

OUTDOOR WRITERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

OUTDOORS UNLIMITED

THE VOICE OF THE OUTDOORS

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2020

FIRST YEAR FREELANCING

Lessons learned | **p. 14**

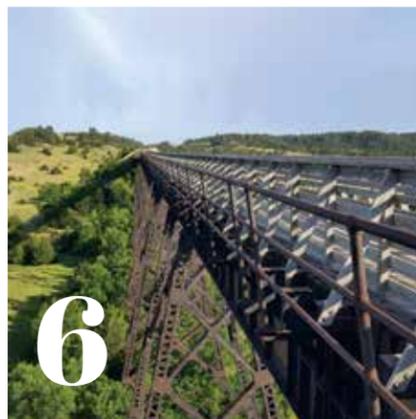


Wildlife photography
safety, SEO for writers,
OWAA Member deals
AND MORE.

OUTDOORS UNLIMITED

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2020 | VOL. 80, NO. 8

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ON THE COVER

BY TIM CHRISTIE | *A bull bison, intent on protecting the cow he's tending, stares intently for any adversary during the August rut in Yellowstone National Park. The look, should tell anyone, "I'm not to be messed with!"*

www.timchrisitephoto.com

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Paddling away in the deep end

In my last note, I mentioned a few things that I'd be doing as I 'dove into the deep end' of getting up to speed on all things OWAA. While I'm just starting to wrap my mind around all our programs, initiatives, history and impassioned membership, I wanted to update you on progress thus far, as I start to paddle around:

Listen & learn – I said I'd have many conversations with members, the Board and other OWAA stakeholders. Thus far, I've interviewed (almost) every member of the Board of Directors and had great and very valuable conversations with external partners and members, including ones who have been engaged for decades and those that just recently joined.

Plan – I'd noted that I'm a consummate planner. I'm now developing a plan for 2020. While I'm still in the note-taking phase, some things are becoming clear as the plan develops. Upgrading our members' accessibility to OWAA resources, their own directory listings and each other is paramount. To that end, I've initiated a new members-only Facebook group to share select information within our community. I've also started researching developers to provide us with an updated website and a new Association Management Software to power (among other things) the members-only area of our site.

Understand – Knowing what the needs of our members are will take time, but I'm looking to better leverage the collective body to better benefit you, the member. A recent example of this type of consideration is the new benefit providing members access to discounted 'pro' pricing from a slew of brands via IPA Collective. After all, what outdoors person doesn't need to upgrade their gear – at some point – right?

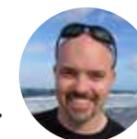
Expand benefits – Already I've brought a few new opportunities to the table for our membership. We now have a partnership where OWAA members can apply for press trips with member ranches of the Dude Ranch Association, discounted access to a few conferences for outdoor/adventure trade, a new store filled with OWAA-branded merchandise and the 'pro' deals via the IPA Collective.

Build partnerships – Partnerships take time. I'm continually working to secure mutually-beneficial partnerships that will provide you with new data about outdoor consumers, enhanced OWAA communications to the trade and consumer outlets and access to more trade events.

Build membership – This one is going to take more time. While I'm 'chomping at the bit' to expand and grow our membership, corral new sponsors and get new registrants to our annual meeting, I first need to get our house in order a little. I'm laying the groundwork to develop the materials, resources and capabilities to grow our community and continue to bring together even more storytellers passionate about the outdoors.

So, we're on our way toward a new horizon. We've got a long way to go, but the initial results are positive. The pack feels heavy, the trail is long and we've got miles to go – but we are on our way!

— *With more than 20 years' experience in the outdoor and travel industries, Chesak is the 17th executive director of OWAA.*



Outdoor Writers Association of America

Our mission: improve the professional skills of our members, set the highest ethical and communications standards, encourage public enjoyment and conservation of natural resources and mentor the next generation of professional outdoor communicators.



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

OWAA Ethics



OWAA President Tim Mead is a freelance writer and photographer from North Carolina with hundreds of credits in national and regional magazines.

Tim Mead
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Shortly after being elected OWAA President, I returned home from the Little Rock conference. Soon after that, I received a request for help from a member.

He alerted me that he wrote for a major magazine months ago and was never paid. Could I help? Both editor and publisher were people I had worked with before. I sent them an email and asked for an explanation. I did not get one. The OWAA member told me he still had not received a check. So, I sent a second email.

A couple of months went by. The member sent me a message saying he had payment and “thanks for the help.” A couple of days later I got a message that the check bounced. Our member said others ought to know the magazine did not pay.

What to do? I consulted. In email messages I asked Terry Brady, Ethics Committee Chair, Bill Powell, Legal Counsel, and several other members whose judgment I respect.

OWAA Ethics guidelines apply only to disputes among members. OWAA has no jurisdiction over disputes between a member and an outside party. It appears that a failure to pay is a simple business dispute, and one for which it's probably not worth hiring an attorney. A number of years ago, back in the days of slides, I sent 50 plus of my best brown trout slides to a magazine and they were lost. Was it worth hiring a Canadian attorney? I decided “no.”

A remaining option might be called “public shaming.” We could run a notice in *Outdoors Unlimited* warning OWAA members publisher X has failed to pay for published work except with an insufficient funds check. The danger, of course, is such a notice might draw a lawsuit which would cost OWAA more than the loss to the individual member. And, as Bill Powell noted, lawsuits “Are unpleasant, always, and for both parties.”

More recently there were some concerns posted on the OWAA Members

Only Facebook page where members had some concerns about a recent OWAA member benefit.

So, what to do? My wise friends seemed to agree, the best OWAA strategy was a third-party intervention, in our case by the Executive Director or President. Including, as a matter of fact, that an OWAA member stiffed by a media outlet may let the word get out among the community that we should take care in dealing with that publisher.

In that context, if you are having trouble getting paid, let Chez Chesak, our Executive Director, or me know and we'll rattle cages as best we can.

LEAVE A LEGACY as timeless as the great outdoors

Leaving a legacy gift to OWAA in your will allows the organization to:

- Provide best practices to our members
- Equip our membership to inspire others to get outside
- Build a communal network for outdoor media
- Inspire future generations of journalists

Your bequest can help your family minimize estate taxes while helping preserve the future of OWAA. For more information, contact Executive Director Chez Chesak at chez@owaa.org.

GOING MIRRORLESS

BY PAUL QUENEAU |
MISSOULA, MONTANA

FOR MOST OUTDOOR WRITERS, camera equipment is the costliest gear we take afield. We debate which brands and models will best suit our needs, and when the time is right to replace or upgrade our trusted tools.

For 15 years I've used Canon DSLRs for all my professional work, and they've never let me down. My Nikon friends report the same—one reason why these brands have ruled the roost for so many years.

Yet this spring, buoyed by sales of its mirrorless lineup, Sony overtook Nikon as the number two manufacturer the U.S. full-frame market, putting Canon on notice just as it was busy reporting another drop in earning and shipments.

Mirrorless cameras trade out the pentaprism and mirror mechanism of traditional DSLRs for a live sensor-feed to an electronic viewfinder (EVF). This gives you a better feel for the image you're about to take, and depending on the model, saves up to a pound of weight, all while maintaining the steady eyebrow-hold and other familiar DSLR ergonomics.

For years I all but ignored the growing mirrorless fervor. Then Canon announced its first mirrorless full-frame body would employ an all-new, wider lens mount. That startled me into cognizance. Nikon was busy doing the same with its Z-mount, leading camera prognosticators across the interwebs to say it was only a matter of time before mirrorless would replace DSLRs in the hands of most pros.

Yet I was heavily invested in Canon EF lenses, which was now clearly in the company's rearview as it rolled out 10 professional and downright drool-worthy RF lenses in rapid succession. True, EF lenses will remain usable via a converter, but as I feared, each new chunk of RF glass glinting in the spotlight has plunged the resale value of similar EF lenses.

So I began looking hard at the various mirrorless options, and by June was ready to take the plunge. As treacherous as it felt, Sony's offers were too attractive to pass up.

Working with Noah Buchanan and Gary Farber at Hunt's Photo and Video, a staunch OWAA supporter that has treated me wonderfully for more than a decade, I ordered the budget-minded Sony a7 iii with its renowned 24-megapixel full-frame 35 mm sensor and 10 frames-per-second speed. Combined with Sigma's MC-11 converter, it allowed me to mount all my Canon EF lenses. Sony built their E-mount to allow for full-frame converters that require no glass elements, meaning no loss in sharpness. There is a negligible focus lag, and some of the fanciest settings aren't available, but to me it proved plenty workable while also making me quietly long for native Sony lenses.

... leading camera prognosticators across the interwebs to say it was only a matter of time before mirrorless would replace DSLRs in the hands of most pros.

Hunts gave me a five percent credit with my purchase, good for extra batteries and other gear, thanks to my OWAA membership. Soon after the June Little Rock conference, I was hiking into coastal Pinckney Island National Wildlife Refuge in the morning half-light with the Sony attached to my trusty Canon 100-400mm II with a 1.4X teleconverter. I hoped to get shots of the thousands of shorebirds that nest there, and the place didn't disappoint despite stifling humidity and clouds of vicious mosquitoes. Neither did the Sony—I took the best images I'd ever shot of South Carolina's Low Country.

I quickly adjusted to the camera's svelte proportions and was grateful for one thing Sony didn't try to shrink—the battery, which churns out more than 800 images

per charge. I also found the rave reviews of Sony sensors to be spot-on. But speaking of spots, it's a nice segue into my single biggest complaint of mirrorless cameras. They require a constant fight against dust without a mirror there to protect the sensor. I now swap lenses with the utmost care and speed, but dust inevitably still gets on the sensor, requiring me to clean it with far greater frequency.

My other main gripe, at least about the Sony a7 iii, is the sharpness of its viewfinder. I've long used my cameras and long lenses like binoculars to inspect wildlife from a distance, but the 2,359,000-dot EVF of that base-model Sony simply isn't up to the task.

That's changed, though, when I switched to using Sony's new a7R IV. It sports a 5.76 million-dot OLED viewfinder that to my eye is just as sharp as my past DSLRs. I'm no longer left searching for my subject amid jaggy pixels.

