

THE

Leader

Summer 2011 • Vol. 26 • No.3

For Alumni of the National Outdoor Leadership School

A DAMN-FOOL IDEA

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TO PORTLAND, MAINE

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IN TAHRIR SQUARE

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THE LEADER IN WILDERNESS EDUCATION





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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Three thousand field weeks under one tent: 160 faculty from across the globe gathered this spring to be inspired at our Faculty Summit.

Summer at NOLS is filled with the anxious energy of students departing for the wilderness and the exuberant spirit of students and instructors returning from the field. While we have students in the field year-round, the boreal summer is still our peak season and the zenith of energy and activity at NOLS as well as a reminder that the most significant contributor to course outcomes are the NOLS faculty who teach and lead our programs.

In fact, prior to jumping into our busy summer season, over 160 faculty from across the globe met in Lander to both expand and share their wisdom, knowledge, and experience on a range of topics, including leadership, educational effectiveness, evidence-based curriculum, wilderness stewardship, and risk management. To further inspire us, educators, astronauts, NOLS trustees, authors, adventurers, and Forest Service leaders made presentations on timely topics. Before and after the Faculty Summit we held training and knowledge-sharing workshops for staff on rock rescue, river crossing, fly-fishing, and more. Throughout the Summit, I was impressed to observe the powerful commitment our faculty have to continued training and building their knowledge base, and I was reminded again that NOLS faculty are clearly the best in the field of outdoor and wilderness education.

I had another opportunity to connect with our faculty following a recent Trustee meeting in Alaska, when we also celebrated the 40th anniversary of the

first NOLS Alaska course. Following our meeting, the majority of our Trustees carved out time from their busy lives to enjoy an abbreviated sea kayak course in Prince William Sound and sample our curriculum, from sea kayaking skills to fishing and wet weather camping to natural history. The faculty working these courses—Donna Ford, Darren Rorabaugh, Oscar Manguay, and Yuriria Herndandez Alarcon—provided their own story line. Donna and Darren have been with NOLS for over 30 years and are consummate sea kayaking experts. Donna was course leader on the first NOLS course I worked in 1981. Oscar and Yuriria are stars out of our sea kayaking program in Mexico and have also worked around the world for NOLS in various administrative capacities. This lineup was a reminder of the talented, dedicated, diverse, experienced, fun, and committed staff who make up our faculty. While I have been in the Sound many, many times before, I was once again able to take home new knowledge and new skills, a hallmark of a NOLS education.

I think it's time for all of you to reacquire yourselves with the all-star NOLS faculty. Join us for another course or an alumni trip. We look forward to seeing you again at NOLS.

John Gans, NOLS Executive Director

WHO'S THIS?



Recognize this person? The first 10 people to contact us with the correct answer will receive a free NOLS t-shirt. Call NOLS Alumni at (800) 332-4280 or e-mail alumni@nols.edu.

The answer to last issue's "Who's This?" is Paula Hunker, former NOLS field instructor and current Associate State Director of the Nature Conservancy's Wyoming chapter.

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ALUMNI PROFILE

And . . . Action! Zach Gilford Sizes Up the Hollywood Scene

BY AMY RATHKE, NOLS DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

When was the last time you had to treat a femur fracture? For Zach Gilford, it is all in a day's work. As a cast member on ABC's television series *Off the Map*, a medical drama based in remote rural South America, Zach frequently starred in scenes requiring his character to think quickly and make sound medical decisions. But unlike fellow cast members, Zach brought something unique to the table: real wilderness experience from NOLS and hands-on wilderness medical training from WMI.

Growing up outside Chicago, Zach spent his summers at camp in Michigan. "I always wanted to lead trips for my camp," he says, "but they wouldn't hire me until I was 21." So then 20-year-old Zach decided to take a NOLS Pacific Northwest Outdoor Educator course. If he couldn't lead trips right then, at least he could get the training to lead trips later.

"Even though he was the youngest student on the course, he was funny and charismatic," recalls NOLS Pacific Northwest Director Chris Agnew, one of Zach's instructors. "Everyone loved him."

Following that summer, Zach certified as a Wilderness First Responder through WMI. He then worked for seven seasons for Adventures Cross-Country, an outdoor travel program for teens, leading trips from Yosemite to Alaska to Hawaii. "I just love being outside," he says. "Sharing these things with people for the first time, I've never seen anyone whose eyes didn't literally light up."

But it wasn't leading youth expeditions that made Zach famous. It was his role as high school football quarterback Matt Saracen in the critically acclaimed NBC television series *Friday Night Lights* and later as Dr. Tommy Fuller on *Off the Map*. He also recently played Gus Oviston in the film adaptation of *The River Why* and has starred in several other feature-length films.



Rescuers here sized up the scene to make sure it was safe before approaching the patient for care.

Combining his love for the outdoors with an acting career hasn't been simple for Zach. The summer after signing with an agent and a manager, Zach led trips in the Rockies and the Grand Canyon. Explaining that he would only have access to his phone every three weeks didn't go over very well. Zach was met with disbelief and confusion. "What do you mean? You'll check your phone at

night, right?" his representatives asked, perplexed. But these days it's less jarring for his agent, manager and publicist when Zach heads into the backcountry. "I've kind of taken all these people I work with in this weird, sometimes disgusting industry, and made them part of my team," says Zach. "And now they get it. They get me."

Although these days Zach doesn't spend entire summers in the wilderness, he still brings his wilder-

ness training to the set. When working on a film or television show, an urban version of the possibilities bag is never far from his side. "On set everybody makes fun of me—I take my backpack everywhere," he says. He keeps all the predictable items close at hand, including a water bottle, a book, a clean t-shirt,



Zach as quarterback Matt Saracen in *Friday Night Lights*. Next, look for him as Dr. Tommy Fuller on ABC's *Off the Map*.

ness training to the set. When working on a film or television show, an urban version of the possibilities bag is never far from his side. "On set everybody makes fun of me—I take my backpack everywhere," he says. He keeps all the predictable items close at hand, including a water bottle, a book, a clean t-shirt,

Directed to move his "patient" from a stable position underneath a tree before he could prep his splinting materials, Zach said, "Whoa! This guy's leg is broken—that's a serious injury. Why would I pull him out and then get everything ready?"

and his favorite snack. "The last two months I've been addicted to peanuts," he admits. "Don't worry, I pour, I don't stick my hand in the bag!"

Working on the set of a medical drama was especially fulfilling to Zach, who was probably the only actor who showed up with WMI medical scenarios running through his head. "I think our med tech on the show got a little annoyed with me," Zach says sheepishly. "She was great—she was a nurse, she knows medicine and she knew what she was doing. But the thing was, she was used to doing it all in a hospital."

So when it came time to set up one scene, Zach literally did a "scene size-up." Directed to move his "patient" from a stable position underneath a tree before he—the doctor—could prep his splinting materials, Zach said, "Whoa, whoa, whoa! This guy's leg is broken—that's a serious injury. Why would I pull him out and then get everything ready? Especially because I'm probably going to need to make a traction splint." Needless to say, the set medical technician was not amused.



Photo Courtesy of Zach Gilford

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WILD SIDE OF MEDICINE

Beautiful and Dangerous Enjoying and Understanding Rocky Mountain Plants

BY TOD SCHIMELPFENIG,
WMI OF NOLS CURRICULUM DIRECTOR

By the time you read this the cool, wet, and reluctant spring in the Wind River Range will have yielded to a glorious display of wildflowers. I'll be walking in fields of yellow balsamroot, pink bitterroot, purple geraniums, red paintbrush, and blue lupine. And I'll be asking myself many questions along the way. How do they fit in this ecosystem? What can they tell me about the soil, climate, and health of their habitat? Which plants are rare and which might be medicinal or nutritious?

Hidden in the colorful display are plants that protect themselves with thorns, irritating hairs and saps, or chemicals that render them unpalatable and toxic. I'll keep my eyes open for those. In the Rockies I can expect to encounter poison ivy, with its nasty irritating urushoil; the aptly named prickly-pear cactus, defending itself with thorns; larkspur, gorgeous but containing a glycoside that can affect the heart; death camas, which can affect the nervous system; monkshood, with potent neurotoxin aconitine that absorbs through the skin; and water



Rich Blaine

Heart Leaf Arnica (*Arnica cordifolia*), common in Wyoming, can trigger dermatitis and inflammation of the mucus membranes—not the best choice for your natural TP!

hemlock, which is so potent one small bite can kill a child.

To avoid an accidental poisoning, use a plant guidebook, learn to use a plant key, and don't eat a plant you can't identify. Keep your eyes on your toddlers, especially if they like to sample everything in their environment. If you brush against poison ivy, oak or sumac you have a short window to take a soap and water bath to remove the urushoil. If you react you can try to find relief in the various recommended creams and lotions, but expect misery, not magic. If you do eat something toxic, take comfort in knowing ingestions are usually small and not harmful. Immediately after someone eats something poisonous, you can induce vomiting unless the patient exhibits signs of illness or altered mental status. If you can't contact Poison Control (1-800-222-1222), evacuate the patient from the backcountry.

Knowing more about the flora around you will help you enjoy the fleeting splash of color on the hill-sides and meadows that we call spring in the Rockies.

Real Life Drama Hot Shots with Heat Strokes

Last summer I was one of two NOLS-educated WEMTs on a U.S. Forest Service Hotshot Crew in Prineville, Oregon. As crew EMT for two seasons, I easily treated the various ailments and injuries that arose from 20 people fighting fires in the wilderness. There are too many incidents to describe, but there was one moment where I recognized how effectively WMI had taught me. My crew was ordered to Northern California. On our first day, we had a long, steep hike in, and as we started working, the temperature kept rising and the humidity kept dropping. Our task of clearing a 10-foot wide swath in 12-foot tall Manzanita began to take its toll on my crew. My first patient collapsed with heat exhaustion halfway up the ridge. By the time I treated him and moved him to a lower, shady spot, I received a call that another member of my crew had collapsed on top of the ridge. Just as I relocated my second patient to the shade and made sure he was stable, another call came in. All in all, eight members of my crew went down with heat exhaustion. I surprised myself by how smoothly and calmly I recognized and addressed the medical and psychological issues. (It is not easy to convince a hotshot to sit and rest because another crew member will have to do twice as much work). NOLS training is truly amazing—my skills were dead-on, even when I was past the point of physical exhaustion! Thanks to your training, I've decided to become a doctor and am enrolled to start in the fall at Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences in Yakima, Washington.

