

# MainStreet Family Urgent Care Leadership Expedition

## Utah Canyons

### Course Description

#### Features

- Duration: 7 days
- Route length: approximately 20-30 miles
- Average pack weight: 40 - 50 pounds
- Travel both on and off trail in the canyons and on the mesa
- Emphasis on group dynamics and leadership development
- Explore the natural and human history of the desert

#### Overview

On this course, you will backpack through the red rock canyons of the Colorado Plateau in southern Utah. This area is characterized by rugged terrain and delicate beauty, with red sandstone, and green junipers adding color to the arid landscape. Relics of the Ancestral Pueblo culture may still be seen in the form of ruins, petroglyphs, and potshards. At times you will travel across the mesa tops with spectacular views in all directions while at others, you'll wind your way through the labyrinthine depths of deeply incised waterways.

Once in the canyons, you will learn fundamental wilderness travel skills. Map reading and route-finding can be tricky in this convoluted country where your travel days may range from three miles of dense bushwhacking and wading to miles of flat mesa walking. You will be challenged by the difficulty of minimizing your impact in an area where the soil is fragile and the water you previously took for granted is hard to find.

Throughout the expedition, you will be provided with opportunities to lead and actively follow your peers. In addition, the NOLS faculty will emphasize advanced instructional skills focused on experiential learning and coaching. NOLS faculty will begin the course by developing or reviewing appropriate wilderness skills (e.g., cooking, selecting campsites, setting up tents, etc.). Faculty will spend one day role modeling how to lead a hiking group. Participants will then take on designated leadership roles within the group. These designated leaders are responsible for key tasks such as planning the day's anticipated route, communicating with their peers, using the faculty as subject matter experts, and considering how the day's goals and activities serve the larger goals of the expedition. NOLS expeditions generally split up into hiking groups

consisting of one instructor and four to five students, reconvening as a large group each evening. NOLS faculty will play evolving roles as your knowledge, skills, and abilities increase during this self-contained expedition.

For these expeditions, the main emphasis will be providing opportunities to practice self-leadership, peer leadership, designated leadership, and active followership in a remote, austere environment. Faculty will play evolving roles in response to route challenges and unfolding weather conditions. You should expect to assert an active role in team decision-making processes and actively manage group dynamics to create a positive team atmosphere. Expedition behavior, tolerance for adversity and uncertainty, and a willingness to work hard will be critical to the success of the expedition. Days will often include at least one debriefing of the day's experience to facilitate transfer of lessons learned to the context in which participants work and serve.

## **Weather, COVID-19, and Other Challenges**

### **COVID-19**

While traveling to or during NOLS course, you could be exposed to the novel coronavirus. To best protect students and staff, NOLS' field practices are based on the assumption that everyone is an asymptomatic carrier when they arrive at NOLS. While in town preparing for your course and while in the field, you will be expected to comply with NOLS' COVID-19 field practices. This means we will maintain physical distancing of 6 feet or greater and wear masks when physical distancing is not feasible. Impeccable hygiene, including frequent hand washing and hand sanitizer use, will be an integral part of COVID-19 risk management and will be crucial throughout your course. There will be daily health checks for COVID-19 symptoms.

We recognize that NOLS-specific COVID-19 expectations and practices may look different from or mimic your own. For us the ability to adhere to these expectations is an integral part of our ability to responsibly run field courses and create a positive learning environment, ensuring that we invest in one another's health. In essence, it's what we call good expedition behavior, the leadership skill focused on promoting individual and group success.

### **Weather**

The canyons are known for their dramatic temperature swings and weather conditions. Though warm, mild weather is typical in the fall, students should expect anything from monsoon rains and extreme heat to snow, wind, and subfreezing temperatures.

Sometimes, these weather changes occur in a matter of minutes; other times, storms or cold temperatures can last for days. Rain, though infrequent, can cause flash-flooding. Freezing temperatures are possible, especially at night. There may be times when you are cold, wet, and tired, but you'll learn to manage and even thrive in these situations. In time, your own adaptation to varied conditions will help you understand and appreciate the remarkable flora and fauna that make the canyons such a special environment.

### **Terrain**

All areas in which you will travel are characterized by deeply incised canyons, steep slopes, rocky terrain, and sheer cliffs. Travel in the backcountry can at times be exclusively off-trail, requiring constant attention to route finding. The rock can be loose and easily breakable, adding to the challenge of hiking. Water is often scarce in the canyons; you will need to scout for it and “dry camp” when it’s not available. At other times, you may need to wade or swim through very cold water in the bottom of slot canyons. While in the backcountry, you will be far from roads and telephones.

### **Remoteness**

For the duration of your course, you’ll be miles from the amenities of civilization. Telephones, ambulances, and hospitals may be days away. All NOLS instructors maintain wilderness medicine certifications and are equipped with well-stocked first aid kits to provide care in the event of an emergency.

### **Wildlife**

The desert is home to potentially harmful insects, reptiles, and mammals. Various species of cactus and other plants with sharp spines can make it a challenge to move around at times. An important part of the curriculum is learning to be aware of your surroundings and being able to identify these hazards in order to reduce the chance of injury.

