



A PUBLICATION OF THE NOLS DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

FRIENDS

Welcome to *Friends*, a newsletter for people committed to helping NOLS provide the world's best education in wilderness skills and leadership. This publication aims to provide useful and interesting information on charitable gift planning and the people who support NOLS.

SUPPORTING EXCELLENCE AT NOLS • SEPTEMBER 2008

Expedition 2013

A Strategic Plan for NOLS' Future

BY LAUREN WETHERBEE

After a year of planning and input from numerous staff, Board members, friends, and alumni, NOLS announces the launch of Expedition 2013. As visionary as it is comprehensive, this new strategic plan will set an aggressive course for NOLS for the next five years. Frank Pisch, former Board of Trustees chair, explains, "[The] plan clarifies NOLS' mission, outlines a vision for the future, identifies priorities for the next five years, and lays out a roadmap for achieving the vision." It allows all members of the NOLS community to be aware of the direction the school is headed and to be active and informed participants in NOLS' push to achieve its goals.

The plan is broken down into five primary goals where the school desires to make significant progress:

1. Evidence-based curriculum development
2. Staff excellence
3. Diversity
4. Philanthropic support
5. Environmental stewardship

NOLS Executive Director John Gans points out, "This plan not only continues a strong commitment to our core mission, but it lays out added focus areas to insure that NOLS will remain strong

and relevant for many years to come. We feel that these goals will broaden the breadth of our student body to fit the world that we are moving into."

Some of the strategies and tactics of the new plan call for great strides to be achieved in the environmental and diversity arenas. NOLS would like to set a new standard for environmental stewardship and teaching that accomplishes several things, including reducing our carbon footprint, training our students to make wise frontcountry environmental choices, and leading our partners and vendors in making more conscientious consumption choices. Our diversity goal provides an aggressive template for student and staff recruiting that will diversify, and thereby strengthen, our organization. NOLS is committed to applying the resources necessary to bring about a culture of inclusion and diversity that will continue to define our leadership in the outdoor education world.

Our surveys have shown, and NOLS students agree, that instructors are the single most important factor influencing student outcomes on a course. Our staff excellence goal involves specifically enhancing the staff compensation package, enabling us to recruit and retain exceptional outdoor educators. In the current competitive outdoor industry, maintaining a team of over 500 high quality faculty requires an aggressive strategy and the necessary funding.

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John Gans, NOLS Executive Director



The newly installed solar panels at NOLS Rocky Mountain are an example of the Environmental Stewardship goal in action.



NOLS LEADERSHIP QUOTE

“Expedition 2013 builds on the mission of NOLS, making it even stronger. Its completion will ensure greater financial stability, providing access and opportunity for a broader base of students that will help shape the next generation of leaders.”

Pip Coe, NOLS Director of Alumni and Development

Sherwin Cotler: Designing a Legacy Larger than Life

BY CINDY CAREY

Having recently experienced significant personal losses, including the death of his father, Summit Team member Sherwin Cotler hoped that getting away to a pristine environment with NOLS would help him begin a healing process. His course did not disappoint him, and in the process he acquired a much greater appreciation for the wilderness, as well as the NOLS mission.



*NOLS Summit Team member
Sherwin Cotler*

“NOLS has a way of weaving itself into your everyday life and, in some cases, changes the direction of one’s life,” Sherwin says. After completing his Prince William Sound Sea Kayaking course in 1978, he moved from Southern California to the Puget Sound area in an effort to readjust his pace of living and get more in touch with nature.

A clinical psychologist and the co-clinical director of a free mental health clinic in Olympia, Washington, he often travels with his wife, Bronwyn, to medically isolated areas around the world. To be better prepared, they took a Wilderness First Responder course in 2007 through the Wilderness Medicine Institute of NOLS (WMI). The relationship grew between WMI and Sherwin and this past year he presented at a WMI conference, helping attendees learn to address mental health issues in the wilderness. For Sherwin, participating as a presenter was one of his most fulfilling accomplishments. “It felt like the completion of a wonderful trip that started over 30 years ago,” he says.

Recently, Sherwin added NOLS to his estate plans. He often asks his clients to think about how they would like to have their epitaph read, and what they are doing to achieve that goal. His own answer is, “I would like to leave behind as many, if not more, good things in this world than I, myself, have been fortunate enough to consume or enjoy. To this end, a sizable portion of my estate is to be divided amongst organizations I believe help strengthen individuals and/or protect our environment. I believe NOLS accomplishes both of these objectives.”

