



NOLS ALUMNI SAILING BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

May 17 – 24, 2008

Features of This Trip:

- Self sufficient 7-day expedition
- Sailing and seamanship skills aboard a 50' sailboat
- Exploring islands, cays, beaches and reefs throughout the BVI
- Hands-on learning and immediate application of new skills
- Local natural and human history and wildlife
- Anchorage and weather assessment and passage planning
- Spending each night in a different harbor or cove
- Underwater exploration of reefs and wrecks
- LNT skills and ethics
- 8 participants, 2 instructors

Cost: \$1,875

Minimum Age: 18 years

Trip Description:

The trip begins at Road Town, Tortola, British Virgin Islands at 6:00pm on Saturday, May 17th.

That afternoon, we'll review equipment, get oriented to the boat, and examine the route of our trip. The next morning we'll leave the docks early for our first sail.

Sailing instruction and review will be the focus of the first few days, but very soon you and the rest of the crew will have gained the skills to run the boat while your instructors step back into a coaching and assisting role.

Over the course of the week, we will explore the archipelago of over 50 islands, isles and cays, which have been called "Nature's Little Secrets." Most of the islands are volcanic, though some are formed atop coral reefs. Much less developed than their counterparts, the US Virgin Islands, the British Virgin Islands feature warm temperatures, mesmerizing aqua blue water, and best of all, strong, steady breezes ideal for beginning and intermediate sailors. The islands are almost all within sight of one another and host a broad array of harbors and coves in which we'll drop anchor each night. Some of these are rimmed with white sand beaches, others with colorful local shops and restaurants, and some with nothing but the tropical forest. A favorite haunt of pirates centuries ago, the BVI offer seclusion and a rugged beauty that is best discovered by sailboat.

In addition to Tortola, our voyage will include Norman Island (rumored to be the basis for Stevenson's Treasure Island), Virgin Gorda, Jost van Dyke (named after a Dutch

pirate), and several other smaller isles and cays. As we sail from island to island, you will learn seamanship (or hone the skills you already have), navigation, passage planning, anchorage assessment, and many other important skills of expedition sailing. There will also be plenty of time to discover the world down below. The wreck of the RMS Rhone, the Indians (rock pinnacles) and the boulder gardens of The Baths are a few of the particularly captivating snorkeling spots we'll explore.

Registration and Payment: To reserve a space on this trip, send a \$200 non-refundable deposit to NOLS via phoned credit card or check (ph: 800.332.4280 – NOLS Alumni Department, 284 Lincoln St. Lander, WY 82520). The remainder of the tuition and all application forms are due by April 1st 2008.

Your trip tuition includes meals starting with dinner on May 17th through lunch on May 24th, all group equipment and instruction.

Travel to and from Tortola, lodging on May 17th and/or May 24th, any meals not indicated, and any cost incurred for evacuations are the responsibility of the trip participants.

Environment:

Weather is never predictable. Though the winds are generally between 10 and 25 knots, the potential exists for gusts and squalls that are much stronger. The weather can range from hot sunshine to rain, strong winds, low visibility, and high seas.. There are times when you might be wet and tired, but you will learn to manage these situations, perhaps even with a smile. While each trip carries a radio and a satellite/cell phone for emergency communication purposes, communication cannot be guaranteed. Medical evacuations may be delayed.

A constant theme in our instruction is identifying and managing the hazards of ocean travel. Hazards include inclement weather, prolonged exposure to heat and sun, marine organisms, shallow reefs and submerged rocks.

This trip's environment includes the sailboat itself. Sailboat living is an intensely communal experience— participants and staff will share small cabins and common areas around the clock. Excellent "Expedition Behavior" and good cheer are requisites on this alumni trip.

Curriculum:

Alumni trips are more relaxed than a typical NOLS course; however, this sailing expedition is not a vacation or a guided trip. Trips are self reliant where evacuation to modern medical facilities may take hours to days. Throughout the trip, you live on the boat, prepare group meals, and care for yourself. We will cover sailing and seamanship skills, Leave No Trace skills and ethics, and human and natural history for the area. The expedition sailing format emphasizes hands-on learning and application of new skills in a variety of situations.

Expectations of you as a participant:

We expect that participants have read the pre-trip information and that you are prepared mentally and physically for the challenges and adventures that are in store for you. **As on all expeditions, we will be flexible and may be thrown extraordinary challenges;** your instructors are prepared to deal with such situations but may require your support and flexibility as well. If you have any questions or concerns, please call us in the alumni department—(800)-332-4280; we look forward to hearing from you.

Participants are responsible for any evacuation expenses incurred by NOLS. We urge you to consider trip insurance— call us for suggestions.

Trip Logistics:

Your trip begins at 6:00pm on May 17th at the Mariner Inn, Road Town, on Tortola. If plane schedules/delays cause you to arrive later, please contact the NOLS Alumni Department ASAP 800.332.4280. You should plan to arrive in Tortola on the afternoon of May 16th or the morning of the 17th. Please limit the luggage you carry to that on the equipment list, as space on the boat is limited and NOLS cannot store luggage for you.

On May 24th, we will return to the marina, clean up, and end the trip. If there is enough interest we can arrange a farewell dinner on the night of the 24th on Tortola. Please do not schedule a departing flight before 6 p.m. on May 24th.

Travel logistics for getting to Tortola:

The British Virgin Islands are situated in the northeastern Caribbean Sea, 60 miles east of Puerto Rico. The Islands are serviced by Beef Island Airport on Tortola, the largest island in the BVI. To get there from the US, you must first connect in San Juan, Puerto Rico (SJU). You will then fly to Beef Island Airport, Tortola (EIS).

American Airlines and American Eagle operate flights all the way to Tortola (EIS).

Other major airlines (US Air, Delta, etc.) will take you as far as San Juan (SJU).

Then, from San Juan to Tortola, you can book a separate:

-Caribbean Sun (www.flycsa.com)

-Cape Air (www.flycapeair.com)

-American Eagle (www.aa.com)

It is likely you will have to collect and re-check your luggage in San Juan.

It is also possible to fly to St. Thomas, in the US Virgin Islands, and take a ferry to Tortola.

Taxis are available at the airport and at hotels. You may wish to contact Noble Travel in Lander for travel details and arrangements (800) 332-4882. **Make your reservations early to get the best price and schedule.**

Entering the BVI:

US citizens **must have a passport** to regain entry into the US after visiting the BVI. US citizens do not need a visa. Residents of other countries may need to obtain an entry visa in advance. For more information, visit the BVI tourist board at www.bvitourism.com.

You must clear customs and immigration upon arrival in the BVI.

Lodging:

Tortola has many options for lodging; some of them are high-end resorts. Here are some of the more economical options:

Rhymer's Beach Hotel (Cane Garden Bay) 284-495-4639

Nanny Cay Resort and Marina (Nanny Cay) 284-494-2512

A & L Inn (Road Town Area) 284-494-6343

Hodges Creek Marina (Hodges Creek) 284-494-5000

Communication and Contact:

Expect to be out of telephone contact for the duration of your expedition. If someone needs to reach you in case of **emergency**, please have them contact NOLS Alumni Relations Department (800.332.4280). Friends and relatives should not expect to hear from you while you are out sailing.

Currency:

The official currency of the British Virgin Islands is the US Dollar.

Fishing:

We will not be fishing. Spear fishing and underwater hunting are illegal in the BVI.