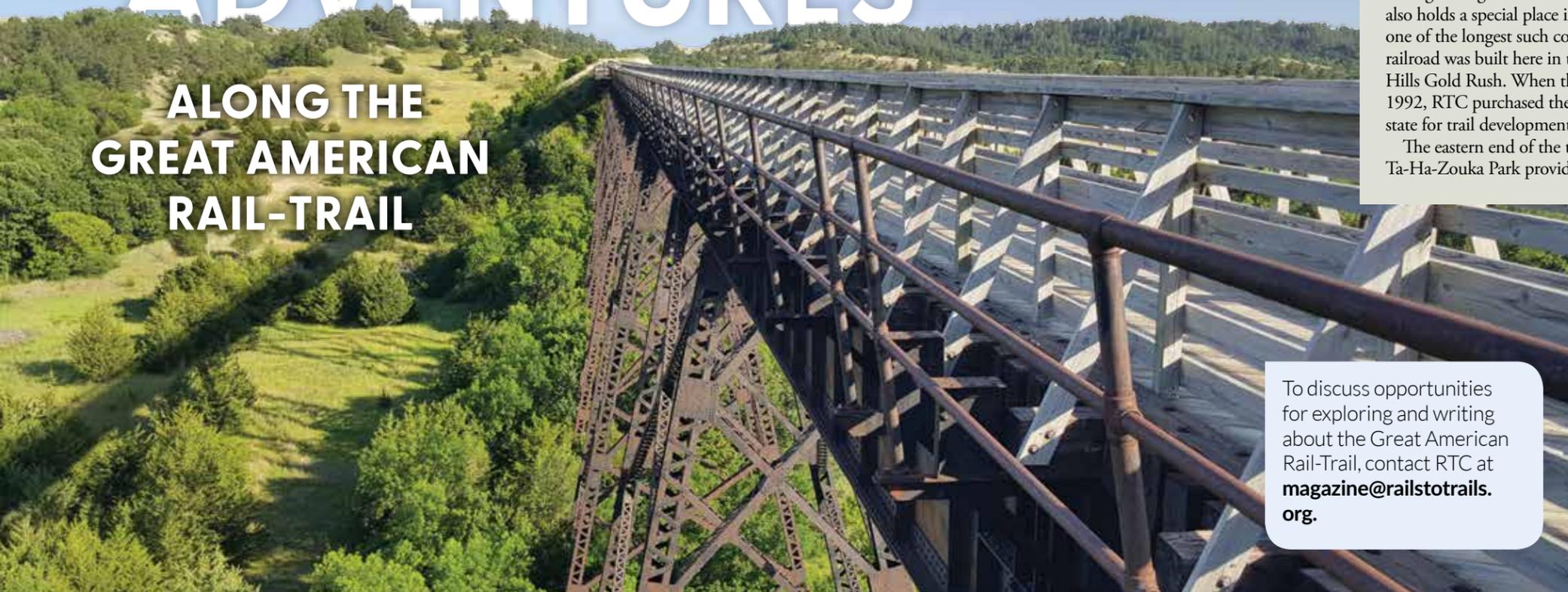
My only Sony gripes are that my camera sometimes crashes, especially if I turn it on quickly and try to shoot immediately. I have to then turn it off and back on again, as its operating system isn't as stable as Canon's. Plus, I deal with the more common complaints: Sony's notoriously elaborate menu system, and the lack of lossless compressed RAW files.

All that said, Sony's auto-focus speed, sensor quality, dynamic range for adjusting highlights and shadows with minimal noise, and other factors make up for any deficiencies. After six months, I'm an official mirrorless convert. I'm able to track movement even of small birds while rapid-fire shooting as well as I did with my DSLR, while knowing just how my exposure will look at the moment the shutter drops. I adore the weight savings, and Sony's lens options have nailed all my needs and then some, especially their new 200-600mm and Tamron's incredibly sharp and light 28-75mm.

I'm waiting for the day I miss my DSLR, but it hasn't arrived yet. If you're interested in testing the mirrorless waters, Hunt's is helping to plan a try-out session at this summer's OWAA conference at the Jay Peak Resort in Vermont.

OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

ALONG THE GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL



COWBOY RECREATION AND NATURE TRAIL (NEBRASKA)

“Recreation and Nature”—it’s right there in the name, and this rail-trail offers both in spades. With more than 200 miles of rugged biking adventure, the Cowboy Recreation and Nature Trail takes the Great American through a large swath of northern Nebraska. The trail also holds a special place in the rail-trail movement as one of the longest such conversions in the nation. The railroad was built here in the 1870s to fuel the Black Hills Gold Rush. When the line was abandoned in 1992, RTC purchased the corridor and donated it to the state for trail development.

The eastern end of the trail begins in Norfolk, where Ta-Ha-Zouka Park provides a prime place for camping

(including RVs) and fishing. From there, the trail traverses the lush Elkhorn River Valley as it heads northwest. Toward the western end of the trail, near Long Pine, an eponymous crystal-clear creek is a local favorite for trout fishing and tubing.

Approaching Valentine, travelers will experience a ‘wow’ moment: a dramatic quarter mile-long bridge rising 150 feet above the Niobrara River, a National Scenic River that can be explored by canoe, tube, kayak or raft. And throughout the route, a backdrop of native prairie, wooded riverbanks and grass-covered dunes (the largest in the western hemisphere) offers a haven for white-tailed deer, wild turkeys, pheasants, quail and more. Several state-owned wildlife management areas near the trail are open for public hunting and primitive camping.

To discuss opportunities for exploring and writing about the Great American Rail-Trail, contact RTC at magazine@railstotrails.org.

HENNEPIN CANAL PARKWAY (ILLINOIS)

A Midwestern gem, the Hennepin Canal Parkway provides a never-dull mixture of northwestern Illinois terrain, including forest, prairie, wetlands and farm fields. Spanning more than 100 miles, the trail hosts the Great American route from the Illinois River in the east to the Rock River in the west; plus, a spur extends north to Sterling at its midpoint. This serene escape follows an early 20th-century canal listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and along the way, travelers will see numerous lift bridges, aqueducts, locks and other relics of a bygone era.

In addition to the trail’s own biking, hiking and equestrian options, the canal adds to the all-around adventure with canoeing, kayaking, boating and fishing. And if birding is your passion, know that bald eagles, waterfowl, woodpeckers and other types of birds are frequently seen in this rural setting.

The Hennepin Canal Parkway is administered by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources as a state park and includes campsites. Bow hunting of deer and dove hunting are also available in the park.

TRAIL OF THE COEUR D’ALENES (IDAHO)

A visit to Idaho has to be on any outdoor enthusiast’s bucket list. Crossing the state’s Panhandle, the 73-mile Trail of the Coeur d’Alenes takes Great American travelers through the rolling foothills of the Palouse prairie and forested mountain valleys. Skirting the Coeur d’Alene River and journeying through Idaho’s chain-of-lakes region, adventurers might spot elk, moose, eagles and other wildlife among the trees. The trail’s proximity to the river also offers options for fishing and paddle sports.

Approaching its west end in Plummer, the trail crosses the southern end of Lake Coeur d’Alene on the stunning Chatcolet Bridge. In its waters, anglers will find bass, trout and even chinook salmon. Nestled against the lake, Heyburn State Park offers a wealth of recreational fun, including boating, swimming, hiking and camping. More camping options are also available in the nearby Coeur d’Alene National Forest.

—Laura Stark is an OWAA member and a lead writer and editor for Rails to Trails magazine, responsible for highlighting trails and the people working hard to support them across America.

BY LAURA STARK | BROOMFIELD, COLORADO

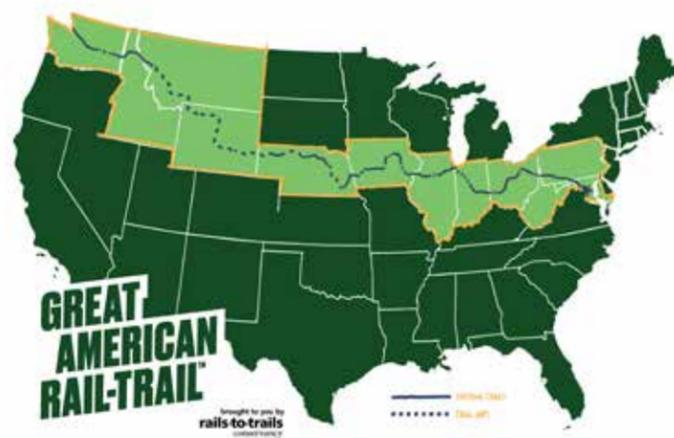
IN THE HEYDAY OF TRAINS, thousands of miles of railway crisscrossed the country, an arterial network of timber and steel nourishing rural communities and urban powerhouses alike.

When rail started losing prominence with the rise of motor vehicles, many railway corridors fell into disuse. Flashforward many decades and these abandoned lines were given new life as rail-trails—multipurpose public paths for walkers, bicyclists, equestrians and others. These corridors of industry were transformed into public lands and pathways to the outdoors.

Since the late 1980s, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) has

envisioned a cross-country trail built upon the foundations of these magnificent railway corridors. The Great American Rail-Trail spans more than 3,700 miles between Washington, D.C., and Washington State, traversing some of America’s most iconic and scenic natural wonders. While still in progress, it already connects us to our shared heritage, nature and each other in unforgettable ways. More than half the route is already complete and open as the Great American knits together existing trails. For the remaining gaps, RTC is providing the national leadership and on-the-ground support to bring together the people, plans and partnerships necessary for completing the Great American Rail-Trail.

Here are just a handful of the nearly boundless outdoor adventures to be found along this emerging national pathway.



SEO

FOR OUTDOOR WRITERS

What you should know

BY SCOTT SEVERSON | WAYZATA, MINNESOTA

AS OUTDOOR WRITERS, our writing projects may have different objectives, but for the most part, like it or not, we are all in the eyeball business. If your target audience isn't viewing and engaging with your content, it's unlikely to meet your business objectives. With that in mind, here are a few basic principles of Search Engine Optimization (SEO) that will help your content be discovered.

