



**NOLS ALUMNI TRIP DESCRIPTION  
TELEMARK & AVALANCHE TRAINING  
IN THE TETONS  
FEBRUARY 22 – 27, 2009**

**Trip Description**

Whether you love winter or seek the thrill and solitude of skiing in the backcountry, this trip will teach you to travel in a world of snow. Winter travel in the Northern Rockies is challenging and demands hard work, but the rewards are amazing—you'll leave with a new set of skills for traveling competently in a harsh and beautiful environment.

Skis and snowboards are your main tool in deep untracked snow. You'll begin your winter adventure with one and a half days of expert instruction at our local ski area, Grand Targhee—world famous for its powder skiing in open glades. You'll work with experienced ski instructors to learn basic cross-country and downhill technique complete with videotaping. In the evening you'll review the day's ski videos and learn about cold injury prevention and avalanche awareness.

The following three days you'll heft a daypack and ski into the mountains for the ultimate winter skiing experience in a classroom of big mountain terrain covered in deep untracked powder. Few places on earth are more dramatic or beautiful. You will return to the warmth of our Teton Valley base each evening.

Classes teach you responsible, comfortable outdoor living, whether it's 30°F above or 30°F below. The skiing can be excellent, with a continual focus on risk management in avalanche terrain. By the end, you'll have a new set of skills for achieving your winter or mountaineering goals on future expeditions.

**Cost:** \$1175

**Group Size:** 12 participants

**Features of This Trip:**

- 5 Nights at the NOLS Teton Valley facility
- Travel through forested mountain terrain
- Elevations of 7,000 to 10,500 feet
- Training in avalanche assessment
- One and a half days at the lifts of Grand Targhee Ski Resort
- Learn/refine backcountry ski or snowboard technique

## **Environment**

The setting for this course will be the west side of the famed Tetons just outside Driggs, Idaho. It's a favorite haunt of skiers and snowboarders because of the dependable snow and exceptional backcountry skiing terrain. Variety is the spice of the Tetons, with heavily wooded patches intermixed with open slopes, and steep terrain broken occasionally by gentle slopes. Altitudes range from 7,000 feet to 10,500 feet and temperatures may range from a balmy 30 degrees to -40 degrees Fahrenheit.

Given the altitude and latitude of these mountain ranges, bitter cold and blizzard conditions can occur at any time. You should expect highly variable weather that can change quickly from sunshine to snow, and sometimes even rain. The demanding winter environment challenges you to put forth maximum effort. You will be exposed to cold temperatures during the day, and constant care must be exercised to minimize the possibility of hypothermia and frostbite. Travel requires snowshoeing or skiing with a daypack. In these mountains, avalanches occur and can bury unwary travelers. Predicting the likelihood of an avalanche occurring is a skill akin to predicting the weather; it requires experience and practice, but is never 100 percent accurate.

## **Trip Progression**

The first day: meet at 7:30 am on February 22<sup>nd</sup> in the lobby of the Cottontree Inn in Idaho Falls, ID. There will be a shuttle to take you to the NOLS Teton Valley facilities; please be sure to reserve your space for that ride. We will have an orientation and issue equipment needed, then it's off to Grand Targhee for our first taste of Wyoming powder.

The second day: we will head back up to Grand Targhee for more practice and a chance to ski and board for a day without having to hike for our turns.

Days 3-5: we'll be based in Driggs for these nights, while skiing and boarding in the surrounding mountains during the day. Depending on how everyone's legs hold up, there's an option for a "local culture" break—including Jackson's outstanding National Museum of Wildlife Art and/or a tour of the National Elk Refuge.

The last day: on February 27<sup>th</sup>, we will ski/ride until mid afternoon, deissue equipment and have dinner in Driggs. After dinner you will catch the shuttle back to the Cottontree Inn in Idaho Falls.

## **Curriculum**

Alumni trips are more relaxed than a typical NOLS course; however, this is not a kick-back vacation or a guided trip. 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 any further questions about this trip, please contact the alumni office at (800) 332-4280.

Our days in the backcountry will be spent exploring, checking out avalanche terrain, and learning about riding and skiing in a remote setting. There will be opportunities to be away from the base for a whole day so we will need to dress and pack accordingly. We will learn to dig snow profiles and try to develop that sixth sense backcountry travelers have that tells them to stay off certain slopes. The long days of late winter will also mean good photography. Depending upon participant interest, curriculum may include the following:

- Telemark ski and snowboard technique
- Dressing for winter conditions
- Avalanche awareness and assessment
- Transceiver use
- Winter ecology and plant and animal adaptations

## **Registration and Payment**

Call the NOLS alumni office at (800) 332-4280. A non-refundable deposit of \$200 reserves your space on the trip. Your enrollment is complete upon receipt of your final payment 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 February 22<sup>nd</sup> through lunch on February 27<sup>th</sup>, all group equipment, instruction, and transportation to and from the field.**

**Accommodations the night before and the night after the trip, travel to and back home from Idaho Falls, ID (including transportation to the Cottontree Inn), shuttle ride to the Teton Valley Branch the first day, and back to the cotton tree on the last day, meals not indicated, any personal equipment that is purchased or rented and any costs incurred by evacuations are the responsibility of trip participants.**

**If you have any questions about trip costs, please call the NOLS Alumni office at 800-332-4280.**