Sherwin Cotler is a member of the NOLS Summit Team, a recognition society for the donors who include the school in their estate or other long-term plans. If NOLS is in your plan, please let us know. Contact us at (800) 332-4280.

BY DAVID C. COWLES

What does your pre-trip checklist look like? Have you thought of everything? Is there something you might regret once you get on the road that you haven’t taken care of? Does your list look something like this:

- Leave trip itinerary with folks
- Find a housesitter
- Stop mail service
- Write personal will

Just the other day I got a call from a NOLS alum who was getting ready to do a year-long, round-the-world trip with her husband. Leaving in two weeks she was tying up final loose ends and just called to tell me that NOLS had been listed in her recently penned will. “It won’t be much,” she said, “but NOLS is the only benefactor I’ve listed. My NOLS semester ten years ago was the most important experience in my life so far.”

It’s not uncommon for people setting off for adventures to spend time reflecting on what’s most important to them. Family, favorite memories, and their legacy are some of the things that cross their mind. What’s even more compelling is that long trips are somewhat of a call to action. Unfortunately,

Trip Planning

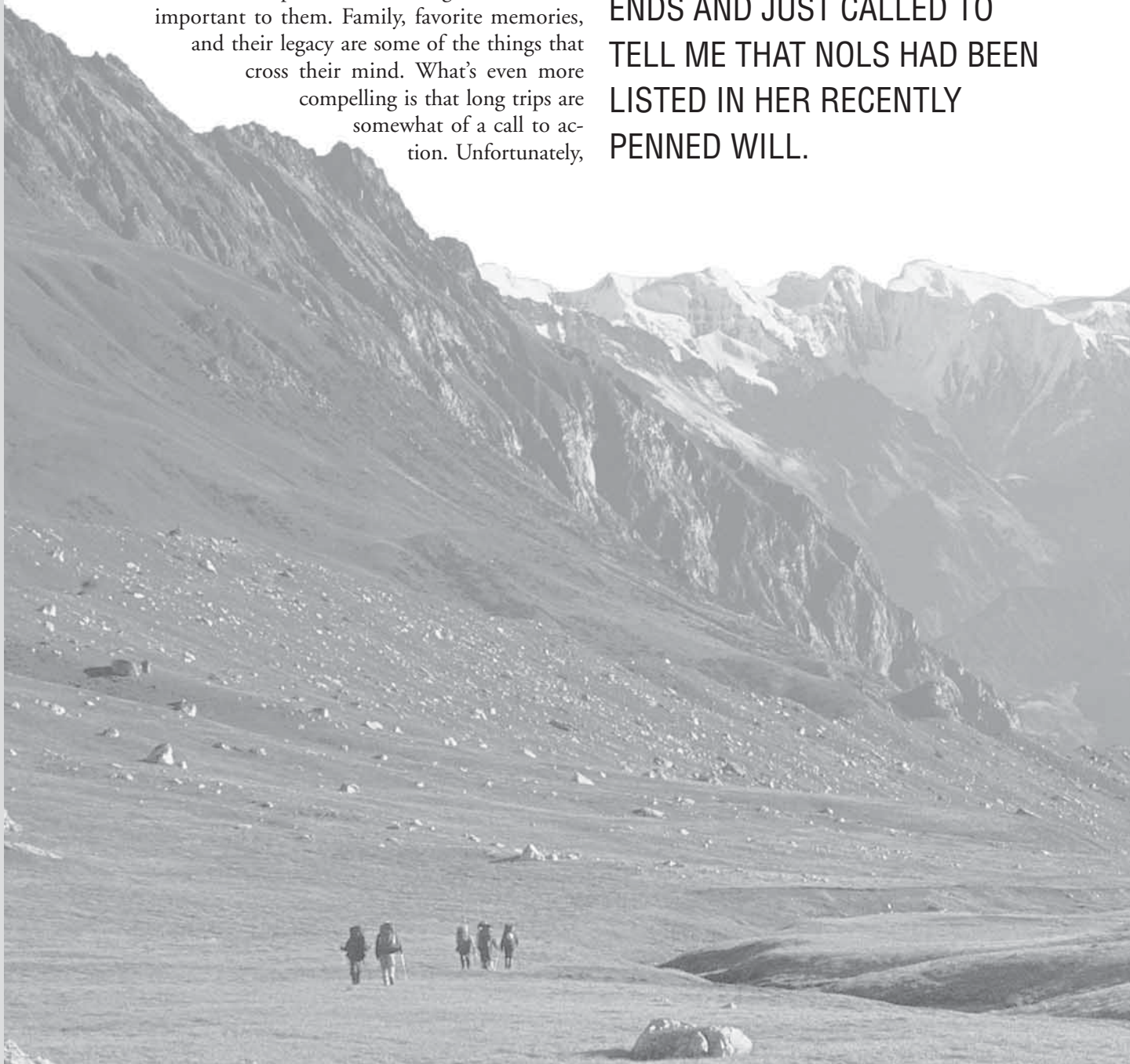
Don’t Forget to Pack your Tooth

just thinking about what’s important won’t make something happen after you die. The individual I mentioned above made a point to turn her wishes into action before she traveled, “just in case.”

