trackers use, keeping your head up and walking fast, identifying voices of the birds to know what is up ahead!