



“As early as 12, I was being groomed for outdoor leadership and camp counseling.”

At the age of 17, she spent a summer living in the woods with an outdoor pursuit club where they climbed Mount Robson, the highest peak in the Canadian Rockies.

She eventually went to university but bounced around different programs. “Finally I ended up transferring to Prescott College which specialized in outdoor education.”

She continued to work at summer camps, developing her skills even further. Loeffler completed a masters degree in outdoor experiential-based counseling, learning how to help people therapeutically in the outdoors, and a doctorate in outdoor recreation education. She arrived in Newfoundland 11 years ago to begin her teaching position at MUN. During her time in this province she developed MUN's recreation degree program, has received the Presidents Award for Distinguished Teaching in 2005 and most recently won the 2006 AAU Distinguished Teacher Award. She still uses experiential learning, from taking her students rock climbing in Flatrock to sea kayaking in Bay Bulls.

“I find my mind gives out before my body does. That was one thing I learned on Denali.”

#### THE ROAD TO EVEREST

With over a decade of professional teaching complete, Loeffler says her love of the outdoors — and especially mountaineering — has crept back into her life.

“I found myself in August 2004 needing a really big project to focus on and something I could devote a

whole lot of my being to and that ended up being Denali. I spent a year preparing, and that was a good thing for me to do. It turned out I inspired a lot of people. I'm still pretty fit and I didn't want to let that go so that's what took me to Tibet.”

She completed the world's hardest bicycle trip last fall, riding from Tibet to Nepal — that's over 1,200 kilometres through eight mountain passes.

“Then I got an offer to go on an Everest expedition this fall. So here someone has just handed me my dream on a platter but I knew how intense my teaching was this summer and I knew it was going to be a tremendous challenge to raise the funds so I had to turn it down.”

Instead she gave herself until March 2007 to get ready for Everest, and that includes raising over \$40,000.

But before Everest, Loeffler hopes to reach two more of the world's seven summits — the seven highest peaks on the seven continents. She has already reached North America's highest peak — Denali, which is 20,320 feet above sea level.

At the end of August she plans to travel to Russia to conquer Mount Elbrus which is Europe's highest peak at 18,506 feet. In December, she will attempt Aconcagua which is the highest peak in South America (22,841 feet). And she hopes number four of the seven summits will be Mount Everest, which is a sobering 29,028 feet high.

#### SOME BAD NEWS

Loeffler recently heard that three climbers died on Mount Elbrus. News like that is unnerving, but it also gives her preparations even more focus and devotion.



Mike Pollack photo