



# WildMedix Winter Wilderness Medicine Course



Matroosberg Private Nature Reserve  
18 – 22 July 2017

## [Info Pack](#)

### [Introduction](#)

Winter mountaineering and medicine training, in a beautiful and austere environment! Although South Africa lacks any true Alpine environments, the increasing popularity of outdoor pursuits and extreme sports is encouraging people to seek adventure in the high, cold wilderness around the world. To be a safe participant, and a safe wilderness/expedition medic, you need to have knowledge of and skills for all conditions you may encounter. After the previous years' successes, we are proud to be presenting another winter wilderness medicine course aimed precisely at meeting these needs, and bringing world-class wilderness medical education to South Africans.

We look forward to hosting you on a practical but evidence-based course, focusing on winter wilderness medicine and mountaineering. You may be attending the full program (arriving on the evening of 17 July) or just the weekend (arriving evening of 20 July) – both will earn you CPD points. The full program is targeted at medical professionals and suitably skilled volunteers, and includes detailed theory lectures along with targeted simulations. The weekend program is predominantly practical in the field, and open to those without formal medical qualifications. Expect to spend some quality time in the high, cold outdoors! We will adjust the activities to the amount of snow/ice present at the time of the course (as always, at the mercy of the weather), but rest assured you will spend some long hours getting to terms with everything cold!

### [Location](#)

Matroosberg is the highest peak in the Hex River Mountains and is named for a rock formation resembling a sailor, visible from the Hexrivier valley. At 2249m, it is second only to Seweweekspoort Peak in the Western Cape, but is undoubtedly the easiest and most reliable place to access the winter snows in South Africa outside of the Drakensberg range. Indeed, the regular winter snows, sheltered south-facing slopes and gullies often generate enough snow and ice that skiing, snowboarding and

occasional ice climbing is possible. They bring danger, too, however: Matroosberg has been the site of several deaths due to exposure and icy conditions. While the mountain phase of the workshop will be at an informal camp at the base of Conical Peak in the Matroosberg Private Nature Reserve, our base of operations is on the farm itself at the base of the mountain.



## Program

- **Tuesday** - Arrive at the farm during the course of the evening, **but no later than 21h00**. Welcome drinks, a warm fire and informal dinner.
- **Wednesday to Friday** - Full day program of lectures interspersed by practical skills training, in the area surrounding the home base. The lecture topics cover an introduction to altitude physiology and medicine, medicine in extreme settings, cold physiology, local and systemic cold injuries, avalanche, winter wilderness sporting injuries, exposure prevention, cold weather equipment, wilderness survival, wilderness medical kits, search and rescue, exercise physiology, lightning injuries, wound management, patient assessment, patient transport, wilderness trauma and orthopaedic injuries, etc. Skills training includes practical wilderness medical skills, patient packaging and stretcher use, ropes and knots for wilderness travel, introduction to winter mountaineering equipment, navigation skills, communication skills, and some surprises... On Friday evening, the participants arriving for the weekend-only program will join us, and we'll have a socialising evening.
- **Saturday** - Practical training on the mountain. We'll complete the first part of the ascent of Matroosberg by 4WD truck to save time, and then spend the rest of the day on foot. Depending on snow and ice conditions, we undertake practical training exercises in ropework, rock and snow anchors, safety on steep ground, self-arrest, crampon and ice-axe techniques, snow assessment, snow shelters, survival skills, signalling and radio work, stretcher use, improvisation, navigation and cold-weather mountaineering skills. We will overnight under the stars on the mountain.
- **Sunday** – Practical! Time to put some of those skills into action...so be prepared :). We'll be down off the mountain and back at our base Youth Camp around lunchtime to allow folks to eat and thaw before leaving for home.



## Accommodation, Meals & Costs



### Basecamp

Homelier than a camp, but you'll appreciate the warm walls by the end of the weekend! There is a good tar road to the farm, with ample parking on site. Directions are to be found near the end of this document. Accommodation is in shared wooden cabins with bunk beds (8 pax/cabin, a small en-suite bathroom per cabin, kitchenette and indoor- and outdoor fireplace). You will need to bring sleeping bag and towel. All meals, tea and coffee from arrival until departure are included in the course fee.

### Mountain phase

On Saturday and Sunday, we will be operating from the base of Conical Peak. Transport to the mountain will be provided in the WildMedix/VFI 4x4 truck; thereafter we are on foot. We will overnight on the mountain in snow shelters, communal tents or out in the open, depending on the conditions. Meals are included. You will require mug, cutlery, sleeping bag, hiking mattress and survival/bivvy bag for the mountain. You're welcome to take a snow bath.



### Costs

R 5000.00pp for the full program (accommodation, permits, food, transport from the training base to the mountain and training equipment included)

R 2500.00pp for the weekend-only program (accommodation, permits, food, transport from the training base to the mountain and training equipment included)

Repeat customers are eligible for a 10% discount.

### Personal Equipment

The required kit is essential for your survival and participation, and must be brought along with you. Anticipate conditions on the mountain to be below zero during the night (and possibly the day as well); snow, ice, wind and freezing rain are all possibilities. Temperatures of  $-10^{\circ}\text{C}$  and lower have been described on Matroosberg. If you are unsure or would like advice, please contact us.

#### Required:

- Mountain hiking kit – suitable base layers (wicking shirts and thermal long underwear), insulating midlayer, sturdy hiking trousers, a waterproof hard shell (jacket minimum, shell trousers recommended), warm gloves, sun hat, balaclava or beanie and buff, at least two pairs

of warm socks, snow gaiters and boots. We will be actively seeking out snow, so trail running shoes are not adequate!