You may have heard the joke, "If you want to bury a dead body where no one will find it, just bury it on page two of a Google search result page." The bottom line is, if you're not ranking on Google you don't exist.

According to StatCounter, Google currently accounts for 92% of search engine market share. Given its outsized influence, there are a lot of theories on how to rank well on Google. Google is never going to tell about all the factors that influence where you show up in a search engine result, but it's clear that the quality of your content is a huge factor. Specifically, it's about something they call E-A-T.

E-A-T stands for EXPERTISE, AUTHORITY and TRUSTWORTHINESS. Let's break these down.

First is **EXPERTISE**. Outdoor writers typically have this in spades. We're passionate about our niche and it shows in our content.

AUTHORITY is related to expertise, but the big thing Google wants here is either conducting or citing research that supports the topic. You should link to any research you cite with the appropriate anchor text. This is a direct signal to Google that you are attributing sources. From a reader's perspective, linking makes it easy to visit the original source. This transparency also helps develop greater trust with your readers.

The final part is **TRUST**. While this is an article about SEO, we can't write content just to be found in a search; we're writing for a human audience first and foremost. The Google Webmaster Guidelines suggest asking the following question when you're creating content, "Does this help my users? Would I do this if search engines didn't exist?"

Beyond E-A-T, there are a few basics to cover when you create content web content.

KEYWORD RESEARCH

When starting an article, you need specific keywords to target. For example, I recently wrote about Sport Dog's TEK 2.0 GPS Tracking + E-Collar. I wanted to rank for the specific name brand product term if people were searching for that particular product, but I also wanted to rank for the general unbranded term for people researching the category. By using Google's Keyword Planner, I found a considerably higher search volume for "GPS Dog Collar" than "GPS e-collar" so I used the higher ranking keywords in the article.

H TAGS

H Tags or Heading Tags help make your content more user-friendly and provide SEO value. HTML has six different heading tags — h1, h2, and so on. The h1 is considered the most important tag, and the h6 is the least important. Here's how to use them:

H1 - Typically the title of the article. The most important concept of the page, generally 20-70 characters in length

H2 - Is a SubHead for your H1

H3 - is Subhead for your H2 and so on.

EXAMPLE OF H TAGS IN USE

H1- The Five Gun Cleaning Basics Every Hunter Needs to Know

H2 - Tools You'll Need

H3 - Cleaning Rods and Brushes

H3 - Solvents and Lube

H2 - Disassembly

H3- Disassembling a Shotgun

H4 - Removing the Barrel

H4 - Removing the Trigger Assembly

H3 - Disassembling a Rifle

H4 - Remove the Bolt

TOOLS

There are a variety of tools to make SEO easier and a part of your content creation. I've found that Yoast is one of the most user-friendly options for writers creating content in Word Press. It'll catch most SEO errors and give you suggestions for improvement.

WORD COUNT

While our goal shouldn't be to write an overly long article, longer articles generally win more organic traffic. A good rule of thumb is to look at the length of the top 10 articles that currently rank for a search term that you're targeting and use that as a guide.

META DESCRIPTION

The meta description is a snippet of up to about 155 characters — a tag in HTML — which summarizes a page's content. Search engines show the meta description in search results mostly when the searched-for phrase is within the description, so optimizing the meta description is important for SEO. I tend to think of the meta description as an ad for your content. Give the searcher reason to click on your link and ask them to take action. Here's an example of Meta Description for an article that was optimized for the search term "Pheasant Hunting Gear":

The Ultimate Pheasant Hunting Gear List - HuntTested

<https://hunted.com/the-ultimate-pheasant-hunting-gear-list>

Jul 1, 2018 - Pheasant Hunting - Ensure you have all the right gear you need for a successful hunt. Check out our Ultimate Pheasant Hunting Gear List.

IMAGERY

Using more images in your content is usually better for your readers and for search traffic. I typically like to use an image every 200 words or so. Be sure to optimize the image for search by completing the ALT and description tags to tell Google what it is. Some sites see significant traffic from Google image searches.

This is a basic overview of SEO best practices to consider as you're developing content. For more on the subject, sites like neilpatel.com or searchenginejournal.com can provide a deeper dive. I often geek out a bit trying to figure out how to increase article ranking. When I do it's important to remember that I'm writing for a person with interests similar to my own. If I can write something that's of value for him or her, Google will likely find it valuable too.

— Scott Severson is the founder and editor in chief of HuntTested.com. The former product testing manager for North American Hunter Magazine, he went on to lead the magazine's internet business before founding HuntTested to blend his love of hunting and hunting gear with his internet marketing background. HuntTested.com provides in-depth content, resources, and reviews on big game gear, upland game gear, camping and general outdoor gear. Scott joined OWAA in 2019.

NEW MEMBERS ONLY FACEBOOK GROUP

OWAA now has a members only Facebook group. If you haven't already joined, simply request access through the link below. Once approved, you'll be added to this new private group.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/owaamembers/>



Keeping it REAL

Ground truthing and accuracy

The making of a trail guide

Outline xxxxxx... Photo courtesy of xxxxx



Out on the trail researching in the winter. Photo by Mary Terra-Berns.

BY MARY TERRA-BERNS |
COEUR D'ALENE, IDAHO

WHEN I TRAVEL ABROAD, I typically have a guidebook with me. There are a couple of brands I love because of the concise, accurate descriptions, and color photographs. I also have trail guides for hiking and biking, and I look for the same level of accuracy.

A lot of thought goes into producing a good guidebook (e.g., traditional publishing vs. self-publishing, color or black and white, include advertising or not, book size, number of pages).

However, providing accurate information that has been ground-truthed should be at the top of the list. Ground-truth-

ing means physically going to a site and verifying what is on the ground. This is a good practice even if you are familiar with the area. Having a guidebook that gives inaccurate, outdated, vague, or confusing information will quickly relegate it to the “one star” category.

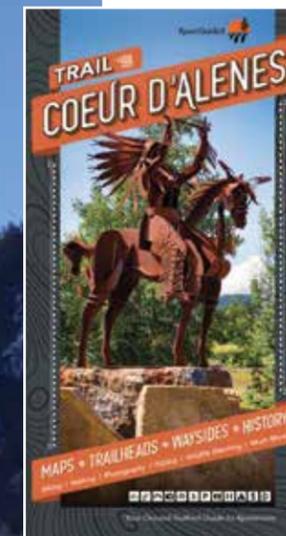
So, when my friend Judi Cronin (jcroninphotograph.com), a professional photographer, and I decided to team up on a Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes guidebook, we did our homework. There are 19 trailheads and 20 waysides on the 73.2-mile Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes. We wanted to highlight each of them.

Even though I bike and Nordic ski on the trail regularly, we went to every trailhead and wayside to record any recent changes and to verify the amenities locat-

ed at each site. All of the trailheads have benches, picnic tables, and restrooms. Almost all of the waysides have a bench, and some have a picnic table and restroom. Important amenities such as water availability (only at two trailheads) and bike repair stations (only at three trailheads) are not always noted in on-line blogs and other publications.

We talked with the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation trail manager and several trail enthusiasts about what they would really like to see in a trail guide (other than directions, miles, amenities, etc.), and the most common response was history along the trail. Keeping historical information as accurate as possible takes a different kind of ground-truthing.

In 1886, the Washington and Idaho



Railroad built a branch line from Tekoa, Washington, to Burke, Idaho, dubbed the Wallace Branch, to transport gold, silver, and other valuable ores out of the Coeur d'Alene Mining District.

The Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes is a rail-trail that follows the path of the historic Wallace Branch. Consequently, history is abundant along the trail and is fascinating.

So, in addition to ground-truthing the trailheads and waysides, verifying historical stories was important as well. Some stories are unbelievable (because they are not true), some are well documented and some have various versions seen through different eyes. Searching out and verifying historical facts requires patience, attention to minor details, and research skills.

If you are thinking about publishing a guidebook and want to see reviews with five stars instead of one, do your homework. Verify your information by ground-truthing, be as accurate as possible, and keep it real.

— Mary Terra-Berns, an OWAA member since 2016, lives in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, where she writes for a number of magazines.



A moose forages along the trail. Photo by Mary Terra-Berns.

**There's a Story
Behind Our Seeds**

ERNST SEEDS

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POLLINATION APPROVED

f in t i y

DANGEROUS CRITTERS

Wildlife photography safety tips

TIM CHRISTY |
COEUR D'ALENE, IDAHO

EVEN SOMEONE WHO'D NEVER SEEN A BISON should have understood the look. Intense. Unyielding. Unforgiving. Don't try. Don't even think about it! And yet the man in the pink shirt and dockers confidently approached the rutting bull and cow bison.



ABOVE: A bison looks intently towards the camera. RIGHT PAGE: Critical to staying alive is understanding body language and eye contact with critters. This bull elk is in an aggressive mode. You can see it in his body language and eyes. Photos by Tim Christy

Everything seemed to turn into slow motion—shifting from wooing his cow, his front shoulders twisted, launching him forward. Two thousand pounds of brown fury with blood in his eyes was on the man in pink before he could turn to run. An explosion of dust engulfed the scene; before it settled, the bull emerged, trotting back to his girlfriend-for-the-day. Luck was with the tourist who ignored dozens of warnings. As several people ran to his aid, he struggled to get up. Bright red splotches splayed across his shirt; his knees poked out of his pants. The bull had just head-butted him instead of goring or stomping him to death.

That happened some 30 years ago on a hot August day while I visited Yellowstone National Park at the peak of the bison rut. Herds of the wooly behemoths roamed throughout the park and all the

males had short fuses. “Mess with me,” their attitudes said, “You’re gonna know pain. Maybe death.”

Millions of people visit Yellowstone every year. Additionally, Western Montana’s National Bison Range, Custer National Park in South Dakota, and Teddy Roosevelt National Park in North Dakota are flooded with people wanting to experience wild America. Wherever you find bison, unless you sneak into the parks under the cover of darkness, you’ve been warned, “Don’t approach Bison—they’re dangerous!”

This past summer a young girl was attacked and pitched high into the air like a rag doll by a bull wanting no part of human intrusion. The video made national network evening news. What wasn’t asked was, “Where were the parents?” “Who allowed her into that dangerous situation?”

