

## SNOWSHOEING ADVENTURE IN GLACIER NATIONAL PARK AND MISSION VALLEY, MT

Join me for a week of snowshoeing in spectacular Glacier National Park in, Montana as we explore this national gem in winter. Glacier, part of the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park, is a snowshoeing paradise. With over 1 million acres, many miles of trails, soaring peaks, awe-inspiring glaciers, Glacier is the perfect place to explore the backcountry on snowshoes.

This trip is designed for experienced, fit snowshoers who appreciate an opportunity to learn about the area and the natural history as we explore the winter backcountry.

For this trip we partner with the Glacier Institute (GI), a non-profit organization operating within the park, dedicated to connecting people with the natural and cultural wonders of the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem. The heart of this Ecosystem is Glacier National Park. Glacier Institute's slogan is "Learning Gone Wild" and they deliver!

The educational content on this trip complements the incredible snowshoeing and scenery. But you should be prepared at times for frequent stops for the instructor to share their information. This trip is ideal for those who love vigorous snowshoeing, but, also, enjoy learning about and appreciating their environment.

We will spend 2 days on a raptor-viewing safari driving on the scenic back roads of Mission Valley with a world-renowned snowy owl researcher. Next, we will snowshoe in Glacier National Park with a wildlife researcher who will teach us how to tell what animals have been before us by their clues of tracks, scat and signs. With luck, we'll spot some live animals as well. Another wildlife researcher/biologist will join us in GNP and expand our tracking knowledge plus teach us about the fire ecology and help us find many birds of prey including owls, Bald Eagles, and Red-Tailed Hawks. The learning will add to, not take away from, the great snowshoeing – this is an active snowshoeing trip with opportunities to learn about the fascinating natural history!

### **DAILY ITINERARY:**

Note: All topics/trails are subject to change due to Glacier Institute conflicts, illness, weather and trail conditions, etc. The following descriptions are only a sampling of what we may actually do on certain days. They give you a good idea of the types and possibilities that will be presented to us.

### ***Saturday, February 14***

Arrive Kalispell/Glacier Park International Airport (FCA) in the afternoon. Transport by Glacier Institute to Ninepipes Lodge in the Mission Valley. Orientation by GI staff.

### ***Sunday, February 15, and Monday, February 16***

Mission Valley

Topic: Raptor Viewing Safari with Denver Holt

The beautiful Mission Valley boasts one of the largest concentrations of wintering raptors in the northwestern United States, including rough legged and red tailed hawks, bald eagles, kestrels, merlins, prairie falcons, and an occasional gyrfalcon. After a brief introductory session on the natural history and identification characteristics of Montana's raptors, we will spend our days in the field driving the scenic back roads of the valley and stepping out to scope for birds, view nest sites, habitat and possibly assisting with research if desired. In our regularly scheduled course, *Winter Birds of Prey*, we normally see about 300 raptors in 2 days including approximately 10-15 different species! We will stay both nights and take our meals at Ninepipes Lodge.

### ***Tuesday, February 17***

Travel day to Flathead Valley and our next lodging spot at Glacier Park Motel. We will stop along the way to view beautiful Flathead Lake and eat lunch. Before leaving the area we can visit the National Bison Range and/or the Ninepipes Museum of Early Montana.

### ***Wednesday, February 18***

Going to the Sun Road: McDonald Creek/McDonald Lake area.

Topic: Tracks, Scat and Sign with Brian Baxter.

As we snowshoe, we'll learn how to tell what animals have been there before us by looking at the clues they leave behind. With luck, we'll spot some live animals as well!

Activity level: Depending on the area visited (road closures, weather) we will snowshoe about 6-8 miles roundtrip and the elevation gain will be no more than 300 feet.

### ***Thursday, February 19***

Camas Road.

Topic: Tracking and Fire Ecology with Vince Slabe.

We'll continue to hone our tracking skills and enjoy a more strenuous snowshoe as we learn about fire ecology in an area of Glacier that burned in 2003.

Activity level: The camas road is "hilly" and we can travel up to 15 miles roundtrip depending on the energy level of the group. The trail/road will be uphill on the way in and downhill on the way back and elevation gain will be approximately 750 feet.

### **Friday, February 20**

Inside North Fork Road.

Topic: Tracking and Glacier's Birds of Prey with Vince Slabe.

Bald Eagles, Red-Tailed Hawks and many species of Owls winter in the park and with Vince's expertise we will hopefully find a few.

Activity level: The Inside North Fork road is forested on either side and will hopefully provide great opportunities for tracking and finding birds. The road is similar to the Camas road in that elevation will be gained first and then lost on the return and we can travel for miles according to energy level. The elevation gain will be approximately 1000-1200 feet.