### **Group dynamics**

You will be living and working in a small and diverse community around the clock and in sometimes difficult conditions. This will require cooperation, patience, and humility. The success of the expedition is dependent on the ability of its members to support one another in trying circumstances. On all of our courses, we strive to foster a course culture free from racism, sexism, xenophobia, classism, homophobia, and transphobia, and in which these and other hallmarks of systematic oppression do not impact anyone's ability to learn and thrive in the outdoors. Working together towards a common vision can be one of the most rewarding and memorable aspects of any NOLS course.

## **Fitness Recommendations**

Spring daylight provides for long, busy days; your fitness goals should focus on being able to sustain a moderate level of exertion for hours on end rather than “quick sprint” fitness. Students on courses quickly realize that it’s not about getting to camp quickly, it’s about getting to camp efficiently with energy enough to carry on for the time it takes to build sturdy camps in exposed conditions and cook great meals. Focus on a well-rounded routine that emphasizes stamina, endurance, flexibility, and strength. Finally, don’t ignore the need for balance; this will serve you well in the uneven and steep canyon terrain allowing you to dance, rather than stumble, your way through. Your ability to participate and enjoy activities will depend on your physical condition.

## **Personal Communication Device Use on Course**

Integral to every NOLS course is the splendid isolation of wilderness. NOLS does not permit students to use cell phones, satellite phones, or other communication devices (including personal tracking devices, such as SPOT) while in the field. Additionally, students are not permitted to take personal music players (e.g. iPods) or to use smartphones or tablets (e.g. iPhones, iPads) as digital cameras. If you wish to take photos on your course—and we hope you will!—please bring a 35mm or dedicated digital camera. Instructors carry communication equipment, including personal locator beacons (PLBs) and satellite phones, to handle emergencies that may arise. Drone technology is not allowed on NOLS expeditions.

## **Student Independence**

Both in town and in the field, you will be independent (unaccompanied by instructors) at various times. While in town, on the road, and in the field, you are expected to always adhere to NOLS’ drug, alcohol, and tobacco policies, and to comport yourself in a respectful, responsible way.

## **Learning Outcomes**

### **LEADERSHIP AND TEAMWORK**

Students will be exposed to the theory and practice of outdoor leadership, teamwork, and expedition behavior. Expedition behavior, a concept developed at NOLS, involves commitment to the group, acceptance of others, and cooperation to achieve goals. Each student is expected to:

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- Function effectively in all four leadership roles: self leadership, active followership, designated leadership, and peer leadership
- Practice and develop competence in NOLS' seven leadership skills
  1. Continually increase technical competence in all skill areas
  2. Display strong expedition behavior by working effectively as a member of a team and serving group goals with a positive attitude
  3. Maintain flexibility, commitment, and positive attitude in the face of adversity and uncertainty
  4. Accurately identify personal strengths and areas for growth
  5. Work to understand the leader's vision and develop an individual vision as a leader; follow through with appropriate action to help the group achieve its potential
  6. Demonstrate sound personal judgment and facilitate or participate in effective team decision making
  7. Effectively communicate and problem solve on interpersonal and group levels

### Curriculum Modules:

- Positive learning environment and group formation
- NOLS' leadership framework: four leadership roles, seven leadership skills, and one leadership style
- Expedition behavior
- Leadership teams and designated leader preparation
- Effective debriefing
- Feedback
- Communication (interpersonal gap, empathic communication, etc.)
- Decision-making models
- Developing judgment in others
- Diagnosing group challenges (Waterline Model)
- Tolerance for adversity and uncertainty

## RISK MANAGEMENT

NOLS teaches wilderness users to practice responsible habits that promote the health and safety of self and others. Each student is expected to:

- Recognize and consistently perform appropriate techniques to reduce or avoid hazards in a remote environment, (e.g., rockfall, weather, river crossings, etc.)
- Practice effective peer decision-making to mitigate hazards
- Display sound judgment and an awareness of team and self limitations

### Curriculum Modules:

- Identifying objective and subjective risks

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- Assessing likelihood and consequences
- Leading small teams in a communication-denied environment

### WILDERNESS SKILLS

NOLS students learn to live and travel in the wilderness within a framework of personal safety and care of the environment. Each student is expected to:

- Live comfortably in a remote environment; learn to camp, cook, and dress for a variety of conditions
- Travel competently in terrain using map and compass skills, off-trail navigation, hazard evaluation, route-finding techniques, and river-crossing techniques

#### Curriculum Modules:

- Review of individual equipment
- Introduction of group equipment
- Hygiene and water disinfection
- Pack packing
- Footwear and hiking tips
- Campsite selection and camp set up
- Leave No Trace™ principles
- Cooking and kitchen set up
- Nutrition
- Finding water
- Baking
- Map basics/review and scouting
- River crossing (as appropriate)
- Managing steep terrain (as appropriate)
- First aid: hydration, blisters/foot care, and other topics as appropriate

## **ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES**

NOLS connects students to wild places. Students will be able to:

- Explore the natural world through observation and application of ecological concepts
- Develop a sense of place by experiencing wilderness and exploring relationships with their surroundings
- Apply Leave No Trace™ principles to camping and travel