—MARYANNE PICKETT, WEMT 12/31/07



OFTEN IMITATED, NEVER DUPLICATED

If you spend any time in remote locations, you need wilderness medicine training. For 20 years, the Wilderness Medicine Institute of NOLS (WMI) has defined the standards in wilderness medicine training. With a wide range of course and certification opportunities, our graduates travel into the backcountry prepared to act with confidence, make complex decisions, and manage emergencies. *To find a course near you, visit www.nols.edu/wmi or call (866) 831-9001.*

MEDICINE QUIZ

A Wilderness First Responder can attempt to reduce a shoulder dislocation:

- a) in a wilderness context.
- b) in an urban context.
- c) only if the patient has dislocated his shoulder before.
- d) only if there is altered circulation, sensation, and motion from the dislocation.

(Answer on page 13)

PREPARE YOUR RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

BE READY FOR ROUGH WATERS



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Our Wilderness Medicine Expeditions are truly unique and showcase the best of what NOLS has to offer.

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ISSUE ROOM

Farming the Sea

Salmon Aquaculture on the Rise in Chile

BY RACHEL JAMES, NOLS PATAGONIA PROGRAM SUPERVISOR, AND AARON BANNON, NOLS ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AND SUSTAINABILITY DIRECTOR

Sea kayaking beneath snowcapped peaks through the fjords of southern Chile has long been one of the richest NOLS experiences available. Coastal temperate rainforests, island archipelagos, tidewater glaciers, and icebergs provide breathtaking views as students encounter humpback whales, sea lions, orcas, seals, dolphins, and penguins. But, these coastal waters are also home to a more recent arrival: salmon farms. And, while students can still expect a stunning sea kayak expedition, NOLS instructors today are making a greater effort to avoid too much overlap with the burgeoning salmon farming industry.

Although salmon farms are still few and far between along the southernmost Chilean coastline, NOLS student sightings of open net pens are on the rise. Andy Dennis, a NOLS sea kayaking instructor, has noticed farming activity in areas that were once pristine. “Beaches we stayed at ten years ago are basically salmon farms now,” he says.

Some see salmon farming as offering hope to the planet. As the world’s population increases, salmon farming may provide increased food security. In fact, economists tout it as one of the top sustainable solutions to promote good health and prevent hunger. Others have voiced their concerns with regard to the integrity of marine ecosystems, human health impacts, and coastal communities’ economies.

Environmental groups accuse the salmon farming industry as being plagued with pollutants that



A fish farm in Chiloe, Chile.

threaten the ecological integrity of the Patagonian marine environment. They identify the source of the salmon feed, the conditions in which the salmon are raised, and the waste products from salmon farms as ecologically problematic. They also claim that the industry is unsustainable, citing Infectious Salmon Anemia (ISA), which has caused mass mortalities in Chilean farmed salmon. The cocktail of environmentally problematic pesticides, disinfectants, and antibiotics used by the industry to combat ISA does not appear to have contained it and, in fact, has created ISA-resistant strains.

Salmon farming has also had an impact on traditional fishing activities, industrializing a once community-oriented profession. In the Aysen region of Chile, where NOLS operates, communities have begun to push back. Local artisan fishermen in Puerto Aysen, backed by the National Confederation



NOLS Patagonia courses (paddling here in Canal Martinez) have started seeing the effects of salmon farming in Chile.

of Chilean Artisan Fishermen, fifteen local fishermen groups, and other international organizations, joined forces in 2008 to form the Association of Aysen Artisan Fisher Organizations (AGO), which requested that the president of Chile place a moratorium on salmon farming in the region. AGO of Aysen has since vigorously resisted the expansion of salmon farming into Patagonian waters by blocking the main commerce route to the region’s capital, Coyhaique, and protesting in the streets of Puerto Aysen.

Local fishermen and conservation organizations are not the only entities paying attention to the growth of the salmon farming industry. Salmon purchasers and regulators are concerned about healthy salmon supplies as well. In early 2009, Wal-Mart opted to cease purchasing and distributing Chilean farmed salmon in the U.S. due to consumer safety concerns. Likewise, U.S. Government regulators such as the Food and Drug Administration are working to create a comprehensive approach toward testing for toxins in farmed salmon from Chile.

In the face of these challenges, solutions are being offered and efforts to raise awareness are under way. Mercado de Pescadores de Puerto Aysen, a collective that promotes local commercial fishermen who rely on wild fish stocks, supplies businesses with wild fish and educates local communities on fish farming issues. Oceana, an international conservation organization, has advocated for zoning valuable waterways with a conservation status. Other groups have proposed structuring aquaculture permits by neighborhoods so that companies would be required to establish rest periods in a neighborhood between production cycles to allow the ecosystem to recover.

How a balance will be struck between these various competing interests remains to be seen. “I don’t think it’s going to get better,” concludes Andy



iStockphoto

Dennis. “There’s so much open ocean, and it’s a huge market.” While NOLS courses are not threatened in the near term, the impacts can’t be ignored. As the industry expands NOLS will continue to be vigilant by monitoring issues related to salmon farming in the region and by gathering and disseminating information about its impacts.

SUSTAINABILITY UPDATE

NOLS HQ ENERGY STAR Certified

NOLS’ International Headquarters in Lander, Wyoming, was recently awarded the Environmental Protection Agency’s ENERGY STAR certification for 2011. One of only three organizations in Wyoming to be awarded the certification, NOLS is proud to receive this recognition. NOLS’ Headquarters building is the result of a collaborative process between the architects, the community, and NOLS employees. To the extent possible, NOLS utilized local contractors and materials for the project. Ninety percent of materials were sourced within 500 miles of Lander, Wyoming. The building is also highly energy efficient. Many thanks to former NOLS Facilities Manager Latane Frank, who made this certification possible! For more information, visit <http://tinyurl.com/3vfb594>.

NOLS GRADUATES FROM SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS SCHOOL

Due to the efforts of NOLS Teton Valley Operations Manager Dan Verbeten, Dan—and therefore NOLS—is now a graduate of Yellowstone Business Partnership’s sustainable business leadership program, UnCommon Sense. This program equips businesses to make desired changes in their operations and empowers them to become sustainability leaders in their communities and industry sectors. For more information, visit the NOLS Environmental Sustainability & Stewardship blog at http://nols.blogs.com/nols_news/environmental_initiatives.

WILDERNESS QUIZ

What wildland designation does “NLCS” stand for? (Hint: This is an open book quiz if you still have the spring issue of *The Leader*.)

(Answer on page 13)

NOLS THEN AND NOW

BY GARY AUXIER, MD • 1970 WRW, 2010 WME

In 1969, I watched *30 Days to Survival* on The Alcoa Hour, and the next summer I found myself, at age 17, in Lander for a Wind River Wilderness course. This last fall—after 40 years of longing to go back to NOLS—I found myself on another trip, this time a Wilderness Medicine Expedition in my home state of Arizona. In case you're not good at math, I was 57 this time—but I had just as much fun as when I was 17.

NOLS 40 Years Ago

Some memories haven't faded over time: outfitting in the Lumber Yard (present-day NOLS Rocky Mountain), wool sweaters with mismatched extensions sewn on to make them longer, bouncing around in the back of the cattle truck on the way to the trailhead, and the basics of Leave No Trace. I had a Camp Trails frame with the three bags strapped on, a heavy 80-pound backpack (but fortunately it had one of those "new-fangled" belly bands). Our patrol carried the double-bladed ax. I had the goldline rope, piton hammer, and some soft iron pitons. I also remember our meals. We used cook fires and buried leftovers in a sump hole. For our first outdoor meal, Paul Petzoldt wanted us to kill and dress an animal, so we brought a sheep along. However, we didn't have a permit to shoot it on the Indian Reservation, so we had to use the piton hammer. Not pretty.

NOLS Now

Things were slightly different this time around: ultra-light packs (yahoo!), synthetic clothes instead of wool (still insulates when wet and dries much quicker); transporting in vans (the truck only car-

ried the packs this time). There was also much more of an emphasis on Leave No Trace. And while I did (sort of) get used to the no toilet paper thing, I still haven't figured out how to break that news to my wife and kids.

NOLS Then and Now

While some of the particulars were a bit different, the most important elements were the same. Our instructors, for example, still seemed to know everything. I can't remember my instructor's name in 1970 (Pat, I think), but Iris Saxer and Marcio Paes Barreto were just as competent and confidence-inspiring. The views of spectacular wilderness had not changed, nor did the poring over topographical maps to find our way through it. Both then and



now we baked exotic meals and ate the iconic “potato pearls.” And most important: both courses treated me to learning in a fun, relaxing environment.

Paul created something spectacular in NOLS. He was an imposing character—the first person I ever knew with a dramatic presence (which now I think is even more impressive considering he wore that silly beret). When he spoke, everyone listened. I remember his bitterness about the Englishman who wouldn’t allow him to use a piton, thus spoiling his first ascent of K2. Some of my memories have blended into the legends about him—like when he found our messy kitchen we hadn’t cleaned up yet since we were late for the morning meeting. (Did he really kick dirt into our pots? I can’t remember. Either way, I learned to not do that again!) I also learned not to let him drive a car—he was one of those drivers that paid more attention to the talking than the driving.

I’m grateful to NOLS for both trips. NOLS gave me years of backpacking and climbing as well as the competence to teach countless Boy

Scouts, church youth groups, and my own family the joys of the wilderness. Some things may change over the years, but the feeling of renewal and joy I get from the outdoors has been the same, at age 17 or 57. I can’t wait for my next trip; hopefully, I won’t wait another 40 years.