National Parks have set a minimum distance of 25 yards for most wildlife and 100 yards for grizzly bears and wolves.

A couple weeks later social media was abuzz with a video of people standing on a wooden walkway with a bull peacefully feeding next to the trail. Only a wooden railing separated several people from the bull mere feet away. One brave (read stupid) guy reached over the railing to scratch the bull’s ear. Recoiling, the bull backed up. Had he bulled forward, several people would have been involved in a

wooly train wreck.

As a wildlife and nature photographer, I’ve been tramping around North America and Africa now for 40 plus years. People approaching too closely to potentially deadly animals including bison, bears, elk, moose and even deer have always been a problem. The invention of point-and-shoot cameras seemed to lure even more people into approaching up close and personal. Cell phones exacerbated the problem, especially for those wanting a selfie. Walking up to a bedded bison or bull elk, turning your back on it, and then taking a photograph can earn you a Darwin Award.

Other than allowing such reckless behavior and/or removing people from the gene pool, what should responsible visitors to the wild do?

1 If you’re going to photograph, do it with a camera and appropriate telephoto lens.

2 Learn about animal behavior. Always allow animals a path to escape. I’ve seen photographers literally surround a bull elk to get photos. Beside ruining the photos of some because there are other photographers in one’s images, it dramatically raises the stress on the animal.

3 Follow the rules. National Park regulations are available for every park. National Parks have set a minimum distance of 25 yards for most wildlife and 100 yards for grizzly bears and wolves. Even 25 yards is too close for rutting ungulates.

A simple formula for safety; if an animal can kill or maim you, don’t help them do it.

— Tim Christie is an OWAA Excellence in Craft recipient and has been an OWAA member since 1985. He’s traveled all over North America and to South Africa in search of magical light and experiences that make for interesting images and articles.



PRODUCT REVIEW

Sirui P-326 carbon fiber monopod

BY NOAH BUCHANAN |
HUNT’S PHOTO AND VIDEO

Monopods are a must-have accessory to any wildlife photographers kit. Carrying a telephoto lens can tire you out quite quickly. Monopods are a great way to stay out shooting longer and reduce the risk of injury or even damage to your equipment. You can go virtually anywhere with a monopod—even places where tripods aren’t allowed. This is helpful when shooting in popular locations where a tripod either isn’t allowed or is too hard to move around and set up. Monopods also allow you to work much faster than using a tripod. If your subject is moving, you can quickly move without worrying about a clunky tripod.

Monopods vary by length, type of locks and the materials they’re built with.

The Sirui P-326 is one of the smallest and lightest monopods I’ve come across. It collapses to 15.6 inches and extends to 61.4 inches. It weighs only 0.9 pounds and can support up to 22 pounds. Its carbon fiber material helps cut down on weight and reduce vibration. It’s compact enough to throw into a suitcase while traveling and extends long enough to be at eye level while shooting. Even for a taller person like myself at 6 feet 2 inches, I have no trouble bringing the camera up to eye level.

Contact me today to inquire about all the different types of monopods available and to find one that best fits you! If you’re in the market for anything else, please reach out and I’ll work special OWAA pricing for you. nbuchanan@huntsphoto.com.



First year freelancing: Lessons learned

BY CHRISTINE PETERSON |
NEWCASTLE, WYOMING

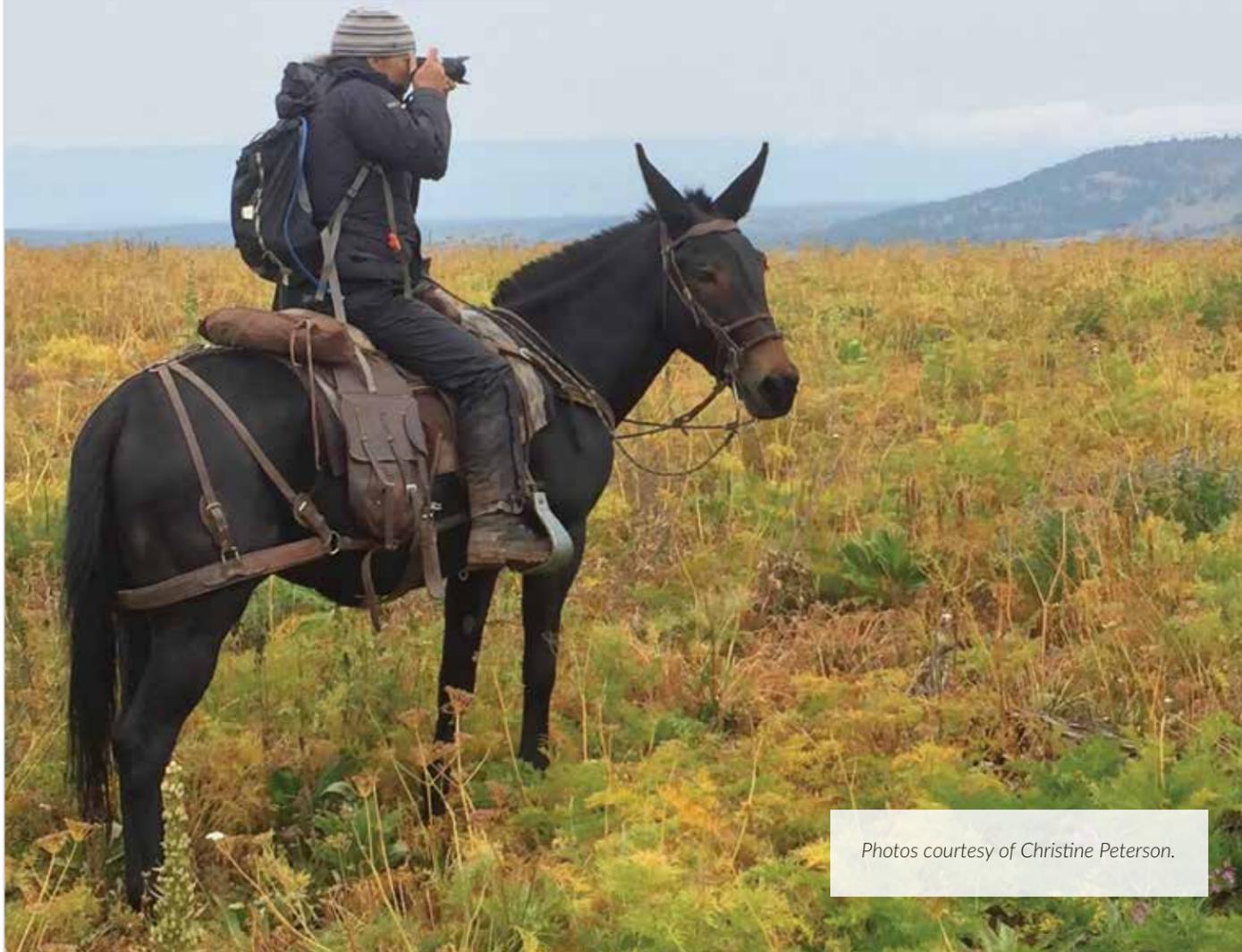
TEN YEARS AGO, IN THE FREEZING COLD WYOMING WINTER, my soon-to-be husband and I decided to get married, quit our jobs, and travel for a year. I had been a local government reporter at the Wyoming state paper for two years, he'd been working odd jobs between summer stints guiding fly fishers in Alaska. It seemed perfect – then

I panicked. I couldn't be a freelance writer, I told him. I couldn't live with that much unpredictability, that much hustle, that much unknown. But we had committed, so we did.

I cleaned toilets in Alaska while he guided. We saved money and traveled, writing weekly columns for \$75 for my home paper and selling one story about bone fishing on the Yucatan to the Dallas Morning News.

When I came home, I knew freelancing,

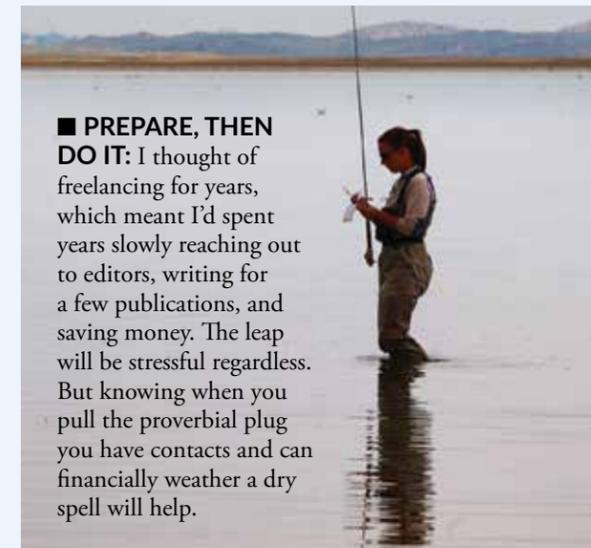
while fun, was not practical if I wanted to do silly things like eat and pay rent. So, I started as the outdoor reporter for the same paper I'd left and figured I'd found my dream job. I spent the next handful of years trapping grizzly bears, searching for black footed ferrets, riding horseback into the wilderness, and chasing native cutthroat all for stories. But the industry changed, and the paper changed, and soon I was spending most of my time at a desk as managing editor and not much time outside.



Photos courtesy of Christine Peterson.

I pulled out a few sheets of paper I collected from a 2012 OWAA seminar titled something like “how you know when you're ready to full-time freelance.” The check list, created by fellow member and good friend Colleen Miniuk, had been my guiding light over the years. The bulleted items gave a smart breakdown of the realities of freelancing that had previously helped me realize I wasn't ready. This time, that list made me realize I was.

So, I turned in my three weeks' notice and left the only real employer I'd ever known in the only real job I'd ever known.



■ **PREPARE, THEN DO IT:** I thought of freelancing for years, which meant I'd spent years slowly reaching out to editors, writing for a few publications, and saving money. The leap will be stressful regardless. But knowing when you pull the proverbial plug you have contacts and can financially weather a dry spell will help.

■ **BUILD A SUPPORT NETWORK:** If you're reading this, you're already an OWAA member, which is great. Stay a member and go to conferences to meet others. Having a group of other freelancers, writers, photographers or videographers will help when you're frustrated and down. There's nothing like commiserating with someone else who just got their 12th rejection letter.

