

# C O U R S E D E S C R I P T I O N

## Wildfire Leadership Training Expedition

McClellan, CA

Jan 17-Jan 23 – or – Feb 21-Feb 27, 2010

### Features of This Course

- Hiking route of approximately 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

### Course Dates and Times

8:00 AM, Jan 17 – Jan 23, 2010 & 8:00 AM, Feb 21 – Feb 27, 2010

### Course Start and End Location:

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

### The Expedition

**Route:** The route leads us through the mountains of California (potentially the Los Padres National Forest). Some 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.

**Purpose:** This expedition is designed to provide potential or current fire crew supervisors the tools to build and lead highly functional crews. Leadership curriculum is based on genuine leadership opportunities that take place in the field. Formal classes on leadership theory and communication will take place in the field, just as they would in a traditional class setting. Trainees will hike cross-country from a start to finish point while investigating and exploring group dynamics and leadership values and principles. 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 participants' knowledge, experience and abilities increase during this self-contained expedition. The 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.

### Rations & Menu:

Everyone participates in cooking at NOLS. Proper nutrition and good cooking are essential to any expedition. 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 don't need to be Spartan. 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 "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.

### **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 also realize that the BLM Fire program probably screens more carefully than we do, but we still need everyone who goes into the field to fill out our medical forms.

### **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. 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

### **Tentative Expedition Agenda**

- Day 0** Everyone meets in the evening at the WFTC for dinner together and informal introductions.
- Day 1** Course Starts. We will have an orientation to L-380, equipment issue (if needed), gear check, expedition goals, route review, basic leadership and teamwork concepts. Drive to trailhead in the afternoon and camp 1-3 miles in to the wilderness.
- Days 2-6** Hiking in three 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 WFTC, shower, 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: hiking 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