Wind River Wilderness

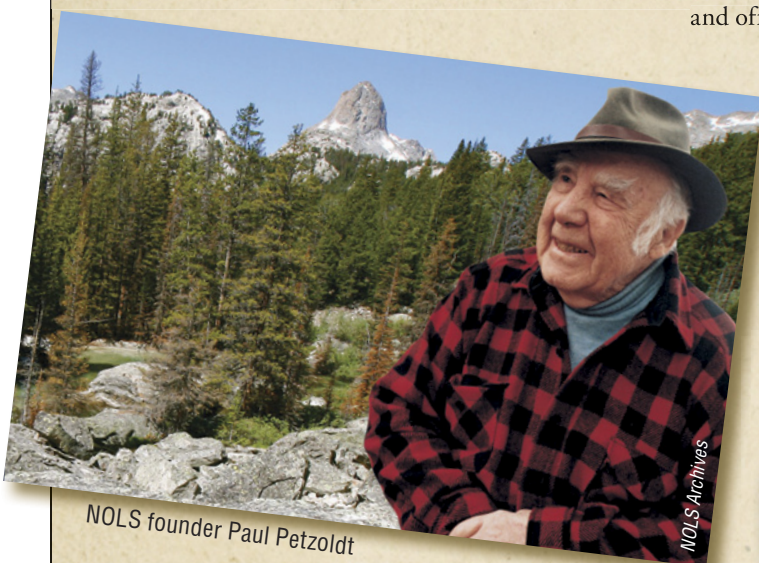
This is the original NOLS course and the most popular expedition we offer. For 30 days, you’ll explore the Wind River Mountains, a wilderness range renowned for its pristine lakes and rugged mountain beauty.

After carrying a pack efficiently loaded with everything you need to the top of your first high mountain pass, you’ll descend into a glacial valley and help lead your hiking group to camp. You and your peers will take turns baking pizzas over a camp stove and catching cutthroat trout for dinner. At night, a star-filled sky will shroud your tent as you rest for the next stimulating day of exploration and learning.

In addition to hiking as many as 120 miles on and off trail, you’ll fly-fish, learn how to use a GPS, summit towering granite mountains, and may have an opportunity to rock climb. The leadership skills you master here will serve you well in the wilderness and beyond.

Wilderness Medicine Expedition

Designed for medical professionals, Wilderness Medicine Expeditions offer a truly unique opportunity to gain continuing education (CEU or CME) in a stunning wilderness environment while backpacking, sailing, rafting, or sea kayaking. Your course begins with the Wilderness Medicine Institute’s signature Wilderness Medicine for the Professional Practitioner curriculum. After a foundational day of wilderness medicine skills and scenarios you will pack your food rations and equipment and head to the jumping off point for your expedition, an opportunity to learn and practice the NOLS outdoor skills curriculum while moving your team through the wilderness. Your days will be full with travel and wilderness medicine—impromptu scenarios, classes and evacuation planning. Evenings are dedicated to exploring the NOLS leadership curriculum and its application to medical practice. After nearly a week of intensive wilderness travel you will celebrate the end of your expedition confident in your ability to respond to an emergency and manage a team in a remote or austere environment. See page 4 for upcoming dates!



NOLS founder Paul Petzoldt



Pascal Beauvais



David Anderson



Melissa Gray



Brad Christensen



Fredrik Norrsell

Q & A

Brad Christensen

You have been with the school for 25 years. What about NOLS has kept you coming back all this time?

I was fortunate enough to have a long career in the field and see students change and grow on a daily basis. Even though I have transitioned into an administrative role at a branch level, I am still able to see the positive impact we have on students. It's really wonderful to look out my window and watch students come back from their course. Just looking at them I can tell they are different people than when they went out. They stand a little differently.

You took a 1982 Fall Semester in the Rockies course. How did those three months in the back-country set you up for what you would do years later with NOLS?

I had grown up camping (which really meant I slept in our pop-up camper on the weekends) but then I came to the Wind River Mountains and remember thinking how astoundingly beautiful they were. I was at Deep Lake, which is not quite at the Cirque of the Towers, but I could still see them and Pingora Peak and I thought to myself, "This is the most beautiful place I have ever been." That first course also made me believe there was an educational institution where instructors were legitimately happy and loved their jobs. That course also changed my perspective on the world, allowing me to positively question my own values and belief system and realize many things: like the fact that learning can be fun, that not all change is painful, and that my own attitude can affect the changes that need to be made in my own life.

You have been a student, an instructor, a program supervisor, and assistant director of NOLS Rocky Mountain. How have those various roles benefited you over the last four years as the director of NOLS Rocky Mountain?

It was quite interesting to transition from a field instructor to program supervisor because I started to see more clearly the variety of ways in which you can successfully run courses. After a few years of that and a brief stint in law school, I came back as NOLS Rocky Mountain Assistant Director under Dave Glenn. Dave taught me to not fear the future, and that you should always encourage your staff to think about what their future holds and what is best for them.

From Field Instructing to Fatherhood

Gary Cukjati on Spending a Quarter Century with NOLS

BY JARED STEINMAN, NOLS ALUMNI RELATIONS INTERN

Can you tell me a bit about your work with NOLS in East Africa?

I was a field instructor for our East Africa program in 1993 and 1994. At that point, I hadn't traveled much internationally. I wanted to see the world and Africa seemed like a great opportunity to do that. They were probably the hardest thirteen months of my life. When you are put into a situation that is unfamiliar and you are expected to perform as an instructor, you can either shut down or open up to the whole process. This caused me to question my own value systems all over again. After being there for a while, my ideas of what were right and wrong changed. What was black and white before all of a sudden became very gray. That profound change allowed me to become much more accepting of other people and other cultures. I started to take more personal responsibility for my own actions and less responsibility for other people's actions, which made me a better educator.

How has your time in Africa furthered your appreciation of wild places?

It really gave me a greater appreciation of the ecosystem of the continental United States. The big game migrations through the Serengeti ecosystem were pretty incredible, but once I looked at it on a map and realized how much land they were covering, I appreciated the even bigger migrations in the U.S. There used to be a three-thousand-mile bison migration with 60 million animals going through the heart of our country. Parts of this route are amongst the greatest wild places left on earth.

And many of these amazing places are used as our wilderness classrooms.

You have predominantly worked NOLS semester courses. What is appealing about working with semester students?

With semester courses, you have more time for reflection. By changing sections, you give the students the ability to take what they learned in the last section and make changes so they get a fresh start each time. This way, they continue to take steps forward throughout the semester. I also like that length of a semester. The longer the course, the more impact it has on a student's life.

How has having a family affected your ability to work field courses?

Since starting a family, I've lost my desire to work month-long courses, at least for now. In the same way that I like watching the growth that happens with students, I really like watching the growth that happens with my daughter. In a certain sense, I apply the principles of instructing to parenting. I want to give her the opportunity for growth, I want to give her the opportunity to make mistakes within reason so she can learn from them, and I want to give her an environment she feels happy in and that's a positive place for her. The commitment that my wife and I have to our daughter really reminds me of the commitment that NOLS instructors have to their students. To run a good course, you have to be fully committed to the process, and the same goes for parenting.

BE A PART OF NOLS HISTORY!

That's right! We've started to pen a NOLS history book, to be published in 2014 in honor of our approaching 50th anniversary. Our author, Timothy Rawson, started as a NOLS instructor in the 1970s and is currently a history professor at Anchorage's Alaska Pacific University. He is diving into past issues of *The Leader*, donor and staff newsletters, and other archives to trace NOLS' past. This is a heads up to all our grads—don't be surprised if Tim tracks you down for an interview, oral history, or personal NOLS story.

And, of course, we're always interested in the opinions of our alumni. To provide your input on this project, take our NOLS History survey: www.surveymonkey.com/s/NOLS_history.

MANY THANKS IN ADVANCE!



ALUMNI IN ACTION



Flying For Humanity

Grad Dustin Smith Pilots for Wings of Hope in Congo

BY LARKIN FLORA, NOLS ALUMNI INTERN

The summer after graduating from college, pilot and 2001 Spring Semester in Mexico grad Dustin Smith was traveling through Belize when he noticed an airplane emblazoned with a logo for Wings of Hope at the airport. His interest was piqued, and he did a little research on the organization.

Established in 1962 and nominated for the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize, Wings of Hope is a nonprofit humanitarian relief organization that supports impoverished communities around the world so they can become self-sufficient, providing air transportation to health care facilities and promoting peace in remote communities.

Determined to join Wings of Hope, Dustin asked them for work, but was told he didn't have enough experience to be useful to them . . . yet. Dustin was disappointed. He had gotten his pilots license at 17 and now had a degree in aeronautical science to boot! He persevered, and after five years of sending in his flight logs, he finally got the call: Wings of Hope needed a pilot to start their operation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. After a six-week crash course in French, Dustin found himself in Tshumbe, in central Congo.

A few days before Dustin left Congo, he met the man and shook his hand. "He would have been dead if we hadn't been there, but he's alive and kicking," Dustin says.

"I received the news with mixed emotions," confesses Teresa, Dustin's mom. "I was very excited for him because he had been waiting a very long time for this opportunity. But, I was afraid for him. Very little in Congo is 'safe' by western standards."

But spending a gap semester in Mexico between high school and college prepared Justin for unfamiliarity. "Baja was a pretty great experience," Dustin recalls. "Learning to sail was a riot!" But besides having fun, Dustin also recalls learning how to become comfortable in a different culture and non-English-speaking country, lessons that served him well in Congo. "It was a pretty big culture shock," Dustin recalls of his first few months in Congo, "I had been through developing countries before, but in Congo there was no infrastructure, no anything, really. Just a whole lot of people and not a whole lot of opportunity."

