



Phi Kappa Psi Leadership Expedition Course Description

Spend a week living and learning in a beautiful and rugged mountain environment that will teach you about leadership, teamwork, the outdoors, and yourself.

Features

- Duration: 7 days and 6 nights in the field
- Route length: 30-60 miles
- Approximate Group Size: 12 students/ 3 instructors
- Hiking at elevations of approximately 7,000 – 10,500 ft
- Backcountry hiking and camping in Wyoming
- Optional fishing and possible non-technical peak ascent on a layover day

Skills that NOLS students learn

- Leadership:
 - Communication
 - Group dynamics
 - Leadership styles
 - Decision-making strategies
 - Risk Management
 - Debriefing and facilitation
- Camping:
 - Cooking on a camp stove
 - Setting up a tent
 - Choosing a campsite
 - Map reading and navigation
 - Bear avoidance techniques
 - Self-care in the outdoors
- Environmental studies:
 - Leave No Trace™
 - Plant and animal identification



Overview

The Phi Kappa Psi Leadership Expedition will take place in the Wind River or the Absaroka Mountains: rugged, glacier-carved mountains renowned for their sheer granite walls and famous for their beautiful alpine lakes. You'll backpack in a wilderness surrounded by towering peaks and perennial snow.

This course has been designed specifically for Phi Kappa Psi members with a desire to backpack and learn outdoor skills, a commitment to group over self, and a willingness to get out of one's comfort zone and learn from others.

You will begin with basic travel and camping skills: cooking, camping, stove use, map reading, practices for hiking and camping in grizzly and black bear habitat, and Leave No Trace techniques. You may also have the opportunity to climb a non-technical peak and fly fish. Another foundational course goal is building an inclusive community with your Phi Kappa Psi brothers. Placing high value on teamwork, you will tackle group challenges and achieve common goals. As you travel, you'll learn about a range of topics related to natural history and leadership, and you'll have opportunities to put your new knowledge into practice every day.



Weather and Other Challenges

Weather

Early summer weather in the Rockies is unpredictable. You'll learn to live comfortably outside in blizzards, rainstorms, and high winds. Cold and snowy conditions can occur any month of the year, and courses in June will likely spend much of their time camping on snow or using snowshoes to travel.

Terrain

You may be bushwhacking off-trail through thick vegetation, scrambling over refrigerator-sized boulders, or battling sleet. Rivers are icy from snowmelt and can be difficult or impossible to cross. You may have to traverse slopes of loose rock and carry a heavy backpack up steep passes.

Wildlife

The area your course will travel through is home to grizzly and black bears. NOLS, in collaboration with bear biologists, has developed specific practices to minimize the risk of a bear encounter. Your instructors will teach these practices to you and you will have to follow them every day. Bear avoidance practices include carrying bear deterrent pepper spray, meticulously maintaining cleanliness at the cooking sites, not having food in tents, and proper food storage. In some situations in grizzly bear country, the minimum group size is generally four people. You will live, travel and take care of personal necessities with a group of your peers always close by. Precautions against bear encounters will decrease the opportunities for solitude and privacy on this course, one of the most challenging aspects of living in grizzly bear country.

Remoteness

Identifying and managing the risks from hazards—such as falling rock, stormy weather, animals, moving water, and steep terrain—will be a constant theme on your course. You're often miles from the amenities of civilization, including medical care. You are expected to demonstrate the highest regard for risk management in the field.

Personal Electronics



A key element to a NOLS education is time spent in wilderness. The benefits of this include being closer to nature, spending time away from society and civilization, and being in an environment where natural forces predominate and students have the opportunity to develop good judgment and practice self-reliance. NOLS does not permit students to use personal cell or satellite phones or other communication devices including personal tracking devices (e.g. SPOT), while in the field. Additionally, students are not permitted to take personal music players (iPods, MP3 players, CD players, etc). Instructors will be carrying sufficient communication equipment (usually a satellite phone) to handle any emergencies that may arise. Drone technology is also not allowed in the field.

Learning Goals at NOLS

NOLS courses teach wilderness and leadership skills on expeditions and in classrooms. You will apply these skills in the field in a supportive learning culture with high expectations. Your course will provide you with the opportunity for a positive, transformative experience intended to inspire you and empower you to act.

We craft NOLS courses so graduates will be able to assume leadership roles; live and travel in the outdoors; act with confidence and competence; respect and collaborate with others on expeditions, on teams and in communities; care for themselves and others; understand their strengths, habits, and areas for growth; function under difficult circumstances; make informed and thoughtful decisions; communicate effectively; connect with natural places; and appreciate living simply.