### **Saturday, February 21**

GI transport to Glacier National Park International Airport for home.

## **Glacier Institute Instructor Biographies**

**Brian Baxter** earned his B.S. in Wildlife Biology from Western Carolina University. He is a wildlife researcher and project coordinator for Silver Cloud Associates, a natural resource information company based in Libby, Montana. He has been involved in forest carnivore research in North America for the past fifteen years and is a member of the Western Forest Carnivore Committee. His published works include "On Silent Feet, Following the Lynx Pathways" an article in *Montana Magazine*, January/February, 2002.

**Vince Slabe** is a wildlife researcher and biologist with Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Park and Natural Resource Management from the University of Illinois. His research projects have included backtracking Canada lynx and fisher, conducting point count surveys for breeding songbirds, capturing and banding sage grouse, documenting rare water birds, and capturing and banding several species of raptors during migration. Vince spends his free time identifying and following tracks of rare animals, birding, canoeing, skiing, hunting, fishing, and walking his dogs.

**Denver Holt** earned his B.A. in History from University of Montana with additional studies in Wildlife Biology. He is the founder and president of the Owl Research Institute and the Ninepipes Wildlife Research and Education Center. Since 1978, he has been studying owls in the United States, Mexico and Costa Rica. In addition to countless magazine publications, Denver's snowy owl research has been featured in *National Geographic Magazine*.

**Trip Leadership and Contact Information**  
**Leader - Betsy Fowler**

Betsy's involvement with the AMC began with a job at Pinkham Notch Camp in 1969 where she worked in the office and on the "crew", then led Guided Hikes for 2 years. She and her husband also ran the AMC Mountain Leadership Workshop in the 1970's. As a guide for Bill Russell Mountain Tours, she led hiking trips to the fjords of Norway and the Tour du Mt. Blanc in France, Italy and Switzerland. She is currently a NH Chapter trip leader and cross-country ski trail adopter. Her first Major Excursion was co-leading a backpack in August 2004 to Banff, Yoho and Jasper National Parks in the Canadian Rockies. In 2005 she co-led a trip to Ecuador and the Galapagos; and, in 2006 and 2007 she co-led a Canadian Rockies backcountry ski trip and Machu Picchu/Cordillera Blanca Trek. In 2007 she co-led a trip to Patagonia. She travelled to Glacier to hike with her family in July 2005, then led a Major Excursion to Glacier in August 2007. She has Advanced Wilderness First Aid from SOLO as well as American Red Cross CPR training.

Address                   PO Box 1829, Conway, NH 03818  
Phone                     603-447-5077  
Email address         betsyfowler@roadrunner.com

**ACCOMODATIONS AND MEALS**

The trip will include all lodging, instruction, all meals except for 3 breakfasts, and tracking materials. All transportation will be provided by Glacier Institute vans. Lodging for the first portion of the trip will be at a lodge with individual rooms and private baths. Lodging for the second portion of the trip will be at a motel with individual rooms and private baths.

**GLACIER WEBSITES**

Below are some useful websites if you would like to do more research on the area and the trip:

[www.glacierinstitute.org](http://www.glacierinstitute.org)  
<http://www.nps.gov/glac/home.htm>

**COST, REGISTRATION AND CANCELLATION**

The approximate cost for the trip is \$1325 ground plus estimated airfare of \$500-800 (from East Coast). This is based on filling the trip (7 participants minimum). Trip fees include the following:

- Accomodations at Ninepipes Lodge and Glacier Park Motel
- Ground transportation from airport to Ninepipes Lodge and back in GI vans driven by GI staff
- All meals (alcohol is not included) except breakfast at Ninepipes Lodge
- Park entrance fees
- AMC Major Excursion Program Expense fee

- Fees for Glacier Institute instructors/staff/field experts
- Emergency medical and evacuation insurance

The approximate cost for the excursion is based on quotes at the time the trip was submitted to the Major Excursions Committee (January 2008). Any savings I achieve, as well as any cost increases, will be passed on to participants. Depending on when you sign up, you may pay more or less than other participants for airfare, as we may lock in individual fares as each person registers (once the trip minimum is met). I am willing to help you purchase your airline ticket or you may do your own purchase. Once your ticket is purchased, you own it and tickets are generally non-refundable and non-transferable, though policies vary by airline.

Please be aware that, in accordance with AMC policy, you are subsidizing the leader's costs. However, the leader may not profit from any major excursion. Any unspent trip funds are refunded to the participants. The trip fee also includes an AMC Program Expense fee to offset the administrative expenses of offering Major Excursions.