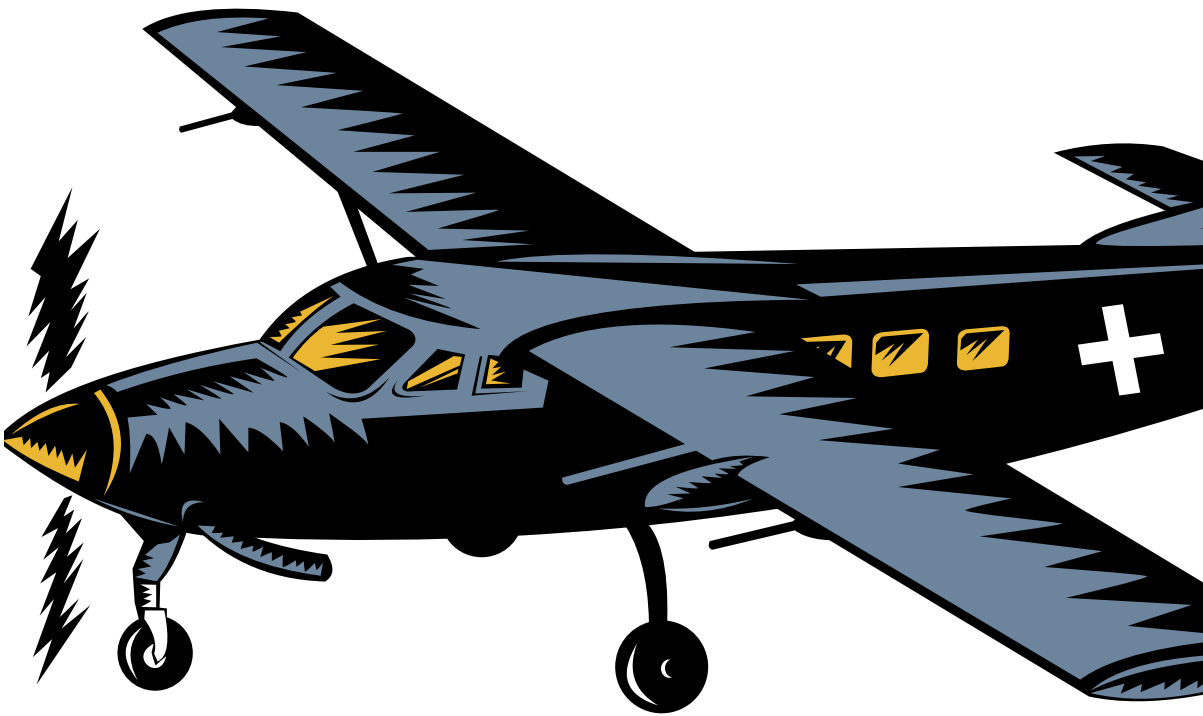
In the beginning Dustin was the only person flying for Wings of Hope. But in his two years there he set up a base, built a house, started on a hangar,

flew many rescue missions, and started a nutrition center in a remote village. "I was the only American around and didn't really speak French at all, so it took some getting used to. But after six to eight months I fell in love with the country." Not only that, but he also fell in love with a midwife from Austria who was working in Congo at the same time.

Dustin's most memorable flight occurred about a month before he left Congo with his wife. "This guy showed up on a motorcycle with two fractured femurs, no left arm, and abrasions all over his abdomen," Dustin says, "There were three people on the back of this bike: his wife was holding him on the motorcycle with a chauffeur in front of them." The man had been attacked by a crocodile, and he actually had to take a canoe downriver to a larger



Wings of Hope transports the sick and injured to hospitals in rural Congo, where medical facilities are few and far between.



town with an airport, where Dustin could pick him up and take him to a hospital. The doctors saved his life, but they had to amputate most of his arm due to gangrene. A few days before Dustin left Congo, he met the man and shook his hand. "He would have been dead if we hadn't been there, but he's alive and kicking," Dustin says.

Today, Dustin is busy with his family, which now includes a baby girl named Tyler Katarine, born in March. But he still plans on returning to Congo every year to train his replacements and serve as an interim pilot. "You don't do something like that and then totally cut yourself off from it," Dustin says. "I plan on flying for money again, but I'd like to be able to have some time off so that I can go back into the third world: if not Congo, then maybe somewhere else." And then wistfully, Dustin adds, "They've got an operation in Peru and one that needs opening in Ethiopia. So, we'll see where life takes us."

SEMESTER COURSES

What are you doing next semester?

Dustin Smith spent a semester in Baja with NOLS. We invented this course type in 1974 and, today, offer semester-long courses worldwide, including international locations such as East Africa, Baja, the Amazon, New Zealand, India, and Patagonia. The cool thing about a semester course is that you get to practice a variety of outdoor skills and get really good at it. Plus, more than 400 colleges and universities nationwide award college credit for a NOLS semester. So, what'll it be for you next semester: sitting in a lecture hall or kayaking in New Zealand?

A DAMN-FOOL

PORTLAND, OREGON, TO

BY ALEXANDER (ZAND) BAILEY MARTIN,
NOLS FIELD INSTRUCTOR SINCE 2008

It forms first in crystalline lines that, if given a chance, stretch out into perfect wings, singular as if angel-shed. These coalesce and disappear into the first sheet, millimeters thick and growing. By the second day, the ice can be plywood thick, over half an inch and growing. In narrow places the ice thickens and bonds to the moss-flecked shore, stretching its manacles into the land.

I feel the portents as much as I see them, hints of the encroaching polar cold that will in days bring temperatures capable of gelling diesel and flash-freezing just-boiled tea. I have to get out, and quickly.

That night the last warmth of the lake is sucked into space. Shackled by ice as far as the eye can see in the wilderness along the Canadian border, and with 2,900 miles and 106 days behind me, I am just a little over half way home.

THE AMERICA'S RIVERS EXPEDITION

Between April 2009 and November 2010 I paddled alone 4,300 miles from Portland, Oregon, to Portland, Maine. I had canned answers for the barrage of questions hurled at me along the way: "Where are you from?" "What are you doing?" The inevitable "Why?" or the variant posed by a bartender in Montana: "What kind of a damn-fool idea is that?" All were easy, save the last, which was a question I often asked myself. Why was I paddling across North America alone?

I told people—including myself—that I wanted to raise awareness of riverine environmental issues, see my country and meet its people, explore our environmental history, and connect the waterways of the United States. All worthy goals, but in my heart they still ring hollow.

Let's go back to when the idea was planted in my mind, when I worked at NOLS Rocky Mountain's Vernal, Utah, river base. With the season declining, I cast about for a project. Walking down the hall, I often stopped mid-stride,

waylaid from my objective by a large poster detailing the Wild and Scenic Rivers of the Lower 48. Thin blue lines traced a vein-work across the topography, Pacific arms diminishing into the Rockies and reaching for the outstretched waterways of the Arctic and Atlantic. In places, their outmost fingertips nearly touched. The distances could be bridged, and they could be bridged by water. I had my mission.

Within days a cancerous growth of maps and books crept across the briefing room table; pads molding with jotted notes and dog-eared river guides cracked open to too-brief entries on seldom paddled rivers. In the wilderness with NOLS, the setting and achieving of goals lie at the heart of the leadership curriculum. Using my NOLS lessons, I split what appeared to be an over-ambitious dream into three achievable goals: Pacific Ocean to Jackson, Wyoming; Jackson to Lake Superior; and Superior to the Atlantic.

This would not be the kind of expedition that would attract fellow members. There would be no summits and little glory. I would be paddling alone or not at all. I planned as much as possible, but in the end committed myself through an act of faith, buying a plane ticket just to convince myself I could not back out.

PORTLAND TO JACKSON

From my send-off in Portland, Oregon, I canoed the Columbia River into Washington, then turned east into Idaho along the Snake River, following the first returning salmon of the year, the remnants

of what was once the largest anadromous fish migration on earth. Along the way, I interviewed hydro-engineers and fishermen, toured fish hatcheries, and saw barges choked with fry churning past me to the sea.

Then I reached the route's first crux: Idaho's Hell's Canyon, where I labored upstream, portaging around increasingly bigger rapids until I decided to take my first break. I hitched a ride in a horse trailer to the top of the canyon, and spent thirty bucks on Taj (as in "poor-taj"), a thrift store bicycle that would help with the long portages. The rest of May, I biked through potato fields and endless scrubland toward the Rocky Mountains and the Continental Divide, where I arrived exhausted, alone, and out of money. It was time to go back to work. I put my canoe, which I had named Casco, in storage in Jackson Hole and flew north to work for NOLS Yukon.

JACKSON TO SUPERIOR

Fall began and I returned to Jackson to move through Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks, paddling the large lakes and cresting the Continental Divide by bike. Just as I put in on the Yellowstone River, the longest undammed river in the Lower 48, the first snow fell. Phrases like "coldest autumn on record" and "a truly bitter October" were bandied about by meteorologists and locals I met in the small central Montana towns punctuating long stretches of high prairie. Wrapped in thrift store blankets and hunkered down on



Self-portrait part way through my journey eastward.

Taj (the bike) and Casco (the canoe), my closest companions for 4,300 miles.

FOOL IDEA

PORTLAND, MAINE



A peaceful day on the water.

Photos courtesy of Zand Martin

the same bends and shoals where Lewis and Clark camped, I ate Snickers bars with cream cheese and read Ivan Doig by headlamp. Every few miles, I left Casco to run around and warm up before returning for butter and crackers and the chore of hacking away at the ice building up on my paddle and hull.

Emerging from woods onto the rain-lashed shores of Superior just before Thanksgiving, I set Casco down. I had not seen a person in 16 days, and my mind was numb with constant physical exertion. I was done with leg two.

THE FINAL LEG

A Spring Semester in the Rockies and a Yukon Backpack and Wilderness Canoe course bookended a few weeks on Lake Superior. In late summer, I launched again in Ontario and traveled the Voyageur Route from Superior to Huron and into Georgian Bay. These were the biggest lakes I had ever paddled, startlingly clear water and 180-degrees of nothing but oceanic horizon.

As I approached waters that were increasingly familiar to me, I realized this expedition was my heart's way of leading me home, and that I had in fact plotted an eastbound course to the waters I knew. In Maine's Sebago Lake, I was only four miles from where I first sat in a canoe, my tiny three-year-old arms barely reaching the yoke as I perched beneath it.