- Additional warm layer – a thick fleece or down jacket is recommended. We will be having open-air lectures and instruction on the mountain, as well as some time to relax and socialise, and you'll appreciate having extra insulation.
- Sleeping bag – anticipate sleeping in temperatures of -5° to -10°C
- Hiking mattress
- Bivvy or survival bag – the standard (cheap) plastic survival bags sold by the outdoor shops are adequate for the purpose, but bring along a more formal bivvy bag if you have one.
- Small personal medical kit, including sunscreen and lip balm
- Personal toiletries
- Headlamp
- Hiking mug and a spoon/spork
- Water bottle/hydration system
- Rucksack capable of carrying the above (40-60 litres is optimal)
- Willing spirit and sense of humour.



#### Optional or recommended:

- Duffle bag/suitcase for your belongings staying behind at the basecamp
- Clothes for the days at basecamp (quantity depending on whether you are undertaking the full or weekend-only program). Comfortable outdoor clothing is recommended, as we will be doing practical exercises in the immediate surroundings.
- Climbing harness & helmet, ice axe and crampons – if you have your own, please bring them.
- Trekking poles
- Compass and/or GPS
- Camera/smartphone
- Trail mix, hiking snacks and lots of chocolate to share/bribe instructors.
- Any soft drinks or a hip flask and/or a bottle of wine to share, if it strikes your fancy.
- Pokemon GO! Equipment.

WildMedix will supply all training materials, group cooking equipment, communal dome tent for cooking and eating on the mountain, mountaineering- snow and ice equipment, maps, radios and navigation equipment for the training.

#### Instructors



**Walther Meyer:** With over 21 years of personal experience, Walther is one of South Africa's most highly qualified mountain guides and instructors, having the distinction of holding all of the SA National Qualifications (SANQ) in Mountaineering. Certified by the Mountaineering Development and Training Trust (MDT) and American Alpine Institute as a Technical Alpine Leader, he is the lead guiding instructor for various National Parks training programs, and numerous projects under the South African Departments of Economic Development and Environmental Affairs and Tourism. He has led successful high altitude expeditions

in Southern and East Africa, South America, the USA and Canada. Walther is a long-term volunteer ILS paramedic, mountain rescuer, and rescue consultant for several international firms.

**Ross Hofmeyr:** Ross is a consultant anaesthetist, clinical research fellow and airway lead at the Department of Anaesthesia and Perioperative Medicine, University of Cape Town. After commencing training in traumatology and emergency medicine with a keen interest in pre-hospital wilderness medicine, he served as overwintering Expedition Leader and Doctor for the South African National Antarctic Expedition, where he developed a strong desire to pursue research into extreme physiology. He has 15 years of experience in mountain rescue and has served on expeditions in Antarctica, Patagonia, Africa, the Middle and Far East. A dedicated teacher, Ross is the academic liaison for the Wilderness & Expedition Medicine Society of SA, ATLS course director, and runs an airway training program.



**Dries Steyn:** Since joining WildMedix in 2008, Dries has gained a wealth of experience working as a Wild Medic in many different environments from mountain tops to competitive sport fields. He qualified as a Basic Life Support medic in 2010, and through his passion for mountaineering has been a stalwart supporter of the development of wilderness medic training in SA. Dries is qualified and registered as a CATHSSETA (NQF) Mountain Skills Assessor, and has therefore worked extensively as a guide and instructor with our sister company, Venture Forth International, training and assessing many adventure guiding students.

**Heide Pretorius-Davel:** Heide initially trained in Nature Conservation and Adventure Tourism before expanding her skillset to include wilderness medicine with WildMedix. An arachnid researcher with a grant from the African Arachnology Society, she is also a trained Venomous Reptile Handler and expert on local field herpetology. Heide has completed the WEMT-B and is a senior instructor on the Wilderness First Aid program.



**Gela Tölken:** Artist jeweller and academic by training, lecturer and mentor by conviction and inquisitive researcher and philosopher at heart, Gela is passionate about medicine, writing, the outdoors and volunteer mountain rescue. She participated in the inaugural WildMedix Kilimanjaro Mountain Medicine Expedition, is a trained Wilderness First Responder and a Basic Ambulance Assistant.

## Directions

You need to make your way to Matroosberg Private Nature Reserve on the afternoon/evening of Wed 17 or 20 July, depending on your program. Budget 2½ - 3h hours for the drive. Note that the reserve closes its gate at 21h00, so access after that time is not possible.

From Ceres, follow the R46 East in the direction of Touws River. 11km from Ceres turn right onto the Bo-Swaarmoed road. Follow this road for 19km (up the pass and past the Klondyke Cherry Farm) and turn right to Erfdeel/Matroosberg. Follow the dirt road for 4km to the Matroosberg Reserve.

GPS Co-ordinates:

S 33.33012 or S 33 19' 48"

E 19.61076 or E 19 36' 39"

## Contact Details

If you need to reach us, please try call or message Ross or Walther first. Note that there is quite intermittent and unreliable cellular telephone reception on the farm and on the mountain, so if it is not urgent, an SMS or WhatsApp message is a good way of getting in touch. For urgent problems, we will be monitoring the satellite phone. If all else fails, call the Matroosberg Reserve numbers.

**Ross Hofmeyr: +2784 549 9259**

**Walther Meyer: +2782 770 7876**

**WildMedix SatPhone: +87077 6138209**

**Matroosberg Telkom line: 023 312 2282**

**Matroosberg Duty Officer: 073 194 0885**

## Keen to participate?

If you have not yet done so, please register online at <https://tinyurl.com/WMX-WinterMed18> and we will respond by sending you an invoice for the course fees. In the event that you don't hear from us promptly (we might be in the hills!), or if you have any questions or queries, please do not hesitate to contact [gela@wildmedix.com](mailto:gela@wildmedix.com).

**Like the facebook event to be kept up to date with the latest developments:**

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1822246821150895/>

