Safety Advisory

Event:

In August a U of R undergraduate student came within 2 meters of a cougar while conducting a field study as part of an undergraduate class. She was close enough to the cougar to hear it growl. The student reacted appropriately to the encounter by standing on a nearby tree stump and vigorously waving her arms and shouting at the animal. While this is a rare and most interesting encounter, training and preparedness was one key to avoiding a potentially more serious outcome to this incident.

Fieldwork recommendations:

1. Ensure that all known or anticipated risks associated with the fieldwork are identified (e.g., working on/around water, wildlife, climbing, H2S, travel to site, cave work, fire risks, communication, heat exposure, cold exposure, transporting chemicals, samples or specimens)
2. Ensure all participants of the fieldwork activity know the potential risks and are provided with proper training, safe operating procedures and personal protective equipment as required. Please note that all training must be documented.
3. Complete the U of R Travel and Field process and forms as this will assist with proper risk analysis.
4. Conduct daily pre-activity fieldwork meetings with all members of your field work team to review the day’s activities and associated risks with appropriate safe research or work practices.

Please note that U of R Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) can assist with risk identification, training and personal protective equipment. HSE contact information is attached to this Advisory.

Please remember to communicate this information to all U of R faculty and staff conducting field work within Saskatchewan, Canada or Internationally.