After portaging over 60 dams on my expedition, I finally reached a spot where a dam had actually been removed. Built in 1735, the Smelt Hill Dam along the Presumpscot River was the

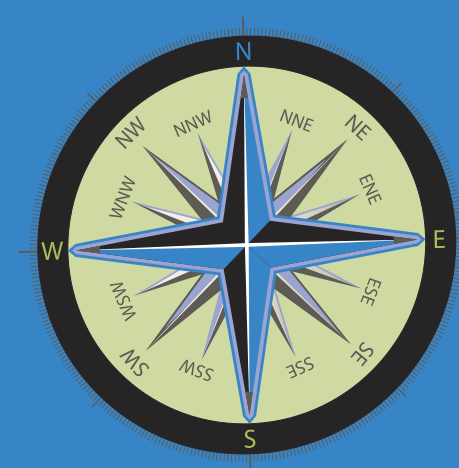
oldest dam in Maine and one of the oldest in the country before local advocacy and simple economics dictated its removal. When I arrived, I was greeted by the roar of whitewater and the beauty of an aerated, natural cascade slowly regaining its health.

As I entered Casco Bay—my partner's namesake and my ultimate destination—I hovered off Martin's Point, contemplating this finale. The six-month long suffer-fest of ice, wind, and deep loneliness was over. Family would greet me at Portland's East End, probably with reporters and photographers, for my scheduled 2:00 p.m. arrival. With one last deep breath of the salty air I pushed forward to the dock a half an hour early to spend a few moments in peace and solitude before balloons, family, camera flashes, and a bottle of Allagash beer descended on me. I was home.

REFLECTIONS

Solo travel is very different than group travel. The highs are higher and the lows are unfathomably lower. There is nobody to talk to, no co-instructor to bounce ideas off of, no friend to console me or make a cup of tea in a storm, not a single person to take your burden at day's end. You are truly alone; free, but with massive, yawning risks at every turn and a council of one to manage them.

So still, the question arises: What kind of a damn-fool idea was that? I have no real answer. Because it is there? Because I had to? Maybe because the mirror of wild country shows us who we are.



KEY:

BLUE: Distances paddled

BLACK: Distances biked

THE EXPEDITION BY THE NUMBERS:

Quantity of food consumed:
3.2 pounds per day

Daily intake: 5,400 calories

Quantity of Sriracha (hot sauce) consumed: 190 oz.

Average temps for first four months:
46° F (7.7° C)

Distanced traveled by paddle or portage: 4,300 miles

Distance upstream: 1,500 miles

Distance downstream: 1,000 miles

Distance portaged: 900 miles

Books read: 38

Average time on the water per day:
11.3 hours

Paddles stolen by wind-blown cow corpses: 1

Travel time: 162 days

Number of layover days: 1

Mountain ranges paddled over or through: 8

Elevation gained: 11,000 feet

Dams: 61

Number of other paddlers/hikers/bicyclists encountered: 2

Log books filled: 3

FIELD NOTES

Low Likelihood, Low Consequence

Taking NOLS Risk Management Lessons to Tahrir Square

BY SALLIE PISCH, SEMESTER IN THE AMAZON 09/07/09

It was shortly before 9:00 p.m. on January 26, 2011. Normally full of vendors, traffic, and pedestrians, downtown Cairo was eerily quiet. On one side of me was a group of Egyptian demonstrators. On the other, a wall of Egypt's notoriously violent riot police. I stood in the middle, debating my next move.

For the past hour I had moved through the streets with around 1,000 Egyptians as they chanted for freedom, protested against the government, avoided police blockades, and tried to make their way to the now-iconic Tahrir ("Liberation") Square. I had purposely decided to stay at the front of the group to avoid being caught in the middle of the crowd during the inevitable clash with State Security.

As we turned a corner, a line of black-clad riot police blocked the path to Tahrir Square. They were armed with shields, batons, guns, and—we found out later—tasers, and were backed by three armored vehicles and dozens of plainclothes security. That's when the NOLS risk management chart appeared in my head, my mind flashing back to my NOLS instructor's lesson: weigh the severity of a risk with the likelihood it will happen.

As a lone foreign woman I knew the police would let me through their lines without a problem and I would be safe on the other side. No risk. But as a journalist I was loath to walk away from an opportunity to film the clashes I knew were about to occur. If I could film safely, I would create one more piece of evidence of the violations committed against peaceful demonstrators by State Security forces. I also had an escape route: a group of men standing inside the door of a bank just behind me had already signaled that they would let me in.

What was the worst that could happen?

I could get shot with a rubber bullet—but that was extremely unlikely, and the chances these police had live ammunition were even more slim. Being detained or arrested was more likely, but also less serious: it would involve me sitting in the middle of a group of officers or in a police van for a few hours and perhaps having my camera confiscated, but they wouldn't touch me, an American woman. But the most likely consequence was inhaling tear gas, which I had already encountered the day before in Tahrir Square, or being caught by a wayward stone.

I decided it was worth the risk. I covered my nose with my scarf, turned my camera to "video" and waited. Soon the demonstrators began moving forward slowly. Their arms were raised and they chanted, *Selmeyya! Selmeyya!* Peaceful, peaceful.

Two plainclothes officers moved forward to meet them. Moments later, one of the armored trucks shot a volley of tear gas and suddenly the police rushed forward, some with batons raised and others brandishing tasers. Clouds of tear gas filled the air, and within seconds plainclothes police were dragging demonstrators down the street. I quickly ducked into the bank, watching through the glass door as the armored trucks moved past us, continuing to shoot tear gas. Twenty minutes later, I safely made my way home through the nearly empty streets.

I would never have predicted that something I learned during my semester in the Amazon with NOLS—other than withstanding the heat, perhaps—would have been applicable to life as a journalist in Cairo. Yet in that split second when I had to decide whether to stay or go, running through the



Tear gas erupts on a bridge en route to Tahrir Square.

NOLS risk management chart in my head made me comfortable with my decision to stay.

Covering demonstrations or other potentially dangerous situations as a journalist requires the ability to assess the risks and make split-second decisions. I knew the police were more concerned with the demonstrators than with me. I knew a safe location two blocks away if I needed to flee. And I trusted myself to know when it was no longer safe to stay.

I found out later that I wasn't the only NOLS grad in Tahrir Square during the Egyptian Revolution: CNN's Anderson Cooper—who is known for having to make split-second decisions—is also a graduate. WMI graduate Ian Lee, who now works for the *Daily News Egypt*, was also there.

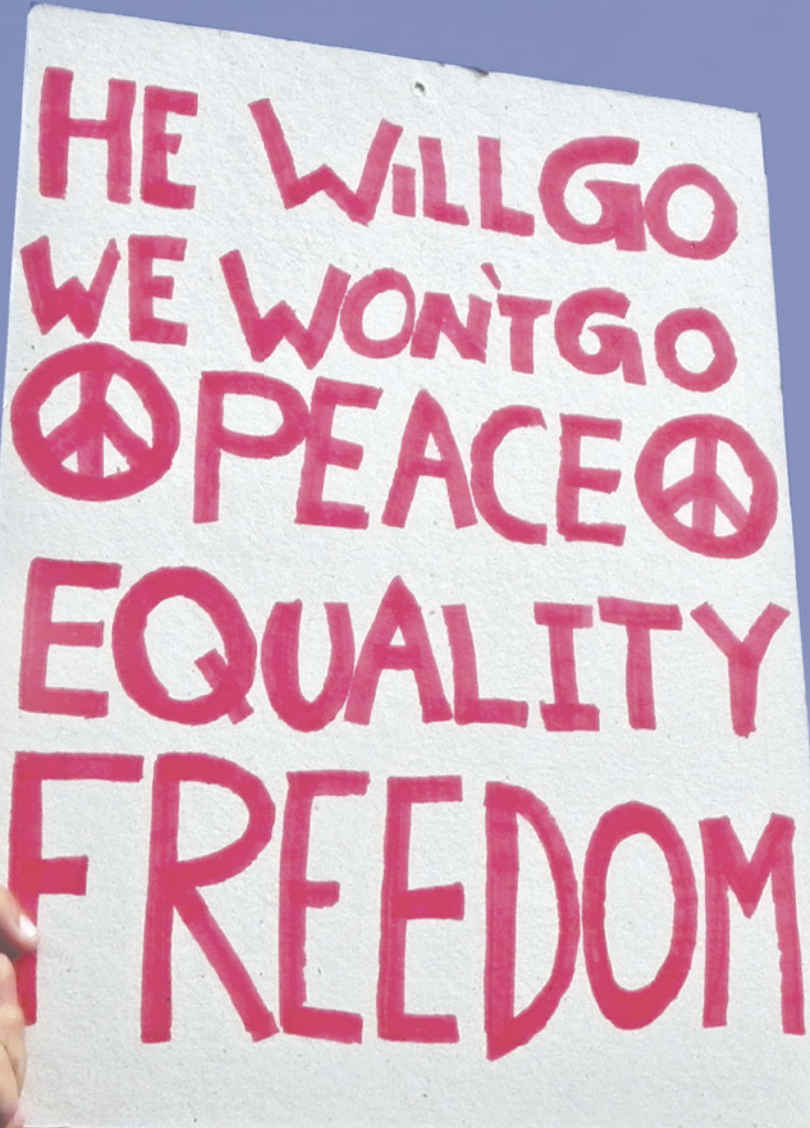
And at the end of the day, I think it made my dad just a little bit more comfortable when he called me during the Egyptian Revolution and I said, "Dad, don't worry. I took a NOLS risk management class."

Sallie Pisch lives in Cairo and is managing director of the Youm7 English Edition news site. The clashes she filmed during the Egyptian Revolution can be seen at www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZd0kiCiQZI.

RISK ASSESSMENT CHART



NOLS teaches risk management as a balance between the probability of consequence and the severity of consequence. In the backcountry and other wild places it's good to assess in this way the outcomes of your decisions based on your unique situation.



