

# Fort Washakie Wilderness Expedition

## Course Description

### National Outdoor Leadership School

August 23 – September 1, 2010

#### Program Schedule

Course orientation at NOLS Rocky Mountain, August 22

Course in the field, August 23 – September 1

Graduation banquet, September 1, 12:30 pm *Family Members Welcome!*

Go to [http://www.nols.edu/nolspro/custom\\_courses/fort\\_washakie.shtml](http://www.nols.edu/nolspro/custom_courses/fort_washakie.shtml) to download the 4 necessary enrollment form: application form, medical form, insurance information and student agreement.

#### Credit

Graduates of the Fort Washakie Wilderness Expedition are eligible for Fort Washakie High School credit. *Some credits will require study and project completion before and after the wilderness expedition.* Please see Fort Washakie High School Principal, Shad Hamilton for details.

#### Course Cost

Students are not charged tuition for this program of Fort Washakie High School. The course is funded by Fort Washakie High School and NOLS' scholarship fund. NOLS Rocky Mountain will cover use of rental equipment and Fort Washakie High School purchases required equipment that can't be rented at NOLS.

#### Course Features

- Hiking route: ~ 30 miles
- Elevations of 8,000' – 13,000'
- World-class Fishing
- Opportunities for Peak Ascents
- Travel near or above tree-line
- On and off-trail Hiking
- Exploration of the Wind River Range
- Average group size: 10 students / 1 faculty member / 1 community member / 3 NOLS Instructors

The Fort Washakie Wilderness Expedition takes place on tribal lands in Wyoming's Wind River Mountains. For more than 40 years, NOLS students have learned outdoor skills, leadership and environmental ethics in this mountain range. Fort Washakie Wilderness Expedition students will develop leadership and teamwork skills through practical leadership experiences as the groups travel through remote wilderness on the tribal lands in the Wind River Mountains.

NOLS teaches a situational leadership theory that demands different decision-making styles depending on group skill, task urgency and outcome predictability. On the Fort Washakie Wilderness Expeditions, teaching young people to effectively negotiate real-world challenges and leadership demands will be grounded in tribal cultural values of deep commitment to the group and respect for all elements of the living environment. The Environmental Studies curriculum will focus on current natural resource management issues in the Wind River Watershed. Students will also have opportunities to learn about their local natural environment through hands-on lessons.



## **FWWE Course Objectives**

Students are exposed to theory and practice of outdoor skills, leadership, teamwork and expedition behavior. At NOLS, expedition behavior involves commitment to the group, a positive attitude and cooperation to achieve goals.

Each course is unique due to variables such as route, group dynamics, fitness levels, and environmental conditions. Working with these variables, it is our intent to see each student accomplish the following outcomes:

### *Leadership and Teamwork--*

- Understand and use situation-appropriate personal leadership styles, leadership skill principles, and leadership roles
- Build competence in wilderness skills such as camping, hiking and navigation
- Increase self awareness through honest reflection and peer feedback
- Work effectively as a member of a team, displaying a positive attitude despite hardship
- Respond to potential issues by using decision-making and planning skills

### *Wilderness Skills--*

- Build the skills necessary to live and travel comfortably in the mountain environment
- Camp, cook, and dress for varied conditions with minimum impact
- Travel competently in mountain terrain using off-trail navigation and hazard evaluation techniques

### *Environmental Science--*

- Demonstrate sound minimum-impact living and travel skills throughout the course
- Develop knowledge of ecological concepts relevant to the area
- Learn about tribal land management agencies and their distinct mandates

### *Cultural Context--*

- Respect and apply known local tribal customs and practices to interact with the environment in an appropriate manner

Bring a tolerance for adversity and uncertainty, respect for other members, and a willingness to work hard. As your group gains leadership skills and experience working together, you can expect your instructors to give you more responsibility for leading yourself and your peers.

You should expect ongoing verbal coaching and input throughout the expedition, with written performance summaries at course end.

## **Contact Info**

Student forms to Shad Hamilton  
Fort Washakie High School  
90 Ethete Road  
Ft. Washakie, WY 82514  
307-332-0142  
SHamilton@fremont21.k12.wy.us

Program questions to Anne Magnan  
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284 Lincoln Street  
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anne\_magnan@nols.edu



## **The FWWE Expedition**

The Wind River Range is the classroom for this wilderness course. It is a rugged, glacier-carved range renowned for its sheer granite walls and famous for its fishing and remote mountains. For 10 days, you will backpack in these mountains surrounded by towering peaks, glistening alpine lakes, and perennial snow. You'll work hard traveling over rocky, steep terrain, crossing rivers, and keeping yourself and others warm and well-fed in a mountain storm. You will also learn how to fly fish, identify plants and wildlife, and climb peaks to take in the spectacular vistas of this mountain wilderness. In addition, this course will include teachers from Fort Washakie High School with community members present to gain an appreciation and knowledge of Native American customs and traditions.

Your course will begin with the basics: cooking, camping, stove use, map reading, and *Leave No Trace* wilderness techniques. Eventually, the curriculum will move on to more advanced instruction on topics that range from first aid to trout fishing, from peak ascents to cultural lessons, and from discussing environmental issues to identifying plants and animals.

You'll be living with two or three other students in a "cook group" during the course. These small groups help disperse our impacts on the land and enable you to master the art of backcountry cooking and living. You'll get lots of coaching from your instructors while you learn these new skills. Before you know it, you'll be savoring homemade pizza and cinnamon rolls— gourmet delicacies that you made from scratch on a single-burner stove.

