

Course Description

NOLS Wildfire Leadership Training Expedition; L-380 McClellan, CA January 29 – February 4, 2012

Features of This Course

- Hiking route: ~35-40 miles
- Curriculum designed to meet L-380 fireline leadership course criteria established by National Wildfire Coordinating Group
- Cross-country hiking over varied mountain terrain
- Wilderness camping in tents
- Individualized coaching on leadership skills development

Pre-Course Work

Read the book *Endurance: Shackleton's Incredible Voyage*

Course Dates and Times

8:00 a.m., Jan 29 – Feb 4, 2012

Course Start and End Location:

Wildland Fire Training and Conference Center (WFTC), McClellan, CA

The Expedition

Purpose

This expedition is designed to provide potential or current fire crew supervisors the tools to build and lead highly functional crews. Trainees will hike cross-country from a start to a finish point while investigating and exploring group dynamics and leadership values and principles. The leadership curriculum taught is based on genuine opportunities that occur in the field. Formal classes on leadership theory and communication will take place, just as they would in a traditional classroom setting. There will be significant technical, navigation, and environmental challenges as participant leaders decide the best approach to meet group goals. Your instructors will play evolving roles as your knowledge, experience, and abilities increase during this self-contained expedition. Each participant group will take on increasing levels of personal and team responsibility for the technical, navigational, and interpersonal aspects of the traveling course. Instructors will provide structured briefing, debriefing, feedback, technical expertise, safety management, evaluation, classes, and structure for participant leadership and followership opportunities.

Leadership Expedition Course Objectives

Participants are exposed to the theory and practice of outdoor leadership, communication, and teamwork through taking turns in designated leadership roles. Individual feedback and coaching from instructors and the group allows personal growth in leadership skills that establish group cohesion. Each participant should leave with the skills to build and manage a team in the field. As part of the curriculum, participants are expected to read *Endurance: Shackleton's Incredible Voyage* prior to the course. A discussion will take place on your course to pull leadership lessons from Shackleton's experience.

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 explore and promote the leadership principles of duty, respect, and integrity. Each student is expected to:

DUTY

- Demonstrate the ability to develop a contingency plan for a group in the outdoors
- Consistently perform appropriate techniques to reduce or avoid hazards
- Demonstrate the first aid skills necessary to support a patient until help arrives
- Demonstrate knowledge of the hazards in a coastal mountain environment, e.g., river crossings, weather, hypothermia, etc.- actively participating in the decision-making process



- Cook nutritious meals using a camp stove or fire
- Demonstrate appropriate campsite selection and shelter set-up
- Travel efficiently in mountainous terrain using map and/or compass skills and utilizing off-trail navigation and route-finding techniques to mitigate hazards

RESPECT

- Develop coaching and teambuilding skills through briefing and debriefing your team
- Demonstrate sound expedition behavior, including commitment to group decisions and a positive attitude
- Be punctual and organized
- Effectively communicate and problem-solve on interpersonal and group levels
- Give and receive feedback, both positive and constructive, in a timely appropriate manner
- Show initiative in leadership/teaching roles with peers- employ leadership styles appropriate to the situation; support others in the leadership role
- Work effectively as a team member and show tolerance for adversity and uncertainty
- Demonstrate respect for the environment by following *Leave No Trace Principles*.

INTEGRITY

- Take responsibility for the health and safety of self and others
- Display sound judgment and an awareness of group and self-limits
- Take responsibility for learning; set and attain personal goals -- lead through role modeling in formal and informal settings

Route

This course will lead you through the mountains of Northern and Central California. On some days, travel will require careful navigation both on- and off-trail. The vagaries of the mountain environment – sun, rain, snow, cold, river crossings, bushwhacking, chaparral -- and team abilities will require us to adapt our travel strategy.

Rations & Menu

Proper nutrition and good cooking are essential to any expedition and at NOLS, everyone participates in cooking. Cooking and baking in the wild is an important outdoor skill emphasized in our curriculum— it's a critical part of being independent and successful on expeditions. NOLS has a reputation for eating well by backcountry standards. We don't eat gourmet style; we use ample amounts of simple foods and prepare them well. Backpacking foods are simple and light, but they do not need to be sparse. The basis of the NOLS ration is complex carbohydrates including common food items such as pasta, rice, beans, flour, and potatoes. These staples are augmented with some fats such as margarine, cheese, and nuts along with simple sugars such as cocoa, powdered fruit drinks, and dried fruit. NOLS uses less than 1% freeze-dried foods. When possible (due to weight or spoilage factors) the basic NOLS rations are supplemented with fresh vegetables and canned or dried meats. Meals are prepared by the participants in "cook groups" of 3-4 people after receiving instruction on stove use, backcountry cooking tips, and hygiene. We use a cookbook called the *NOLS Cookery*, which has been refined by NOLS students and staff for 22 years. There is a lot of latitude in ration planning regarding cost and simplicity. NOLS can easily accommodate participants' wishes along these lines, as long as they fall within our judgment of reasonable nutrition and costs.

Tentative Expedition Agenda

- Day 0** Everyone meets in the evening at the WFIC for informal introductions, L-380 orientation, gear check, and equipment issue.
- Day 1** Course Starts. Groups will finalize equipment issue, pack, review the route, introduce basic leadership, and teamwork concepts. Drive to trailhead in the late morning and camp 1-3 miles in to the wilderness.
- Days 2-6** Hike in two groups, cross-country travel, route exploration, participant leadership opportunities, briefing and debriefing, L-380 classes, etc.
- Day 7** Hike to trailhead by late morning. Drive to the WFIC, shower and complete evaluations. Course ends in the evening with a group dinner.



Typical Backpacking Day (times are approximate)

Sunrise: rise, pack gear, cook and eat breakfast, curriculum, student leaders brief groups for the day

8AM-Noon: hike on- or off-trail, route finding, break for lunch

2PM: arrive in camp, students lead AAR's, set up camps, curriculum discussions/activities

6PM: cook dinner

7:30PM: evening curriculum discussions

9:30: hit the sack

Medical Screening

NOLS will use self-screening or other medical forms to determine the appropriateness of each participant for this expedition. The NOLS Admission Office will do routine follow-ups and may ask you to provide additional information. NOLS reserves the right to medically screen people who we feel are being put at high risk by being in remote areas. We realize that the intent of this program is team building and that a basic goal includes participation by all team members. We realize that the BLM Fire program probably screens more carefully than we do, however we still need everyone who goes into the field to fill out our medical forms.