Photos Courtesy of Sallie Pisch

BOOK REVIEW



BLUE LINES: A FISHING LIFE
By Tom Reed, former NOLS Instructor
© 2011 Riverbend Publishing,
\$12.95, ISBN: 978-1-60639-024-5

REVIEWED BY RICH BRAME, NOLS INSTRUCTOR

Blue lines—named after how they appear on a topographical map—are the small, often unnamed waters that take a hike, a map, and some effort to reach and ultimately fish. Montana writer and former NOLS instructor Tom Reed’s book by the same name includes 29 short, entertaining essays on the trials, benefits, challenges, and rewards of fly-fishing on the blue lines of Wyoming and the West.

This book will immediately resonate with anyone who explores little-fished creeks and obscure mountain streams. From crisp, star-filled morning starts, to forcing yourself through thick streamside brush, to dead-drifting a ‘hopper into a challenging pocket, *Blue Lines* captures the essence of fly-fishing. There’s humor, too, fishing advice, a thinly veiled reference to a NOLS reration, and a cast of interesting and thoughtful characters who will entertain even non-angling readers.

Mostly, though, *Blue Lines* is a personal examination of how solitude, fly-fishing, wilderness, camaraderie, gear, trout, and endlessly variable waterways can fill our days, and ultimately our lives. As Tom Reed recently observed: “The best things in life take effort. Fly-fishing, especially on those remote streams and watery hidey-holes with no trails, no reputation, and few people, is part of that. Blue lining is an attitude that works with a fly rod. It also works in life.”

WILDERNESS QUIZ

Answer: NLCS is the Bureau of Land Management’s acronym for the National Landscape Conservation System. Established in 2000, the NLCS includes more than 25 million acres of National Conservation Areas, National Scenic and Historic Trails, Wild and Scenic Rivers, Wilderness Areas, wilderness study areas, and national monuments across the West. Many NLCS lands are NOLS wilderness classrooms. For more information, see page 5 of the Spring 2011 issue of The Leader.

(Question on page 5)

BOOK REVIEW



THE LAST MOUNTAINS
By Rick Craig, former NOLS Instructor
© 2011 Geyser Books, \$14.00,
ISBN: 978-0-98267-088-0

REVIEWED BY LARKIN FLORA, ALUMNI INTERN

Not your typical mystery thriller, this high-altitude tale of assassination attempts, conspiracy theories, murder, scandal, intrigue, romance, redemption, and of course, climbing gripped me from start to finish.

At its crux, this debut novel by former instructor Rick Craig is about a father-son relationship. Reluctant hero Tom Hadley is a good ole’ Wyomin’ boy and an almost-famous mountaineer turned Grand Teton National Park Climbing Ranger. Tom just wants to survive the summer of 2002 with his estranged son, Ben. In the wake of 9/11, Tom and Ben get thrust into a world of international intrigue and political scandal as they struggle to repair their relationship and stay alive. The novel opens with the duo summiting the Grand, and quickly evolves into a murder mystery as Ben discovers a fallen climber on their decent. Throughout the adventure, Rick brings the Jackson Hole valley and Tetons to life in vivid detail, honing in on the culture clash between local outdoor enthusiasts and those with second homes (or third, or fourth) in the area.

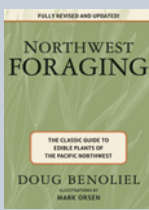
The technical details are vivid, accurate, and enjoyable in a way that only a mountaineer can manifest. Well-written and fast paced, this mystery has enough twists to keep you guessing right up until the unexpected final reveal, as Tom learns to be more compassionate towards his son and those in his community whose lives seem a world away from his own.

MEDICINE QUIZ

Answer: A. In the wilderness, it is a reasonable and acceptable practice for a WFR to attempt to reduce a shoulder dislocation, even without altered CSM. In town, a WFR should not attempt to reduce a dislocation but should seek medical attention for the patient.

(Question on page 4)

BOOK REVIEW



NORTHWEST FORAGING
By Doug Benoliel, NOLS Instructor
© 2011 Skipstone (an imprint of The Mountaineers Books),
\$16.95 (print), \$9.99 (Kindle),
ISBN: 978-1-59485-366-1

REVIEWED BY LARKIN FLORA, ALUMNI INTERN

Almost 40 years after originally writing *Northwest Foraging*, NOLS instructor, landscaper, gardener, and self-professed plant enthusiast Doug Benoliel brings us a fully revised and updated edition. “It’s simply a joy to eat well-grown food from healthy soil,” writes Benoliel.

Highlighting the ethnobotany, folklore, and historical background of these plants, Benoliel incorporates tidbits from Merriweather Lewis’ meticulous notes on the native uses of plants published in *Lewis & Clark’s Corps of Discovery*. Each plant entry includes the common name, Latin name and etymology, the form, leaves and flowers, habitat and range, and edibility, including suggestions of how to cook different parts of the plant. Three new plants have been added to this updated version, along with more ethnobotanical information, additional recipes, and an expanded bibliography.

Perhaps most important is the section on poisonous plants to avoid. Along with his history of the plant and a detailed description, Benoliel cites studies and reports of poisonings, describes symptoms of ingestion, and rates each plant as “possibly poisonous,” “poisonous,” and “highly poisonous.” Red elderberry, previously marked poisonous, is now classified as edible, not because it has lost its toxicity, but because ethnobotanic literature refers to natives of the region preparing it as a food source. Similarly, bracken fern has been reclassified as poisonous because studies show it to be carcinogenic. Finally, the detailed black and white drawings depict each plant at the stage of optimal harvest, but should be supplemented with color photos from another field guide to confirm edibility, lest you confuse a plant with its poisonous cousin.

All in all, *Northwest Foraging* should be in your backpack when you head into the forests of the Northwest. It will teach you that foraging is a fun, easy way to supplement and add diversity to your diet at a minimal expense and pack weight.

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RECIPE BOX

Backcountry Tortillas

A Versatile Vehicle for a Variety of Toppings

BY RICH BRAME, NOLS INSTRUCTOR

Read and bread-like items generally aren’t available on extended wilderness adventures—bagels don’t last, loaves gets smashed, and pitas and ready-made tortillas are bulky. But the standard ration bag has more than enough ingredients to make your own tortillas in the field. Tortillas provide variety for your palate and can be a jack-of-all-trades: layer on peanut butter, brown sugar, and sunflower seeds; slather with butter and a dose of garlic salt; or roll ‘em up and make burritos with bulgur, cheese, or refried beans waiting inside.

Do you have a great backcountry recipe? Send it to theleader@nols.edu. If your recipe is printed it will be featured on a *NOLS Cooking Show*, plus you get a free copy of the *NOLS Cookery*.

BACKCOUNTRY TORTILLAS

Submitted by Rich Brame, NOLS Instructor and Alumni Relations Director

Ingredients (4 tortillas):

- 1/2 cup white flour
- 1/2 cup wheat flour (or you can use all white flour)
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp vegetable oil
- up to ¾ cup warm water
- sprinkling of cornmeal for dry frying

Directions

- 1) Mix first five ingredients in a clean cook pot.
- 2) Slowly add warm water while stirring until you create a sticky dough.
- 3) Knead the dough with floured hands until it’s the consistency of your earlobe—5–10 minutes.
- 4) Cover dough ball and set aside for 30 minutes while you have a hot drink and prepare the other parts of your meal (like the filling).
- 5) Divide dough ball into four equal, round clumps.
- 6) Carefully cut a clean plastic ration bag and lay it out as a sheet, then sprinkle it lightly with flour.
- 7) Plop one of your dough ball clumps on one side of the sheet, fold over the rest of the sheet and work the dough ball into a flat tortilla—the thinner the better, but it needs to fit in your fry pan.
- 8) Dry fry the tortillas (sprinkle your seasoned fry pan with a little corn meal) on both sides until slightly toasted and cooked through.

The tortillas are now ready for eating with butter or as a constituent for more elaborate meals. Check out the latest *NOLS Cooking Show* on NOLS.TV for an in-depth video on making tortillas and loading them up as a spicy and satisfying backcountry burrito dinner.



Step 5



Step 7



Step 8

Photos by Rich Brame

Tortillas are easy to make and a creative add to a backcountry meal.

GEAR ROOM

Trekking with Tots

NOLS Parents Review Kid Carriers

BY APARNA RAJAGOPAL-DURBIN



THE ORIGINAL ERGOBABY CARRIER

The Original ERGOBaby carrier fits kids from 12 to 45 pounds, is fully adjustable for the adult and child, and has numerous optional accessories, including a sleeping hood and padded infant inserts.

PROS: Can be used as a front carrier or backpack; is washable, ergonomic and comfortable for passenger and parent, and sized for day hikes; and it is the most affordable—retails for \$115.

CONS: Difficult for one adult to get a child in and out of the backpack; cargo capacity is small.



DEUTER KID COMFORT II AND III

The Kid Comfort is built for the long haul, with adjustments and 1100 cubic inches (KCII) or 1220 cubic inches (KCIII) of cargo space for long back-country treks with kids up to 47 pounds.

PROS: The most comfortable long-haul kid carrier we tested, easy to adjust and use, includes a water bladder sleeve, made from durable fabric, and has locking hinges to prevent collapse.

CONS: Has less cargo space than the Rumba, the KCIII’s built-in sun/rain shade straps lose stretch quickly, and it is the most expensive carrier tested—MSRP \$229 (KCII) and \$289 (KCIII).



SHERPANI RUMBA BABY CARRIER

The spacious Rumba with over 2800 cubic inches of cargo space is fully adjustable, fits kids up to 50 pounds, and is built to carry a total of 70 pounds including your gear.

PROS: Has the most cargo space of all the carriers tested, the top compartment detaches to become a backpack for your tot to wear, includes a sunshade, and is size adjustable and durable.

CONS: Top heavy and a little unstable for more technical terrain; children complain of discomfort and losing leg circulation despite adjusting. MSRP: \$249

Thanks to our reviewers Aparna Rajagopal-Durbin and her son Kieran, Karly Copeland and her baby Everett, Courtney Kelly and her toddler Jacob, Darci Jones and her toddler Kena, and Gary Cukjati and his daughter Violet.