A registration deposit of \$500 is due with the application form (contact me, Betsy Fowler, for the application form; my contact information is listed under "Trip Leadership and Contact Information" above), and the balance of trip fees is due November 1, 2008. Air tickets will be charged directly to your credit card. To apply to the trip, you must submit the completed trip application form, the Confidential Medical form and the signed Acknowledgement and Assumption of Risk and Release forms with your deposit check. Make checks payable to the *Appalachian Mountain Club*. Mail forms and checks to Betsy Fowler, PO Box 1829, Conway, NH 03818.

**Cancellation:** Our cancellation policy is based on the simple precept that your cancellation shall not raise the cost to any of the other participants or the leader, and there is a \$100 cancellation fee. Therefore, if you cancel I will refund any fees that you have paid, less the \$100 cancellation fee and any expenses already incurred, or future expenses that will be incurred as a result of your registration that cannot be avoided. If you cancel after airline tickets have been purchased, then you own the tickets and that part of the fee cannot be refunded. Basically, if you cancel and I am able to find an acceptable (to me) substitute, you will get all your trip fees back less \$100 cancellation fee and less any air ticket you have purchased.

I will be using email as my primary source of communication. If you prefer snail mail and/or telephone communication, please note that on your registration form.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call me so that we can discuss them.

## **EXPERIENCE AND RISKS**

Snowshoeing in the mountains can be physically demanding. Although the elevations are not generally high enough for contracting altitude sickness, the combination of physical exertion and lower oxygen levels require that we pace ourselves and pay close attention to body-heat management, proper nutrition and hydration. People wishing to participate in this trip must have recent snowshoeing experience and be in good physical condition. This is not a trip for those inexperienced in winter hiking, or people who have never snowshoed.

When you participate in this activity you should be both physically and mentally prepared and equipped with the appropriate gear. You should always be aware of the risks involved and conduct yourself accordingly. We are not responsible for your safety: you are. Prior to registering for this activity you are asked to discuss your capabilities with me. Please do not be offended by any questions.

## **BEING A TEAM PLAYER**

We will be more than just a group; we will be a team. If you cannot accept and enjoy being part of a group, if you are not a team player who is willing to help your fellow hikers, then please do not register for this excursion. You may be asked to help the group in some way. If a member of our group becomes injured, you will be expected to help carry that person's gear.

## **EQUIPMENT LIST**

Notes: Below is a list of the required gear for the trip. Because weather can change quickly in the mountains, you will need to have wind and rain-resistant gear plus additional warm layers with you on all hikes. Keep in mind that we'll probably encounter a varied climate; mid-winter (temps/windchill to 0 F) to spring temperatures (40s), snow and/or rain, bright spring sun. The following is a list of the basics.

### **Required Clothing list**

2 sets of long underwear top and bottom (polypro, wool, silk, etc; **not cotton**)

Various weights of wool or fleece shirts/sweaters

Various weights of wool, poly or fleece under pants

Long hiking pants appropriate for winter conditions, **no jeans or cotton pants**

At least 2 sets of sock combinations that work for you: poly liner and wool outer sock

Outer shell jacket (water resistant) with hood

Outer shell pants (water resistant)

Glove Liners and Gloves/Mittens with wind shell

Gaiters

Wool or fleece hat that has full ear protection

Balaclava or neck warmer that can cover your nose

Sunglasses or glacier goggles with UV protection

### **Required Equipment**

Insulated winter hiking boots

Snowshoes

Boot traction for icy conditions - Stabilicers, microspikes

Day pack (large enough to carry up to 2-3 qts. water, outer shell and pants, fleece vest, lunch/snacks, hat and gloves, flashlight/headlamp, personal gear, etc; during hikes)

2-3 water bottles (liter size)

Lightweight flashlight or headlamp w/ extra batteries

Garbage bag to line pack (to keep things dry in the rain)

Personal First Aid kit w/ moleskin, personal meds, etc; (leader will have a group first aid kit)

Toilet paper

Sun screen (30spf)

Whistle

### **Optional/Personal Gear**

Trekking poles

Thermos

Hand/toe warmers

Knife (remember that this must be put in your checked luggage)

Bandanas/facial tissue for nose wiping

Compass

Binoculars

Field guides

Field notebook and pencil (waterproof or in ziploc bag)

Lip balm with uv protection

Waterproof matches

Personal toiletries

Spare glasses, contacts

Informal clothing for evening or around-town wear - jeans are okay here

Comfortable walking shoes

Ear plugs

Camera and film

Health insurance card