■ **BE DISCIPLINED:** Congratulations! You're working from home now. You can stay in your sweats all day and eat chips straight from the bag while staring listlessly out the window. You can do laundry and clean the bathtub in between phone calls. But also remember when you're not working, you're not making money. Be purposeful about the time you work and purposeful about the time you don't.

■ **MAKE PITCHING A GAME:** Collect those rejection letters and unreturned emails. Make getting 30 rejections a goal. Pitching is a hustle, it's a game you must embrace. Instead of taking those silences or “no thank yous” personally, move on, tweak the pitch and send it to someone else. Each one is a lesson learned and each one is a chance to branch out to a new publication or editor.

I knew I might regret the decision. I might miss the stability of a regular paycheck, the daily routine of talking with coworkers, and the feeling of being part of a team. But I also might not. And I knew with absolute clarity I would regret not trying a full-time freelance life again.

The lessons I've learned in the last year and a half have largely come from fellow OWAA members like Colleen, former OU editor Kelsey Dayton and long-time Idaho freelancer Kris Millgate. They may not make you decide to leave that steady job, but they might just offer a little clarity on the decision.

■ **GET OUT OF YOUR HOUSE:** Those sweats you're still in? Get out of them and go work somewhere else. The change of scenery will spur your brain and keep the neighbors from wondering if they should call for a welfare check on that person they never see.

■ **DO YOUR HOMEWORK:** I once spent an entire day reading National Geographic Animals, searching for editors and reading their recent stories. It felt like a waste at the time, but ultimately it meant I knew who I was pitching and what would resonate. It also resulted in my first story with them. Know your publication and know your editor.

■ **BE A PEST, BUT NOT THAT BIG A PEST:** Follow up on those pitches. Wait a week or two weeks, less if the pitch is timely. Be consummately polite, but also remember editors receive dozens or more pitches a day. Yours needs to be on top, and sometimes that comes by reminding them you sent it.

■ **GO ON THAT TRIP:** Now your field work is on your own time. You aren't getting paid for it unless you have an assignment, so it's often a risk. I went on a six-day horse pack trip into the Teton Range shortly after I went freelance without an assignment. Best case, I hoped to sell a story or two. Worst case, I went on a bucket-list trip deep into rugged, beautiful wilderness. Consider those trips a perk of the job, and if nothing else, post images on social media to build your brand.

■ **THAT BEING SAID, MODERATE YOUR USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA:** Yes, it can be helpful. Yes, we're all friends with biologists, journalists and others who might have story ideas. Yes, it's a good way to build your credibility. But scrolling endlessly through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat are also a massive time suck. Use social media as a tool, don't let it run your life.

— Christine Peterson has been an outdoor writer from her home in Wyoming for the past decade. She has had bylines in National Geographic Animals, Outdoor Life, High Country News, the Cool Green Science Blog and others. She is OWAA's 2nd Vice President. Find her at Christine-peterson.com, Twitter @Peterson-Outside and Instagram @she.will.roam.

EXPLORING VERMONT

BY GARY MOORE



OWAA'S 2020 CONFERENCE will be held in Vermont's famed Northeast Kingdom. It's the most rural and remote region of the state, encompassing the three northeastern counties of Essex, Orleans and Caledonia. We'll offer both pre-conference and post-conference trips throughout central and northern Vermont and a couple of trips in the White Mountains of New Hampshire.

FISHING

Fishing will be the focus of several trips, like charters for trout and salmon on 125-mile-long Lake Champlain, guided trips led by biologists on Lake Memphremagog, various trips to rivers and streams in the Northeast Kingdom and a fly fishing trip for muskies in upstate New York.

Continued on page 18

Exploring Vermont continued from page 16

CANOEING, KAYAKING & BIKING

There will also be guided and self-guided canoe, kayak and bike trips offered. Vermont has a lot of water and trails to explore!

HIKING

Hiking is big in Vermont. Vermont's Long Trail runs the length of the state and crosses right over Jay Peak before reaching the Canadian border. The Green Mountain Club staff will lead a hike on the Long Trail. The Appalachian Trail (AT) and the Long Trail are one and the same in the southern third of Vermont before the AT turns east and heads for New Hampshire's White Mountains.

VISITING A MUSEUM

The massive Shelburne Museum has thirty-nine buildings, more than twenty gardens, and some 100,000 artifacts spread out over forty-five acres, including a steamboat paddle wheeler and a passenger train. Several exhibits will be of special interest to OWAA members.

The Dorset House at the Shelburne Museum has one of the finest and most comprehensive wildfowl decoy collections in the country with 1,400 decoys. It has examples by prominent carvers like John Blair, Bill Bowman and Anthony Elmer Crowell. Decoys from Maine, Long Island, Chesapeake Bay, Illinois, Quebec, and other regions are also on exhibit.

The museum collection includes more than 600 paintings by landscape and sporting artist Ogden Pleissner. About 40 of his works are on rotating exhibition in the Pleissner Gallery, which also displays the artist's Manchester, Vermont studio, recreated at Shelburne Museum in 1986.

The Beech Gallery holds the Terry Tyler collection of more than 100 Vermont firearms by seventy gunmakers between 1790 and 1900.

The Beech Lodge is designed to resemble an Adirondack hunting camp and exhibits hunting trophies, Adirondack furniture and wood carvings.

VISITING A FARM

Shelburne Farms is another special place located just a short distance from the Shelburne Museum.

Shelburne Farms is a nonprofit organization educating for a sustainable future. The Farm advances Education for Sustainability in Vermont and internationally by collaborating with educators, schools, and other partners. Located on the shores of Lake Champlain, Shelburne Farms' campus for learning is a 1,400-acre working landscape and National Historic Landmark.

The Inn at Shelburne Farms is an elegant yet informal 24-room country house that provides guests a unique agritourism experience.

EATING ICE CREAM

Vermont's number one tourist attraction (based on visitor numbers) is Ben and Jerry's factory in Waterbury. Tours are conducted daily with a chance to taste your favorite flavor.

INFORMATION GUIDE

Northeast Kingdom: getnekedvt.com

Kayak, canoe & bike: kingdomtrials.org and lamoillevalleybiketours.com

Hiking: greenmountainclub.org and outdoors.org

Shelburne Museum: shelburnemuseum.org

Shelburne Farms: shelburnefarms.org

Ben & Jerry: benjerry.com/waterbury

Eden Specialty Ciders: edenciders.com/visit/

Jen Cook's Kingdom brewing: kingdombrewingvt.com

Haskell Opera House: haskellopera.com

Old Stone House Museum: oldstonehousemuseum.org

SPOUSE TRIPS

Two spouse trips, which are open to all, will be offered Friday, June 28 and Monday, July 1.

Cruising

The first spouse trip is a two-hour cruise on Lake Memphremagog aboard the Northern Star followed by a stop at the Tasting Bar and Eden Specialty Ciders. Then, on the way back to Jay Peak, a stop at Brian and Jenn Cook's Kingdom Brewing, a micro-brewery whose motto is, "It's a mile from Canada but a million miles from normal."

Touring an opera house

The second spouse trip is a drive to Derby Line to tour the Haskell Opera House, a unique facility that straddles the U.S./Canada border. You can pose for photos inside the library with one foot in Canada and the other in the U.S. From there, the group will take a short scenic drive south to Brownington and the Old Stone House Museum.

VISITING CANADA

Jay Peak is adjacent to the Canadian border so visiting the many historic sites in the eastern townships, Montreal or Quebec City (a UNESCO World Heritage Site) will be enticing for those who have time before or after the conference. Let me know what you are interested in and I will do my best to assist you.

— Gary Moore is the local chair for the 2020 OWAA conference and has been a member of OWAA since 1985. He's a past president, director emeritus and life member of the New England outdoor Writers Association. He and Linda, his wife of 49 years, live in the woods of Vermont in a home they built in 1973.

Do MORE than just attend conference



Photo by David Burnell

BY PAT WRAY | CORVALLIS, OREGON

MANY ASPECTS OF PLANNING AND PREPARATION for an annual conference must come together to create a smooth and well-run event. The local folks have to be dedicated and committed to the cause. The conference chair(s) must develop a great theme and then attract a stable of outstanding speakers, the combination of which will make the general membership truly want to attend. The OWAA staff, Executive Director and conference planner must preside over the framework of minutiae and details, financial and otherwise, on which everything else depends.

But the difference between a well-run and a truly successful conference comes down to one single thing: participation by the membership which, in a word, is you.

Now, I'm not talking about simple attendance, though conference attendance is certainly a critical aspect of participation. I'm talking about your personal and zealous involvement in features of the conference which will lend energy, passion

and excitement to the entire affair. Try these on for size:

SILENT AUCTION. Our silent auction has become a lethargic affair over past years, primarily because most of us are expecting someone else to do the necessary work. Enough of that! We are all, or should be, involved in the silent auction. Not just as recruiters of companies and manufacturers for product, although those are great, but as donors of your own skills, products and, for lack of a better word, stuff.

Have you got a pair of boots that are still in the box but you'll probably never wear? Are you hoarding an antique reel that means nothing to you but might be the crowning jewel for a collector? Can you offer an experience that someone else might consider a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity? Bring it. Offer it. Don't settle for just attending the conference. Be a real participant, and help your organization at the same time. Please notify Executive Director Chez Chesak of donations you intend to bring. Start now. Let's make this

silent auction the best ever!

Author's note: I'll be offering a guided two-day hunt for wild chukars in the high desert of eastern Oregon. Lodging included. Sometime between November 1, 2020 and January 31, 2021.

P.S. It is not true that smart chukar hunters save their last shell for themselves. That's just an old widows' tale.

STORY TIME. This is a new one, recommended by Chez, and it should be a hoot, considering that we are all, by definition, storytellers. We'll dedicate an hour-and-a-half after dinner on one night to give our twelve pre-selected members the chance to tell a favorite story. Subject material is limited only by their experience or imagination. Humor is encouraged. Coarse language is not. Each storyteller will have five minutes. Listeners will vote for the best story and the winner will receive \$100—or maybe more if anyone wants to donate to the kitty.

See you at the conference!