Write to theleader@nols.edu and share your gear thoughts, questions, and opinions. If it ends up in print, we’ll hook you up with a NOLS t-shirt or hat.

TRAVERSES



HAIKUS

WE ASKED NOLS' FACEBOOK COMMUNITY TO SUBMIT HAIKUS, AND THE RESPONSE WAS OVERWHELMING!

If you would like to submit a poem for a future issue of *The Leader* please send it, along with a high-resolution photo and bio, to theleader@nols.edu.

*beans and rice and beans
out of food till the morning
more beans and rice yay!*

BRIAN DROURR

Burlington, Vermont, FSR-5 12/18/93
Brian is a clinical social worker for Easter Seals Vermont and avid dad, sailor, scuba diver and backcountry skier.

*Licking rainbows the
sun burned a happy hole in
our Talkeetna hearts*

ANDREW GALBREATH

Upperville, Virginia, AKW1 06/07/09
Andrew is the corporate general counsel to an international energy company structuring and leading complex commercial transactions. While not in the wilds, Andrew can be found in the yoga studio.

*NOLS spirit summed up
Expedition behavior
The rest is gravy.*

PAUL SAWYER

Hartland, Vermont, NWS-2 09/16/91
After 15 years as an outdoor educator, Paul attended Harvard Divinity School and is now a Unitarian Universalist minister. Paul lives in a log cabin in the woods with his wife and their two children, Emma and Aiden.

*Outside, clarity.
Non-essentials dissipate.
Nature leaves her mark.*

KARYN VERZWYVELT BLACK

Bend, Oregon, LFB 07/19/09
Karyn works part-time for a nonprofit land conservation organization. She is an avid bike commuter, a self-professed wildflower geek, and a belly dance teacher who loves spending time in the mountains.

PHILANTHROPIC TIDBIT

Recurring Gifts: eDonate Makes It Simple

For two thousand NOLS students, this summer has been a chance to learn leadership skills in amazing outdoor classrooms. Even if some time has passed since your last outdoor adventure, you can still help make these opportunities accessible for others.

We are excited to announce that supporting NOLS just became a good deal simpler! When you enroll in our monthly giving program, a donation in the amount of your choosing will be automatically charged to your debit or credit card each month. This means you don't have to worry about remembering to give, and you can plan a monthly donation

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Donations to the NOLS Annual Fund help support scholarships, ensuring that deserving students are able to attend a course even if they can't afford it on their own. The Annual Fund also supports curriculum development and research, as well as efforts to preserve our wilderness classrooms. All of these causes allow us to remain the leader in wilderness education.



Sharing the NOLS experience: made possible by a donor like you. Set up recurring e-donations today.

We hope you'll consider including NOLS in your philanthropic priorities this year. It's a reliable, hassle-free way to make sure your participation in the NOLS Annual Fund doesn't go forgotten.

Find out more information at www.nols.edu/giving and sign up for the program at www.nols.edu/eDonate.

JABBERWOCKY

Contact NOLS Alumni via telephone 800-332-4280 or email (alumni@nols.edu) to find contact information for any of your coursemates or to submit your information for The Leader.

GRADS FROM THE '60S**Steven McFadden, WRW 08/10/66**

Now living in Nebraska, Steven is still making use of the lessons he learned during his course in 1966 with Paul Petzoldt. He has written a book, *Tales of Whirling Rainbow*, about his eight-month walk from the Atlantic to the Pacific with the Seven Fires traditional Anishinabe elders of North America.

GRADS FROM THE '80S**James Guinn, ABW 07/22/80**

James' NOLS experience inspired him to seek challenge vocationally and recreationally. He visits wilderness either on foot, raft, or kayak and has explored Alaska, Wyoming, Montana, Oregon, the Canadian Rockies, and Mexico. James owns a small law firm in Oregon and is raising three girls with his wife Nicole. James would love to hear from his classmates. Email: jt@claimantlaw.net

Jim Andersen, BAJ 02/04/87 & SIC 06/07/90

Jim, facilities manager at Willamette University, received a Staff Sustainability Award this year. Since Jim joined the university, it has discontinued using synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, uses native and drought tolerant plantings when possible, has installed drip irrigation, and reuses all leaves on campus as mulch. The campus is now 100% organic and accredited through Oregon Tilth for organic land care practices!

Elizabeth "Liz" Rogers, WRW 07/20/89

Liz recently wrote an essay about her NOLS course that was included in the book *Faces of Learning: 50 Powerful Stories of Defining Moments in Education*. Her thirty days in the Wind Rivers were the happiest days of her life. She has already created a savings account for her children to attend NOLS.

GRADS FROM THE '90S**Ethan Andrew Holub, SSPA 10/02/97**

Since his NOLS semester, Ethan has worked, studied, or traveled in 66 countries. After ten years of humanitarian and missionary work in war zones he has moved back to Oregon. Ethan has many pictures of his travels, as well as NOLS, on his Facebook account. Ethan would love to hear from his fellow NOLS mates. Email ethanandrewholub@gmail.com or "friend" him on Facebook.

Patrik Hedljung, WW16 07/01/98 & WFR 04/08/06

Patrik, who lives in Stockholm, Sweden, won the Development of Leadership 2011 award for competence. The award goes to young leaders who are driven by their own conviction about good leadership and good society, and who have a positive view of people and cherish diversity.

Latane Frank, SIC 07/29/99

Latane, former NOLS instructor and Rocky Mountain Facilities Manager, has recently taken a position as operations manager with Creative Energies, a solar power provider founded by NOLS grads. He and his wife, former NOLS instructor and Noble Hotel Manager Emily Shoutis-Frank, live in Lander and are expecting their second child in September.

GRADS FROM THE '00S**Dave Wolf, NLE 04/30/01**

Dave, a three-time NOLS grad and astronaut, was just inducted into the Space Technology Hall of Fame for his contributions to the development of technologies that simulate weightlessness to grow cell cultures for research. As a NASA mission specialist on four space shuttle missions, Dave has logged over 168 days in space.

Scott Schneider, NCM 06/22/05

Scott recently took a new job at North Carolina State University as a lecturer on outdoor leadership in the physical education department. He is marrying his fiancée, Jeana, this fall in Grand Teton National Park.

Maya Jaafar, OEM 07/21/10

Maya works for Reverb, a Maine nonprofit organization that brings sustainable green programs to professional music tours. Reverb's co-founder, Adam Gardner of the band Guster, is also a NOLS grad (WRW 08/1990).

MARRIAGES AND ENGAGEMENTS**Katherine Winder Garrison, AKW 06/20/93 & WSB 04/06/03**

Katherine married Ben Garrison on the island of Maui in March. She and Ben are EMS helicopter pilots in Illinois.

NEW ADDITIONS**Sarah Annarella (SIC 07/25/01) & Steven Brutger (AKIC 05/13/02)**

Former NOLS instructors Sarah and Steven are the proud parents of Grady Joseph Brutger born on March 8, 2011. Grady weighed 8 lbs 10 oz at birth in Lander, Wyoming.

Edith Fouser (AKIC 05/09/06) & Jason Fouser (WEA 04/05/08)

Edith and Jason are thrilled to announce the birth of their first child, a boy named Loben Story Fouser, on February 26, 2011, in Ipswich, Massachusetts. Edith works at a small independent school and instructs for NOLS during the summer.

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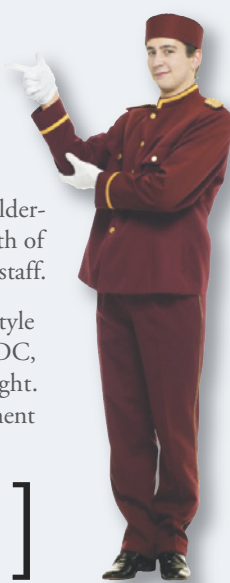
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IN REMEMBRANCE

John Corcoran

John died in his home in Wilson, Wyoming, on February 7. Born into the Bear Clan on March 2, 1947, while parents Joe and Ruth Corcoran lived on the Tonawanda Indian Reservation, John attended the first Outward Bound courses offered in the U.S. and, at the young age of 17, worked with Paul Petzoldt for NOLS when it was founded. With Petzoldt, John was on the first winter climb of the North Face of the Grand Teton. Since the 1960s, John has hiked, climbed, skied, horsepacked, hunted, and fished most of the ranges in Wyoming and Colorado. John's strength, endurance, knowledge, and abilities were legendary. Donations can be made to NOLS in his honor.

Barry G. "Behr" Smith, MEC 07/29/75

Behr passed away on January 13. As a teen, Behr enjoyed being part of Outward Bound and NOLS. Behr's life was a constant demonstration of fierce integrity and dedication to family and friends. Behr's deep laughter, wisdom, and appreciation for all of life's gifts will be deeply, deeply missed, and always treasured. Behr is survived by his siblings and their children.

Tucker Taffe, CWY 06/11/97

Tucker died after falling into a crevasse on Mt. Rainier on May 10. Tucker was an experienced and

passionate backcountry skier, mountain biker, and climber. He worked at NOLS Pacific Northwest in the first half of the 2000s both in the kitchen and in rations. Many aching NOLS field instructor backs benefited from Tucker's powerful massage work. Since massage school, he spent winters living at the top of Little Cottonwood Canyon in an amazing little cabin working for Alta Ski Area as a manager. Tucker is survived by his parents, brothers and sisters-in-law, grandfather, and other extended family.

Cooper Fredo Larsh, ADX 06/30/06

Cooper died in a skiing accident in Steamboat Springs at the age of 19. Cooper began his outdoor adventures as a baby, learning how to ski as a toddler and soon added rock climbing, ski jumping, backpacking, and other outdoor pursuits to his repertoire. Cooper spent his high school years at Colorado Timberline Academy (CTA), a small outdoor sports oriented college preparatory school in Durango where the kids spend part of every day taking courses in outdoor skills. After his NOLS course, Cooper worked as a Junior Ranger with the Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks Program. At the time of his death, Cooper was a freshman in college. Cooper is survived by his parents, grandparents, and many extended family members. Donations in Cooper's name can be made to the Cooper Larsh Scholarship Fund at the Colorado Timberline Academy (CTA), 35554 Hwy 550, Durango, CO 81301.