Writing a personal will is not a difficult thing, and making a bequest to support a cause or two that you care passionately about is even easier. Some people don’t know where to start. Let’s walk through it: Begin by thinking about who and what you care about. Consider what has been important in your life and what you want your legacy to be. Consider where you can make a difference.

Many people outline how to care for their family heirs first, and then they look to those charitable causes that they care about. Next you want to take stock of your financial resources, determining how you would like to see them distrib-

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Essentials

brush and Sign your Will

uted. A financial advisor may be very helpful at this point to assist you in making the most of your assets. The final step is to contact a lawyer who specializes in estate planning and sit down with them to pen the document that will outline your wishes.

To include NOLS, or any other charitable organization, in your will, you simply need to add a sentence or two. Here is a sample of how to word it:

I give, devise and bequeath to the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS), Lander, Wyoming, (the sum of \$xxxxx)(xx% of my estate)(the following property)(the rest, residue, and remainder of my estate). The property comprising this gift may be used to further the charitable purposes of NOLS at the discretion of its trustees.

As you can see from the above sentences, there are several ways you can distribute the assets in your will to assist NOLS or another charity. The first is by giving a specific amount of money or a percentage of the value of your estate to the organization. Or, you can identify a particular asset within your estate—like a piece of property such as real estate, securities, life insurance policies, or other material things of value like artwork or a valuable collection of coins—to pass on to the

charity. Another option people choose is to leave the remainder, or “residue,” of their estate to a charity. The way that works is that once the will is fully executed and the assets have been distributed to other concerns, as well as used to pay taxes and other estate costs, the full amount of what is left is given to the charity.

WRITING A PERSONAL WILL IS NOT A DIFFICULT THING AND MAKING A BEQUEST TO SUPPORT A CAUSE OR TWO THAT YOU CARE PASSIONATELY ABOUT IS EVEN EASIER.

If you already have a will, it's still an easy procedure to amend it to include NOLS or some other charitable cause. The simple addition of the above language in a codicil will do the trick and will not require a rewriting of the rest of your estate plan.

So, though its not quite as easy as remembering to pack your toothbrush, planning and drawing up a will that carries on your wishes after you are gone can be as simple as it is fulfilling.

VOLUNTEER IN ACTION

Alison Gannett: Saving Our Snow

BY LAUREN WETHERBEE



NOLS grad and environmental steward Alison Gannett

As a World Champion skier, Alison Gannett has spent her share of time on snow—skiing on it, filming it, and watching it disappear with alarming speed. And, while traveling in countries such as South Africa, Bolivia, and Bhutan, she has documented the effects of climate change with the goal of raising awareness regarding our planet's changing climate.

Alison explains, “I want outdoor winter adventurers to grasp that snow could be gone in their lifetimes.”

After graduating from the University of Vermont with a degree in environmental science, Alison enrolled on an Alaska Wilderness course with NOLS. “My course really cemented my path of working to save the planet,” Alison says, explaining that although her initial instinct was to become a NOLS instructor, she realized that her path lay in conservation efforts.

In 2006 she founded the Save Our Snow Foundation, which “seeks to take the message of the problems of climate change, but more importantly the solutions as well, to adventurers around the world.”

One program that the foundation funds is Alison's traveling “global weirding” presentation (the term she prefers more than “global warming”). By showing a combination of her self-proclaimed crazy ski movies and devastating images of loss of snow and water around the globe, she hopes to drive home the seriousness of climate change. The footage is followed by a discussion of simple ways that individuals can reverse the effects of global warming, saving our snow and our planet.

Alison has successfully merged her passions for skiing and conservation, and has been recognized worldwide for both. She was named one of Outside magazine's 23 Green All-Stars, an honor which she says was “cooler than winning the World Extreme Ski Championships, building a straw house, or straightlining a 3,000 foot peak in Alaska.”