— Pat Wray, Conference Chair

A BAD IDEA IN A SPECIAL PLACE

Trump administration backs sulfide-ore mining in boundary waters wilderness watershed

BY MICHAEL FURTMAN | DULUTH, MINNESOTA

IT WOULD BE HARD TO IMAGINE a worse place to put a sulfuric acid generating copper/nickel mine than under a lake, any lake.

But wait, it does get worse.

The lake in question, Birch Lake, is only three miles from Minnesota's Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW), and the waters that exits it via the Kawishiwi River flow directly into the BWCAW, then parts of Ontario's Quetico Provincial Park, and eventually west through Voyageurs National Park. Known as the Rainy River watershed, it contains over 2,000 drinking-water pure lakes, and hundreds of miles of equally clean rivers.

The proposed mine is known as Twin Metals Minnesota. It is owned by Antofagasta, a major mining company in Chile controlled by the family of Andronico Luksic, one of Chile's wealthiest families. When first proposed in 2015, alarm bells were sounded by not just environmental groups, but countless individuals who simply cherished the BWCAW, America's most visited wilderness. As it turns out, Antofagasta had acquired long dormant mining permits that the U.S. government had originally granted to the International Nickel Company (INCO) in 1966, permits granted at a time when environmental review was essentially non-existent. The original 20-year lease provided an option for three 10-year



good catch on capitals. I actually made it all lower case, like our other decks, as that's our style.

Should any kind of catastrophic release occur, the impacts would be devastating and irreversible.

Photo by Michael Furtman

renewals, but only if mining began within the initial 20-year lease term.

Based on this interpretation, The U.S. Forest Service exercised its authority to withhold consent for mining projects within the Superior National Forest out of concern that a sulfide-based mine in the watershed risked "serious and irreparable harm" to the Boundary Waters and downstream watershed. Similarly, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), which manages the mineral rights, declined to renew the permits, but determined that Antofagasta could apply for new permits contingent upon environmental review.

After considerable public input, the Forest Service decided to conduct a thorough environmental impact statement on sulfide ore mining within this watershed, and imposed a moratorium on mining during this time.

All in all, it seemed as though the system was working as it should – responsible agencies were following the law by rejecting the 1966 mine permits, and the Obama administration ordered the environmental impact statement.

But then came a presidential election.

Even though President Trump ran on a "jobs" campaign, and thus was supportive of mining, his administration seemingly took particular interest in this largely obscure mining proposal. As it

mind-boggling display of disdain for the environment, the new leases weakened the already weak restrictions found in the 1966 version.

As of the time of this writing, challenges to these leases are winding their way through federal court. Meanwhile, preparations for Antofagasta's Twin Metals mine continue. Because the federal Environmental Protection Agency has also been compromised by this administration, Minnesota state officials announced in December of 2019 that they have informed federal agencies and Twin Metals that they will proceed with a state-only environmental impact statement on the mine. The state also demanded the release of the embargoed Forest Service studies.

What is at stake here is one of America's most beloved wilderness areas. Over 200,000 annual visitors come to the Boundary Waters to paddle, to unwind, to fish or to hunt. What is proposed is a mine that will operate for about 25 years, but whose acid generating waste will require monitoring and treatment for hundreds of years – and that's the best case scenario. Should any kind of catastrophic release occur, the impacts would be devastating and irreversible.

Both the minerals and the Boundary Waters wilderness belong to all Americans. It is my hope that as outdoor communicators, you'll alert your readers and viewers to this unfolding story. It is not inevitable that the Twin Metals mine will be built, but it will be built if the kind of sweetheart deals of this administration continue, and if we don't do our jobs.

— Michael Furtman is an accomplished full-time freelance writer and photographer. michaelfurtman.com



Photo by Michael Furtman

turns out, Andronico Luksic is the landlord for Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner. In a conveniently timed purchase shortly before the inauguration, a company controlled by Luksic bought the Washington, D.C. mansion where Trump and Kushner now live. While all parties insist this is merely coincidence, one can hardly be blamed for smelling a rat.

Although Trump's newly appointed Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue stated to Congress that he would allow the Forest Service to complete the environmental impact statement, without any public input, he later reneged. Instead, he directed the Forest Service to conduct a simple environmental assessment, and ordered them to withhold from the public any information that the partially completed environmental impact study had already produced.

The next Trump appointee to weigh in was Secretary of Interior Ryan Zinke (who has since resigned in disgrace). In 2018 he announced, again without allowing public input, that the BLM would issue new leases based on the 1966 permits to Antofagasta. Released in 2019, these new leases grant nearly perpetual rights to Twin Metals and its Chilean-based parent company to potentially tens of billions of dollars-worth of low-grade sulfide deposits containing copper, nickel, and a variety of precious metals. In a

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

<https://www.savetheboundarywaters.org/>

<https://sportsmenbwca.org/>

<https://www.friends-bwca.org/twin-metals>



JACQUELINE KEHOE |
MADISON, WISCONSIN

Jacqueline Kehoe is a freelance writer, editor and photographer currently based in Madison, Wisconsin. Her work can be seen in National Geographic, AFAR, Fodor's, Oh! Ranger, and similar outlets. In addition to her travel writing, editing and photography life, she runs Scene D—a small theatre company dedicated to social change. Catch her on Instagram or in Madison reading up on plate tectonics. Her next life goal? See all of America's national parks.

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TWITTER: @jackierk
WEBSITE: jacquelinekehoe.com



TOP LEFT: A tree grows defiantly on the Navajo Loop Trail, Bryce Canyon National Park

TOP MIDDLE: A clear day overlooking the amphitheatre, Bryce Canyon National Park

ABOVE: A car winds down the Going-to-the-Sun Road after a brief rainfall, Glacier National Park



TOP RIGHT: A hiker takes on the Kilauea Iki trail just after dawn, Hawaii Volcanoes National Park

MIDDLE RIGHT: The clouds part for a moment of sunshine, Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park

BOTTOM RIGHT: A woman overlooks Reflection Pond at sunset, Denali National Park



DONORS

August and September brought monetary gifts from generous donors. These tax-deductible donations are dedicated to funds designed to boost OWAA efforts ranging from education programs to operational costs. For details about OWAA funds, contact OWAA headquarters at 406-728-7434.

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NEW MEMBERS

New member listings include references to acronyms that relate to Skills, Subject Matter and Sections. A key for those acronyms can be found at <http://owaa.org/ou/about-owaa-skills-subject-matter-sections/>.

RACHEL BROWN, 29 Ravens Point Dr., Lake Saint Louis MO 63367, (C) 314-266-7035, (H) 314-210-4419, rbrown@synergy-pr.com. President of marketing communications firm Synergy Group, which helps outdoor and recreation organizations energize their branding and websites; gain exposure through publicity, digital advertising, website; and understand audiences through research projects. An avid hiker, mountain biker and outdoor enthusiast with a passion for the outdoors and outdoor adventure writing. The granddaughter of Larry Mueller, longtime hunting dog editor for Outdoor Life and author of outdoor adventure books. She has a BS degree in biology from the University of Illinois-Edwardsville. Skills: CDNOQW. Subject Matter: GHJKNOS. Sections: Communications/Media Relations. Approved for Active membership; sponsored by Jim Low.

MONICA CARDOZA, 121 Sunset Ave., Ridgewood NJ 07450, 201-819-4899, tetsui@msn.com, <https://monicacardoza.com>. Freelance writer covering outdoor recreation while completing a nonfiction book on how to spend more time outdoors. Senior editor for Risk Management magazine and editorial director for The National Association of Printers. Author of three nonfiction books and former editor for New York Times Syndicate. Professional member of American Society of Journalists and Authors. (David). Skills: BEOW. Subject Matter: GLOSU. Sections: Magazine. Approved for Active membership; sponsored by Christine Peterson.

JENNIFER CLIFTON, 2220 W. Curry St., Chandler AZ 85224, 770-820-5311, jclift1@gmail.com. Freelance writer and photographer, part-time farmhand and full-time student at Wilderness Awareness School in King County, Washington.

Author of two books, many articles and former mass communications specialist with U.S. Navy Reserve. Avid backpacker, trail runner, mountain biker and kayaker. Skills: BCEINOQSW. Subject Matter: AFGKLMNOPRSU. Sections: Communications/Media Relations, Magazine, Newspaper, Photography. Approved for Student membership; sponsored by Roger Brunt.

STEPHEN COLLECTOR, 4209 26th St., Boulder CO 80304, (H/W) 303-442-1386, (C) 303-579-4537, stephenc@indra.com, <https://stephencollector.com/>. Longtime freelance photographer. Masthead for Outside Magazine, Mountain Gazette, Sports Afield, Outdoor Life to name a few. Began writing for the fly-fishing industry in 2013. Published the book, Law of the Range; Portraits of Old-Time Brand Inspectors (1992). Board member for the Frank Waters Foundation. (Leigh). Skills: BOSW. Subject Matter: ABCEL. Sections: Magazine, Photography. Approved for Active membership; sponsored by Tim Mead.

TODD CORAYER, 30 George St., Wakefield RI 02879, (H) 407-714-4420, tcorayer@fishwrapwriter.com, fishwrapwriter.com. Freelance writer of Fish Wrap, a weekly outdoors column in South Rhode Island newspapers. Fishing editor, OELMAG.com. Monthly fishing columnist for Shore Times magazine and On The Water magazine. Writer/host of Preserve Fishing and Outdoor Report on WPRO-FM and WEEI-FM. Host of Golf Destinations TV for September and October. Also published in Double Gun Journal and Sporting Classics. Work for The Preserve at Boulder Hills includes creating and recording radio and TV advertisements, magazine editorials, promotions, and marketing materials. (Alison) Skills: ENORTW. Subject Matter: ABCDFMORS. Sections: Broadcast, Magazine, Newspaper. Approved for Active membership; sponsored by Tom Sadler.