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ALUMNI HAPPENINGS

Alumni Trips

If a month is too much to ask from the boss, NOLS offers shorter backcountry trips designed for our working grads. We encourage you to bring family and friends along on these weeklong expeditions to reconnect with the school and introduce others to the NOLS experience. These trips have top-notch instructors, and though they aren't guided trips, we do cater a bit more to the desires and maturity levels of our participants. Customized trips are also available. For more details or to sign up, visit www.nols.edu/alumni/trips or contact us at (800) 332-4280 or alumni@nols.edu.

Hiking Italy's Dolomites

SEPTEMBER 2–9, 2011

\$2,495

Join a small group for a week of spectacular hiking in the Dolomites as you trek between *rifugios* (small, hostel-style lodgings) during the Alps' early autumn. Connecting our string of rifugios gives you the chance to savor Italian cuisine and culture while mixing with other, mostly European, travelers in a dorm-style setting. Sleeping and dining in rifugios lightens packs on daily hikes amongst the stunning spires, valleys, ridges, and peaks of northern Italy.

Trekking in the Indian Himalaya

OCTOBER 11–23, 2011

\$2,295

This donkey-supported hiking trip travels the Kumaon region in the high peaks of the Indian Himalayas. The staggeringly beautiful Kumaon is the birthplace of the holy Ganges River and a cross-roads of ancient trade routes between India and Tibet.

Bahamas Sea Kayaking

November 16–21, 2011

\$1,600

Shockingly clear, warm water. Undeveloped beaches. Few tourists. If this sounds like a good way to spend a chunk of November, consider spending six days paddling the scenic blue waters of the Caribbean with NOLS grads. This new trip starts and ends in Georgetown and is suitable for all skill levels.

Joshua Tree Rock Climbing

FEBRUARY 24–MARCH 1, 2012

Price TBD

Climbers of all experience levels can get vertical at Joshua Tree National Park, a granite climbing desert playground near Palm Springs, California. From a rustic area campground base, you will head out every day and learn a plethora of skills—face and crack climbing techniques, multi-pitch climbing, knots, rope handling, belaying, anchors, protection placement, traditional and sport climbing systems, rappelling, and lead climbing theory. Bring your camera to record the desert's unique sun-drenched beauty and surreal Dr. Seuss-like landscape.



Upcoming Reunions

NOLS is coming to your community!

Reunions are a great way to meet NOLS grads in your area, reconnect with friends, and network with like-minded outdoor types. Reunions feature a NOLS adventurer's riveting expedition tale, delectable appetizers, and chances to win cool outdoor gear. There's something for everyone. Non-grad guests are always welcome.

Stay tuned for details about autumn reunions in New York City, Annapolis, Charlotte, Austin, and Minneapolis. We hope to see you there!

Visit www.nols.edu/alumni/reunions or email alumni@nols.edu for details.



BRANCH NOTES

ROCKY MOUNTAIN

- As the sponsoring branch for NOLS Northeast, we are running our first Adventure Courses in New York’s Adirondack Mountains this summer.
- In conjunction with Sinks Canyon State Park, the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service, our interns spearheaded three days of trail work in Sinks Canyon. With over 35 volunteers and hundreds of volunteer hours, they rerouted trails and rebuilt many steps for dog-walkers and climbers alike.
- Our Vernal River Base reports that the Rockies’ unusually high snow pack is causing high water on our river classrooms.

NOLS SCANDINAVIA

- We are thrilled to have a new base manager, Fredrik Norrsell, who brings a breadth of global NOLS experience to the program.
- NOLS Scandinavia is again running backpacking, sea kayaking, and combination courses in Sweden and Norway this summer.



NOLS PACIFIC NORTHWEST

- Our “summer” mountaineering courses and a wilderness course are enjoying a Cascades snowpack that is well above normal. In fact, the North Cascades Highway reopened from its winter closure a mere three hours before our first wilderness course of the season departed the branch.
- In June, in-town staff participated in the annual 100-mile Ski to Sea relay race in Bellingham, Wash., skiing, canoeing, cycling, and kayaking their way from Mount Baker ski area to Bellingham Bay.

NOLS ALASKA

- NOLS Alaska’s 40th anniversary year is well underway. Forty years ago, NOLS Alaska offered two courses: a sea kayaking trip in Prince William Sound and a climb of Denali. Starting with that climb in 1971, NOLS has been the longest serving mountaineering concession in Denali National Park.
- In June, the NOLS Board of Trustees held their summer meeting in Alaska. In addition to plenty of meetings, the Board did some exploration on Prince William Sound and ice climbing on the Matanuska Glacier.
- Our very first Backpacking and Packrafting course runs this summer.



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BELAY OFF

From Barrow to the Bayou

A SCIENCE TEACHER APPLIES A TREK IN THE ARCTIC NORTH TO HIS CLASSROOM IN THE SOUTH

BY JOSH DUGAT, ROCKY MOUNTAIN OUTDOOR EDUCATOR WITH WFR 06/17/2010

"It's beacoup hot, Mr. Dugat." Warnell had returned early from gym to find my classroom little respite from the heat and humidity of May in Louisiana. "Was it cold where you were?" he asked, peering over my shoulder at pictures of Alaska.

"It snowed," I told him, sharing images of muskoxen, moose, and daylight at 11:00 p.m.

The pictures chronicled my very first days in Alaska with PolarTREC. As its acronym—Teachers and Researchers Exploring and Collaborating—suggests, PolarTREC partners K-12 teachers with Arctic and Antarctic researchers in an effort to raise awareness and enthusiasm of polar science in classrooms. My own expedition was alongside permafrost researchers, covering the full ten degrees of latitude between Anchorage and Barrow, Alaska.

On a recent exam, students connected the vitality of the Gulf Coast with the Poles, describing how greenhouse emissions in Louisiana contribute to sea level rise through glacial melting.

I teach science in New Orleans at Success at Schwarz Academy, an alternative school where there are no sports teams, no band, and no proms, but students do get to pass through metal detectors, receive full pat-downs, and be escorted on bathroom breaks. Overcoming low reading levels and coordinating interventions with social workers and probation officers are some of my challenges, but the most prescient charge I face comes when a student asks, "Why should I care?"

The test of every teacher is to invest in his or her students by making subject matter relevant and engaging. Any NOLS instructor or student could tell you that. For Schwarz students—rejected by the traditional educational system—alluring lessons spell success. So when PolarTREC came knocking, I didn't just see a chance to hike a slice of Earth I had never seen; I saw an opportunity to creatively reinforce content and share with students what their home has in common with a totally alien part of the world. (After all, most of my students' only out-of-state experience came during their Hurricane Katrina evacuations.) Most of all, I saw a chance to show them that a work day can be filled with helicopter landings, river crossings, and polar bear warnings; in short, that science can be sexy.

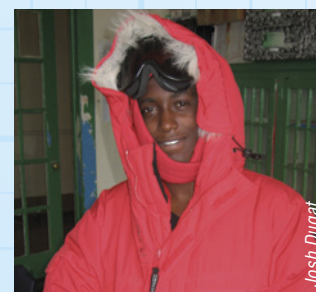
My motley crew of two professors, a USDA scientist, two George Washington students, and I trucked the thawed Dalton Highway over the Yukon River and through the Brooks Range to arrive in Deadhorse by the light of the midnight sun. Our primary field task involved identifying Active Layer depth through the highly technical process of inserting a metal probe in the ground until it reached the permafrost table. Or, to quote one of my colleagues, "just stick it in until it thuds" For the uninitiated, the active layer is the portion of soil found above permafrost which seasonally thaws and refreezes. While the act of determining Active Layer depth may seem a less than romantic chore, the measures taken to reach some far-flung field sites were well worth the monotony. Caribou herds, snowy owls, and Arctic foxes were frequent visitors, and the threat of a polar bear visit was enough to ensure a member of our team carried a precautionary twelve-gauge at all times.

My NOLS lessons reverberated throughout my expedition. When deciding whether to take a chopper to a field site, a risk

assessment weighed the likelihood and consequence of being caught amidst building storm clouds or running short of fuel. Before taking off for the day, I packed to survive unsheltered overnight. Navigating remote field sites required the occasional swiftwater river crossing any NOLS grad knows by heart. A landscape void of peaks



Left: Posing in the Arctic Circle with my school flag. **Right:** One of my Schwarz student dons my polar layers.



and ridges and filled instead with thick Arctic fog put my triangulation skills to the test. Keeping feet dry in knee-deep wet tundra became a mantra of sorts. My colleagues had long-ago adopted their own Leave No Trace principles, which we diligently obeyed, appreciating the fragility of an ecosystem with such a finite window for growth and repair.

Back in the classroom, my days are spent trying to pass on what I learned on PolarTREC to my students. I teach them that my expedition informed our early lessons regarding scientific method—repeating classroom trials three times ain't nothing; some scientists have been repeating trials for 20 years! Students have created their own digital models of Active Layer depth. On a recent exam, students connected the vitality of the Gulf Coast with the Poles, describing how greenhouse emissions in Louisiana contribute to sea level rise through glacial melting. This notion has revitalized the urgency of a class garden: "If we eat vegetables from around here," explains 11th-grader Daysha, "we won't burn as much gas shipping food from all over." A part of the world once seen by my students as a Discovery Channel novelty has become personalized, allowing the same possibility for other frontiers in the future.

Looking ahead, I do not expect Schwarz to become a hotbed for burgeoning permafrost researchers. I do not even intend for all of my students to seek careers in science. Just as my PolarTREC colleagues require years of data to formulate a conclusion, I know the answer to my students query—"Why should I care?"—will take time. Meanwhile, I find solace in the fact that they've unknowingly begun an investigation of their own—every scientific inquiry, after all, begins with a question.

Information regarding PolarTREC, including application material, classroom resources, and pictures and journals from Josh Dugat's expedition, can be found at www.polar trec.com.

