



**NOLS ALUMNI TRIP DESCRIPTION
FLY FISHING & RAFTING ON
ALASKA'S LAKE CREEK
AUGUST 3 - 9, 2008**

Trip Description

Spend the week with us rafting whitewater rapids and fly fishing on Alaska's Lake Creek. Located 65 miles northwest of Anchorage, Lake Creek flows approximately 60 miles from the blue waters of Chelatna Lake to the confluence of the silty Yetna River. Most days will find us floating the river and pulling over to the shore to fish enticing holes for silver salmon, rainbow trout and arctic grayling. Depending on the river level, we may encounter numerous stretches of class II and III rapids. Several stretches are even classified as class IV. Lake Creek will keep us on our toes as we read the river and make our way safely downstream. Many rock gardens will give us lots of opportunities to improve our rafting skills. We may have at least one layover day to take advantage of the fishing in the area.

COST: \$1985

Group Size: up to 8 participants & 2 instructors

Features of this Trip:

- Oar rafting up to class IV rapids
- Fly fishing for rainbow, salmon and arctic grayling
- Scenery!
- Opportunities to see Alaskan wildlife
- Flights in & out- seeing Denali

Environment

An abundance of both amazing fishing opportunity and natural beauty await you as you begin the journey down Lake Creek. Exciting whitewater and numerous fishing spots will fill most of our travel days. If weather permits we will have views of Denali, Mt. Hunter and Mt. Foraker on our bush flights in and out of Lake Creek. These mountains, which are part of the Alaskan Range, have more than 20 glaciers. The Kahiltna Glacier eventually forms a river that forms Chelatna Lake and Lake Creek. Over seven miles long, Chelatna Lake, allows much of the glacial sediment to settle out of Lake Creek's striking, blue water. Lake Creek is generally a very clear stream unless heavy rains cloud the water.

As we continue our journey downstream we will travel through forests of white spruce, alder and birch. Eventually, Lake Creek drops into a canyon with sheer cliffs of 300 feet. We have the chance to see brown and black bear, moose, wolf and beavers throughout the trip.

Lake Creek is subject to interior weather patterns, which typically means that July and August are the driest months. Expect daytime temperatures in the 50-70° range with nights in the 40's. This being Alaska, we can experience rain at any time and will plan accordingly. Substantive rain can quickly raise the river level—dramatically altering the rapids and fishing.

Trip Progression

First Day: August 3—Meet the NOLS bus at the train station on 1st and C Street in Anchorage at 6:30 a.m. The bus will take you to our headquarters in Palmer about 50 miles to the north. At the NOLS headquarters, we will check your gear and issue you anything that you need. We will pack our gear and rations for easy bush plane transport to Lake Creek. We'll leave the branch before lunch on our short drive to the air charter.

Depending on the time and weather, we will either make camp in the bush near our drop-off or assemble the rafts and have a class on raft packing and traveling techniques. We may head down Lake Creek to our first campsite. The bush flight is approximately 45-minutes.

Lake Creek's first several miles are slow, giving us an opportunity to learn oar raft skills. The early, upper stretches of the river have the best opportunities for trout and grayling. Soon the river narrows to 20 feet and becomes fast with numerous boulders. Most of our fishing will be done from the shore as we search out holes where salmon pause on their journey to their spawning grounds. Depending on the water level, most river days will negotiate Class II and III rapids. At river mile 30 we will enter the "Canyon". This section of the river has two IV class rapids requiring extensive scouting and possibly lining (coaxing the rafts along the river edge with ropes). The first and last sections of Lake Creek are accessible by motorized boats, so despite the remoteness, we may see other people and hear some motorized clamor.

During the day, we'll fly fish in promising holes and river eddies. Lake Creek is home to all five species of salmon, though in August the main species will be the Coho, or Silver. Some sections of the river will present rainbow trout and arctic grayling. We will often camp near good fishing opportunities. We will travel on most days, but we are planning a least one layover day.

On August 9th, our final day, we will break camp and raft to the take out point where we meet our bush plane at 11 a.m. We will fly to an airstrip and meet the NOLS bus for transport back to our facility in Palmer. We will deissue gear, shower and have a nice dinner, perhaps grilling some of the salmon that you caught. After dinner the NOLS bus will drive you to your destination in Anchorage. If you are flying out that evening do not make reservations before 10:00 p.m.

Curriculum:

While on the river you will have the opportunity to learn basic oar rafting, river safety, scouting rapids and reading water. We'll review many of the basic NOLS outdoor living skills and techniques (cooking, sanitation, stove use, camping, etc.). Of course, we will also teach fly fishing skills—improving or establishing your cast and matching the hatch to bring in the "big ones."

The alumni trip atmosphere is more relaxed than a typical NOLS course, however it is not a guided trip- we call it an educational, participatory vacation. The curriculum is informal and based on participant interest. Trips are self-reliant and you will be miles from the amenities of civilization. You will be living outdoors, sharing a tent with as many as three people, helping cook meals and caring for yourself. This wilderness trip is entirely in Grizzly Bear country. That means that we'll practice stringent bear camping techniques, including camping, traveling and fishing in groups. Bear camping means that you will not have much personal, "alone" time—this trip is a group experience requiring excellent expedition behavior. Participants have the freedom

to bring equipment that is necessary for their comfort and enjoyment of the trip and are expected to take responsibility for this aspect. If you have further questions about this trip contact our office in Lander (alumni@nols.edu or 800.332.4280).

You will paddle in remote wilderness areas. While each course carries a satellite phone for emergency correspondence, communication cannot be guaranteed. Medical evacuations may take several days. Under certain circumstances, participants may not be accompanied by a NOLS staff member if evacuated from the course.

A constant theme in our instruction is identifying and managing the hazards of remote wilderness river travel. Your instructors will teach the skills and share the knowledge you need to handle these situations. Even so, a good attitude and consistent assumption of personal responsibility is critical for ensuring the safety and success of the entire group. Students who get the most out of a trip are invariably those who arrive open to new ways of learning, enjoy working with others, and are committed to being positive, responsible members of the expedition.

The challenges of Alaska are equaled by the intensity of its remote wilderness, the beauty of the landscape and the triumph of working together as a group to overcome obstacles.

Registration and Payment

Call the NOLS alumni office at (800) 332-4280. A non-refundable deposit of \$200 will reserve your space on the trip. Your enrollment will be complete upon receipt of your final payment of \$1350 and your completed application forms; these are due no later than 30 days prior to the trip start date.

The price of the trip includes all meals starting with lunch on the first day, through dinner on the last, all group equipment, instruction and shuttles from Anchorage to the branch in Palmer on August 3 , and back to Anchorage on August 9.

Accommodations the night before the trip and the last night of the trip, meals not indicated, any personal equipment that is rented or purchased and any costs incurred by evacuations are the responsibility of trip participants.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call the NOLS alumni office at (800) 332-4280.

Individuals are responsible for getting to Anchorage and the lodging the night of August 2nd. We will transport you to Anchorage the evening of the 9th. If you are flying out that night please make reservations after 10:00 p.m. You are responsible for any personal gear that is rented or purchased and any costs incurred by evacuations are the responsibility of trip participants.