JIM CRAIG, 2950 Simpson Ave., Juneau AK 99801, (C) 907-321-3647, (W) 907-465-4236, jim.craig@alaska.gov, <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov>. Manager of

the Publications and Information Section for the Alaska Department of Fish & Game with responsibility for all published materials in SE Alaska and professional communications by staff with outside publications. Prior to moving to Alaska 20 years ago, he was a staff photographer/feature writer for Montana Living Magazine, The Daily Inter Lake, and Hungry Horse News. Covered sports for Stadion Magazine in the Czech Republic in the early 1990s and later employed as a staff photographer/journalist for the United Nations covering the conflict in Bosnia. Also a contributor to Mlady Svet magazine, receiving Czech Press Photographer of the Year honors in spot news. Moved to United States in 1995 and worked as a staff photographer for The Daily Item in Pennsylvania before moving to Montana. (Alena). Skills: DEILNOQSW. Subject Matter: ABCDFGIKLMOPRST. Sections: Communications/Media Relations. Approved for Active membership; sponsored by Phil Bloom.

TODD DAVIS, 136 Park Forest Lane Altoona PA, 16601, (H) 814-742-9260, (C) 814-949-5634, tfd3@psu.edu, www.todddavispoet.com. Nature writer and professor of environmental studies at Penn State's Altoona College. Poet, essayist, author of six full-length collections of poetry, most recently Native Species and Winterkill. His poetry and essays have appeared in Orion, Gray's Sporting Journal, Anglers Journal, Alaska Quarterly Review, American Poetry Review, Gettysburg Review, Iowa Review, Missouri Review, and North American Review. Winner of the Foreword INDIES Book of the Year bronze and silver awards, Gwendolyn Brooks Poetry Prize, Chautauqua Editors Prize, and nominated several times for the Pushcart Prize. Skills: BLOW. Subject Matter: AC. Approved for Active membership; sponsored by Dennis Scharadin.

PENNY HEGYI, 656 Mari Ct., Lolo MT 59847, 406-207-8253, penny@pennyhegyi.com, <http://pennyhegyi.com>. Graduate from the Rocky Mountain School of Photography Professional Intensive Program in May 2019. She has sold images to Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks and has received an Editor's Choice

from National Geographic. (Mike). Skills: CSW. Subject Matter: LWS. Sections: Photography. Approved for Active membership; sponsored by Colleen Miniuk.

PETE HERMANN-FRANZEN, 1000 Boone Ave. N., Ste 1200, Golden Valley MN 55427, (W) 763-231-6680, (C) 612-213-8543. Video photographer and editor at Ron Schara Productions where he shoots and edits stories for Minnesota Bound. Skills: E. Subject Matter: CHST. Sections: Broadcast. Approved for Active membership; sponsored by Scott Fransen.

HOLLY HEYSER, 1346 Blue Oaks Blvd., Suite 100, Roseville CA 95678, (C) 916-792-0640, (W) 916-648-1406, hheyser@calwaterfowl.org, www.calwaterfowl.org. Communications director and magazine editor for the non-profit California Waterfowl. Principal photographer for Hunter Angler Gardener Cook. Wild food cookbook photographer. Occasional freelancer. (Hank Shaw). Skills: AESW. Subject Matter: CT. Sections: Magazine, Photography. Approved for Active membership; sponsored by Hank Shaw.

ELLA HOLLAND, 130 Harriet Ave., Highland Heights KY 41076, 815-508-4564, ellaholland@live.com. Student at Northern Kentucky University. Skills: INQ. Subject Matter: LOR. Sections: Communications/Media Relations, Magazine, Newspaper. Approved for Student membership; sponsored by Phil Bloom.

JEFF HOLMES, 713 N. Rd. 48, Pasco WA 99301, (W) 509-868-3337, basaltbone@yahoo.com. Author of more than 225 articles for outdoor magazines and popular blogs since 2011, including Field and Stream, Northwest Sportsman, Salmon and Steelhead Journal, Salmon Trout Steelheader and more. He leverages over a decade of experience as university English faculty into his work at a national science laboratory where he leads proposal production and provides writing, editing, and rhetorical support for fundamental and applied researchers from around the world. Skills: EOQRW. Subject Matter: ABCGLORSTU. Sections: Broadcast, Communications/Media Relations, Magazine, Newspaper. Approved for Active

membership; sponsored by Rich Landers. **JACQUELINE KEHOE**, 305 Norris Ct., Apt. 2W, Madison WI 53703, 949-910-5525, Jacqueline.r.kehoe@gmail.com, www.jacquelinekehoe.com. Freelance writer, editor and photographer with publication credits in National Geographic, AFAR, Backpacker, and Matador Network. An amateur historical geologist and self-professed national parks geek. Skills: EOS. Subject Matter: L. Sections: Communications/Media Relations, Photography. Approved for Active membership; sponsored by Danielle Taylor.

JOHN F. MCCALPIN, 3840 Regal Oaks Dr., Suwanee GA 30024, (C) 678-699-7407, sonarangler@gmail.com. Writer with credits in Angler Magazine, Georgia Outdoor News and www.southernfishing.com. Speaker and presenter at Bass Pro Shops, Cabela's, Atlanta Boat Show, various outdoor expo events and fishing groups. (Lisa). Skills: CDILNOSW. Subject Matter: ABJK. Sections: Magazine, Newspaper, Photography. Approved for Active membership; sponsored by Ken Sturdivant.

JEREMY PUGLISI, 562 Smith Dr., Point Pleasant NJ 08742, (W) 732-996-6284, jerempuglisi@gmail.com, www.thervatlas.com. Managing editor of thervatlas.com and co-host of The RV Atlas podcast. Also the co-author of Idiot's Guide: RV Vacations and the forthcoming See You At The Campground (Sourcebooks, March 2020). He and his wife, Stephanie, are regular contributors to Trailer Life magazine and have worked as spokespersons for RVIA's Go RVing media campaigns on TV and radio. He is a pro staff member with Cabela's and Bass Pro Shops. (Stephanie). Skills: AOSX. Subject Matter: GHLT. Sections: Communications/Media Relations. Approved for Active membership; sponsored by Phil Bloom.

RICK SAEZ, 1335 Rocking W. Dr., Suite 349, Bishop CA 93514, (W) 760-473-6302, rick@theoutdoorbizpodcast.com; www.theoutdoorbizpodcast.com. Avid outdoor adventurer with a 30-plus-year career in the outdoor industry. He's held leadership roles with iconic brands

such as Montbell, Eagle Creek, JanSport, Dana Design and Lowepro. He is the founder, producer, and host of The Outdoor Biz Podcast. In addition to podcasting, he helps outdoor adventure brands, retailers, and outfitters tell their stories through podcasting. Skills: BLRS. Subject Matter: AGLS. Sections: Broadcast. Approved for Active membership; sponsored by Tom Sadler.

REINSTATED MEMBERS

Reinstated member listings include references to acronyms that relate to skills, subject matter and sections. A key for those acronyms can be found at <http://owaa.org/ou/about-owaa-skills-subject-matter-sections/>.

EILEEN STEGEMANN, 625 Broadway, Albany NY 12233-4502, (W) 518-402-8047, eileen.stegemann@dec.ny.gov, www.dec.ny.gov/pubs/conservationist.html. Managing editor of Conservationist, bimonthly publication of the New York Department of Environmental Conservation with focus on natural resources and outdoor recreation in New York State. Skills: EW. Subject Matter: AGOS. Sections: Magazine. Approved for Active membership; sponsored by Glenn Sapir.

NEW SUPPORTING GROUPS

Supporting Group listings include references to acronyms that relate to resources they provide. A key for those acronyms can be found at owaa.org/ou/about-owaa-supporter-resources.

HELICONIA, 1782 Beachburg Rd., Beachburg, ON Canada K0J1C0. Contact: Brendan Mark, (W) 613-582-7154, brenndan@helipress.com, www.helipress.com. Helps tourism destinations and brands share their stories through video.

PATAGONIA, 235 W. Santa Clara St., Ventura CA 93013. Contact: Corley Kenna, director of global communications/public relations, (W) 202-320-3921, corley.kenna@patagonia.com, www.patagonia.com. Patagonia is a sustainably and ethically made outdoor clothing and gear company. Resources: P.

REINSTATED SUPPORTING GROUPS

Supporting Group listings include references to acronyms that relate to resources they provide. A key for those acronyms can be found at <http://owaa.org/ou/about-owaa-supporter-resources/>.

THE BEENDERS WALKER GROUP, 125 E. High St., #200, Jefferson City MO 65101. Contacts: Marjorie Beenders, co-owner; (W) 573-636-8282, marjorie@tbwgroup.net; Jo Duncan, director of media relations, (W) 573-636-8282, jo@tbwgroup.net. A full-service marketing and communications company with clients from Missouri's Lake of the Ozarks to Alabama's Gulf Shores & Orange Beach. TBWG specializes in destination marketing, providing professional, creative and media-friendly inbound customized and group press trips for travel writers, editors, outdoor writers and other communicators. Resources: CIO.

CONTINUOUS METAL TECHNOLOGY, 83 Salada Rd., Du Bois PA 15801. Contacts: Timothy Smith, president, (W) 814-772-9274, tsmith@tomboboutdoors.com; Brad Clinton, director of marketing, bclinton@powdered-metal.com. Continuous Metal brings advanced technology to the outdoor market, from fishing lures and ammunition components to outdoor body wash and pet care products.

OHIO DIVISION OF WILDLIFE, 2045 Morse Rd., Columbus OH 43299. Contact: Kendra Wecker, information and education administrator, (W) 614-265-7043, kendra.wecker@dnr.state.oh.us, <http://wildlife.ohiodnr.gov>. Dedicated to conserving and improving fish and wildlife resources and their habitats and promoting their use and appreciation by the public to enhance quality of life for residents. Resources: C.

TIOGA COUNTY VISITORS BUREAU, 2053 Rte. 660, Well-sboro PA 16901. Contact: Lori Copp, executive director, (W) 570-724-0635, lcopp@epix.net. Website: <https://visitpottertioga.com>. Promotes and facilitates tourism and related activities in Tioga County, Pennsylvania.

SIX CANDIDATES CHOSEN TO RUN FOR OWAA BOARD

Six candidates, selected by OWAA's board nominating committee, will compete for three seats on the Outdoor Writers Association of America's board of directors. They will replace John Kruse, Ann Simpson and Danielle Taylor. Those elected will begin their three-year term June 27, 2020. Candidate profiles will appear in the April/May issue of OU. Active, senior-active and life members will vote in an online election in April. Below is the slate in alphabetical order.