You will also travel in small groups, usually of four to six. Initially, these groups will include an instructor. However, once students have learned map reading, route finding, and hazard evaluation, they often travel on their own. NOLS courses are designed for the learning to take place through experience. Your instructors are there to train, supervise, and provide feedback and advice, but ultimately, what you learn depends on what you practice.

Expeditions, unlike the school classroom, are influenced by weather, terrain, and the group's health, as well as its skills, experience, and ability. We can't script our courses as precisely as your school, but to give you a sense of the experience, we'll describe what your days might be like.

Wilderness courses often hike three out of every four days. You'll travel in small hiking groups so you have more opportunities to lead, make decisions, and map read as you move through beautiful wilderness. The days begin early when you light your stove, cook and enjoy breakfast, and then organize and pack your backpack. You're usually hiking by mid-morning. Lunch on the trail might be bread you baked the day before, or a trail mix of nuts and dried fruits. You may stop for a short class on human history, or to learn how to cross a river, travel through boulders or snow, or move over a high pass. When you arrive at your new camp location, you'll first spend time choosing a Leave No Trace site, organizing camp, then preparing and enjoying dinner. If the day was long, a short evening meeting may wrap up the day. If the hike was short, there may be a class or discussion.

The difficulty of a hiking day is hard to predict. Long miles on trail may be physically easier than high mountain passes or a day hiking through boulders and fallen timber in a wilderness without trails. Your pack may be lighter than usual as you approach your final day, or you may be carrying extra gear to lighten the load of a course mate who is not feeling well. The wilderness has a knack for finding challenges for all.

You might have a layover day to rest, enjoy a special location, have classes, or climb a peak. On these layover days, after breakfast and organizing camp, there may be a class or an excursion to go climbing or fishing. Lunch may be something cooked—layover days are great times to bake for the next day's travel. The evening plan may hold a class, a discussion, or an organizational meeting.

### **Personal Electronics**

A key element to a NOLS education is time spent in wilderness. NOLS does not permit students to use personal cell or satellite phones or other communication devices including personal tracking devices (e.g. SPOT), while in the field. Additionally, students are not permitted to take personal music players (iPods, MP3 players, CD players, etc). Instructors will be carrying sufficient communication equipment (usually a satellite phone) to handle any emergencies that may arise.

### **Student Independence**

On all NOLS courses, students will be independent (unaccompanied by instructors) at various times. This will include time in and around camp such as while cooking or performing camp chores. Instructors may allow students to travel away from camp. Students may have independent unsupervised time, usually in town, before and after their course.

### **Independent Student Group Travel**

An emphasis of this course is the development of skills that permit you to be self-sufficient in remote backcountry areas. Our teaching progression for accomplishing this is carefully planned and executed. Initially travel groups, usually of four to six students, will include an instructor who will teach travel skills and leadership. Gradually, as you gain proficiency, the instructor will allow you to take on more responsibility and make more of the decisions. When you have demonstrated the necessary competency to the instructors, you may travel in student-led groups without instructors for a day at a time as you hike from camp to camp. We call this “daily independent student travel” and it is an effective educational tool. It allows you to practice travel skills and leadership and gives you responsibility for the outcome while still having indirect supervision by instructors and the benefit of the NOLS support systems.

### **Weather and Other Challenges**

Mountain weather is capricious. On any given day, temperatures may range from below freezing to sweltering. Afternoon thunderstorms are common and can be violent. You may experience snow, hail, and rain, as well as long stretches of sunny, blue skies.

Travel in the mountains can be tough. You may bushwhack through thick forests or scramble around boulders the size of refrigerators. Rivers are icy from snowmelt and can be difficult or impossible to cross. You'll traverse steep slopes of snow, loose rock,

or grass, and grunt up high mountain passes. There will be times when you will wish you were somewhere else, but the hard work is worth it! There's nothing quite like taking your pack off at the top of a pass, feeling the wind dry the sweat off your back, and looking down at miles of new country opening up before you. It's exhilarating!

Camping may involve dealing with swarms of mosquitoes and hanging your food to keep it away from bears or other animals. You'll be miles from the amenities of civilization. Telephones, ambulances, and hospitals may be several days away.

Bear avoidance techniques while camping and traveling will be integrated into this course. Note that precautions against bear encounters may decrease the opportunities for solitude and privacy on this course. This course will protect all food and attractants from bears. Other bear avoidance tactics include meticulously maintaining cleanliness at the cooking sites and making loud calls to warn bears of your presence.

Identifying and managing mountain hazards — falling rock, weather, animals, moving water, and steep terrain will be a constant theme in our instruction. Managing risks and being responsible for yourself and your colleagues will help make your expedition in these wild mountains healthy and fun.

### **First and Last Day**

Early on the first full day, our instructors will check your equipment and issue any items you need for the course. You will prepare rations, then pack up to leave town. Once last minute details are completed (generally after lunch), you will be transported to the roadhead to spend your first night camping.

On the last day, you will be picked up early in the morning and transported via NOLS vehicles back to the NOLS base. Upon arrival, you will clean, repair, and return issued equipment, then take that long-awaited shower! The expedition concludes with a lunch banquet and the awarding of diplomas. Please invite your family to the end-of-course lunch.

### **Telephone**

You will be out of telephone contact for the duration of your field experience.

### **Fishing Licenses**

Fishing for trout is possible on most courses. While fishing is considered to be good in Wyoming, we can never guarantee you'll catch a fish! Your instructors will advise you on the advisability of purchasing a license, according to the season and your course route. If you want to fish, Tribal Fish and Game has waived fishing license fees for students on this course.