Alumni are some of NOLS' greatest resources. Graduates support the school by organizing local NOLS events, networking, cultivating students and organizing regional chapters. Please contact the NOLS Alumni Department (alumni@nols.edu) with your interests and ideas to be a volunteer in action.

Rebuilding History

Foundations Step Up to Renovate the Berry House

BY STEFANI FARRIS

Twenty-five years after NOLS trustees and supporters rallied to provide a permanent home for the school's northernmost branch by purchasing an old farmstead in Palmer, Alaska, the property's original farmhouse is getting a much-needed facelift. Thanks to generous grants from the Brown Foundation of Houston, Texas, and the Rasmuson Foundation of Anchorage, NOLS Alaska's Berry House is being brought into the twenty-first century in style—while staying true to its original roots.

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Berry House was built in 1935 as part of the Matanuska Colony, the largest of Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal resettlement projects. At that time, more than 200 families were moved from the Midwest to establish a farming community in Alaska's Matanuska Valley.

By the time NOLS bought the Palmer farmstead in 1983, the Berry House and the original barn were standing empty. Since that time it has served as a staff commons and office area. Long-time Alaska instructor and former NOLS Alaska assistant director Rick Rochelle recalls working out of an office in the house with no insulation, single-pane windows, and uneven floors. In the winter, he says, he could feel the wind blowing through. There was talk of tearing it down to build a more efficient and modern facility for staff. But, as Rick and other staff pointed out, "The Berry House is the emotional heart of NOLS Alaska." Keeping it and restoring its historical feel fit nicely into the main theme of NOLS Alaska's strategic plan, which is to be "a sustainable farm that's part of the history of the area."



Left: The NOLS Alaska Berry House prior to renovations. Right: Renovations are currently well underway!



Due to the foresight of Don Ford, NOLS Alaska director since 1989, that plan is coming together. The strategy called for updating the parts of the farm that are student service areas first, and then move on to the staff areas as time and funds allowed.

With most of the student areas completed, NOLS Alaska turned to the renovation of the staff areas like the Berry House. The Alaska-based Rasmuson Foundation stepped in with the maximum grant amount they award for local community projects. Also assisting with funding, the Brown Foundation, a longtime NOLS supporter, made a generous grant award to the renovation. Support of foundations like these two are significant to NOLS because in addition to much needed funds, they lend a level of outside philanthropic credibility to our efforts. Following the busy summer season, the finishing touches will be put on the Berry House, once again restoring its full use and rich history to the farmstead we call NOLS Alaska.

Expedition 2013 *continued from page 1*

In order to achieve the standard that NOLS is striving for with the new plan, we must also grow our philanthropic support. "Strategic plans require the investment of new resources," Pisch says. "Some from the annual support that NOLS receives from its friends and alumni, some from NOLS itself, and some funds will be sought as part of a capital campaign." Growth in the philanthropic support for the school through a capital campaign will allow us to make major strides in all areas of the plan. A further goal of the plan calls for doubling our endowment, giving us the

working funds we need to sustain the growth required to meet our strategic goals.

Much of the plan calls for major staff and Board involvement over the next five years. In addition, the goals that have been established will require the significant support of the entire NOLS community. With the support of all of our alumni and donors, the Expedition 2013 strategic plan will be a success and keep us in the forefront of the outdoor education field.

In order to view the complete strategic plan, log on to www.nols.edu/strategic_plan.

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PHILANTHROPIC TIDBIT

GoodShop for NOLS!

What do Apple, Best Buy, Amazon, Ebay, Expedia, and iTunes all have in common? By purchasing items from any of these vendors (and many more) through Goodshop.com, a portion of your purchase can be donated to a nonprofit of your choice—including NOLS!

Next time you go purchase your plane tickets, computers, or favorite songs, head over to www.goodshop.com first and use it as a portal to link up to your favorite retailer's website! By selecting NOLS as your nonprofit of choice, up to 30 percent of each purchase you make will be donated to the school and help support scholarships, outreach programs, and curriculum development. Giving back has never been easier.



The NOLS Monthly Giving Club

Want an easy and convenient way to donate to NOLS? Look no further! The NOLS Monthly Giving Club is the way for you to make regular monthly contributions to the NOLS Annual Fund. Donating in smaller amounts each month is an easier and more practical way to support the school. Additionally, your consistent giving helps us to be more sustainable by saving paper and further mailing costs.

To become a member of the NOLS Monthly Giving Club, you simply need to decide your monthly gift amount and then give us a call at 1-800-332-4280. Your contributions are charged to your Visa or MasterCard on the first weekday of each month. Simple. Practical. Charitable. Sign up today!