Bill Brassard
Newtown, Connecticut

Matt Miller
Boise, Idaho

Kelsey Roseth
Duluth, Minnesota

Steve Griffin
Midland, Michigan

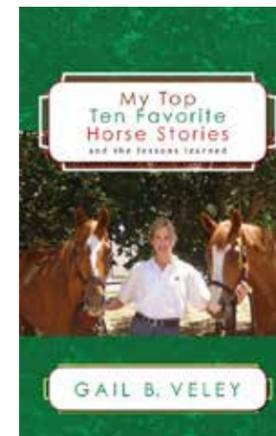
Russell Roe
Austin, Texas

Charles Witek
West Babylon, New York

MY TOP TEN FAVORITE HORSE STORIES AND THE LESSONS LEARNED

AUTHOR: Gail Veley

INFO: Booksurge, paperback, 125 pp; 27 black and white photos; \$9.99 Kindle; \$14.99 Amazon; booksurge.com; gbveley@live.com; gailveleyequestrian.com

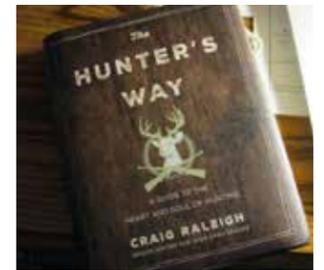


Given an "Excellent" rating by an independent review from The Yankee Horsemen's Pedlar, this book is hard to put down once you get started. Every chapter is a story unto itself, chronicling the author's life and experiences as a horseperson. Guaranteed to help you end your day on a good note, every chapter inspires, strives to entertain while also teaching a moral. Even non-horse lovers will find this enjoyable! As for horse lovers, they will wonder when the next book is coming out!

THE HUNTER'S WAY, A GUIDE TO THE HEART AND SOUL OF HUNTING

AUTHOR: Craig Raleigh

INFO: HarperCollins/Dey Street Books, NYC, NY, hardcover, 187 pp; 4 photographs; \$24.99 HC; \$15.89 Amazon; craigraleigh.com



The Hunter's Way is not so much about how we hunt. The book speaks more to why we hunt, how we approach hunting, prepare for hunting, and the personal feeling after the harvest. It's not really a how-to book, but rather a reflection of our minds—body and soul—as we prepare to take from the nature that gives to all of us. In this way we can get back to our base roots: we don't need a supermarket to take care of ourselves. More so that we prove to ourselves that we can overcome nature while caring for it. The book speaks to the conservationist in all hunters.

Environment and National Affairs

BY DREW YOUNGEDYKE |
ENVIRONMENT AND NATIONAL AFFAIRS CHAIR

Despite the dominant political climate, bipartisanship still exists for some conservation priorities. Building on the bipartisan success of the John D. Dingell Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act, which permanently reauthorized the Land and Water Conservation Fund when signed into law in early 2019, multiple pieces of bipartisan conservation legislation have been working their way through U.S. House and Senate committees.

In early December 2019, the U.S. House of Representatives Natural Resources Committee advanced two significant bills on the same day, the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (H.R. 3742) and the Modernizing the Pittman-Robertson Fund for Tomorrow's Needs Act (H.R. 877).

The Recovering America's Wildlife Act, introduced by Reps. Jeff Fortenberry (R-Neb.) and Debbie Dingell (D-Mich.), would direct almost \$1.4 billion to state and

tribal wildlife agencies to recover the almost one-third of species at risk in the United States, identified as species of greatest conservation need in state wildlife action plans. \$1.3 billion would go to state wildlife agencies to implement those existing plans to recover wildlife, with the remaining \$97.5 million going to tribal nations for wildlife recovery on tribal lands.

The Modernizing the Pittman-Robertson Fund for Tomorrow's Needs Act will provide state wildlife agencies the flexibility to use some of the hunter education allocation they get from the fund for marketing and outreach efforts to increase hunter recruitment, retention and reactivation. Since 1937, hunters and recreational shooters have paid into the fund for wildlife recovery through excise taxes on hunting and shooting equipment, but declining hunting participation risks a decrease in wildlife conservation funding through the Pittman-Robertson Fund.

Both bills will now move to the House floor for consideration.

Member discounts and deals

Check out the 2020 courtesy discounts offered by OWAA Supporting Groups, Agencies and Businesses

Access to OWAA's membership is available to groups, agencies and businesses with an interest in the outdoor field and a desire to support OWAA programs. These entities join OWAA as 'Supporting Groups' in order to help expand public information on outdoor recreation and conservation, improve our professional craft and further recognize outdoor writing as a specialized field.

Traditionally, many OWAA supporters have extended courtesy discounts to OWAA members to help provide them with the tools and services they need as storytellers in the backcountry and, ultimately, build relationships with them. Note that these discounts are for OWAA MEMBERS ONLY. Please do not share the contacts, codes or discounts noted below with anyone who is not a current OWAA member. For more information on member discounts, email membership@owaa.org or call 406-728-7434.

DESTINATIONS

ABERDEEN AREA CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU offers to arrange film and media tours to their South Dakota destination. They work directly with guides, outfitters, landowners and lodges and can help make the connections needed to host a quality film and media event. Many times there is no charge for these events. Contact Casey at caseyw@visitaberdeensd.com or 605-225-2414.

VISIT CENTRAL FLORIDA offers FAM trips for media looking to cover the region. Members can explore more than 375 miles of hiking and paddling trails, get up close and personal with a wide variety of animal species in what USA Today named one of the "Top 50 Places in the US to See Wildlife" or haul in some trophy-class bass in the Largemouth Bass Capitol of the World. Contact Al Snow at al@visitcentralflorida.org for more information.

OUTDOOR MEDIA SUMMIT affords a 30% discount off of conference and hotel tickets for OWAA members. Look for the updated 2020 summit promotional code later this year.

GEAR

ABSOLUTE OUTDOOR INC. extends a 30% media discount on Full Throttle, Onyx and ArcticShield products. Contact Mary Snyder at msnyder@absoluteoutdoorinc.com or 320-252-2056, ext. 103.

ALLEN COMPANY provides a 40% media discount on their line of hunting, shooting, tactical and archery products. Use code OWAA2020 on byallen.com.

BLACK RIVER TOOLS affords media wholesale pricing for Driftmaster rod holders, Father Nature bird feeders and Cart Lok golf cart locks. Call 803-473-4927 and ask for David.

BRITE-STRIKE TECHNOLOGIES extends 50% off manufacturer's suggested retail price on all items. Call 508-746-8701 or email customerservice@brite-strike.com and mention your OWAA membership.

FLYING FISHERMAN extends a 40% discount on direct purchases of Flying Fisherman polarized sunglasses and angler accessories. To receive your media discount, contact Bobby Vaughn at bobby@flyingfisherman.com or 800-335-9347, and mention your OWAA membership.

For **GRABBER AND HOTHANDS** products, use offer code OWAA25 for 25% off at www.warmerwarehouse.com and www.coolingwarehouse.com. You can also use offer code OWAA10 for 10% off at www.warmers.com.

GUMLEAF USA is pleased to extend a 20% discount off our incredibly comfortable, European-made, handcrafted, 85% natural rubber boots. To order, ask questions or for product review info, please call Jack toll free at 844-486-5323.

For **HUNT'S PHOTO & VIDEO** discounts, contact Noah Buchanan at 781-462-2356 or nbuchanan@huntsphoto.com. Watch for Hunt's direct mail and email specials throughout the year or visit Hunt's blog at www.wbhunt.com/blog for product reviews and the latest news.

EPPINGER MFG. CO., makers of the world-famous Dardevle spoon, offers writers traveling on assignment a loaner tackle box program: They send you a tackle pack loaded with the appropriate lures for the location you will be fishing and writing about. They ask that their products are featured in some way in the publications you are writing for and require a copy of the finished story when it is published. When the project is completed, simply return the box minus any tackle you wish to keep for further adventures. They also offer a 50% discount off factory retail pricing on any purchase done directly with their factory. Contact: John Cleveland at john@dardevle.com or 313-582-3205.

L.L. BEAN provides a discount of up to 20% on all sporting goods, apparel and footwear (not included are items from the Home, Travel or Kids catalogs). To receive the discount, call 800-458-3058, ext. 38136 and mention your OWAA membership. The discount is not available

online or at L.L. Bean retail or factory stores and is intended for use only by individual OWAA members.

LODGE MANUFACTURING CO. offers a 50% discount off retail prices. Contact Mark Kelly at mkelly@lodgemfg.com.

MEPPS (SHELDON'S, INC.) extends a 40% discount on all lures and kits. Mister Twister offers a 40% discount on all soft plastics, kits and electric fillet knives. For more information, contact the Mepps and Mister Twister Communications Director at 800-637-7700.

MYTOPO, a Trimble Company, provides free products for evaluation, or discounted products for personal use. MyTopo's suite of products includes professional GIS mapping software, Terrain Navigator Pro and a wide array of printed map products that will be printed and shipped within 24 hours. Use promotional code "OWAA" during checkout at www.mytopo.com to order your free map at the company's website, www.mytopo.com, or contact Paige Darden at paige@mytopo.com or 877-587-9004. The professional software, Terrain Navigator Pro, is available for review by visiting www.terrainnavigator.com and signing up for the free 7-day trial.

PORTA-BOTE FOLDING BOATS offers a 50% discount and free delivery to the lower 48 states for their unique line of folding boats. The boats are available in different lengths and fold to four inches flat. For more information, call 800-227-8882 or email info@portaboat.com. Porta-Bote Folding Boats was awarded a sales franchise by Suzuki Outboard Engines, so they can offer very low OWAA prices to writers for outboards up to 30 horsepower.

SPORTDOG BRAND extends access to a full range of dog training products via ExpertVoice. To obtain access to ExpertVoice, and view special industry pricing and available products, contact Matt at MattM@psccc.net.

STORMY KROMER provides a 30% discount on all regularly priced items. To receive the discount, call 888-455-2253,

ask for Tiffany and identify yourself as an OWAA member.

SUZUKI MARINE offers discounts on outboard motors to those in the continental U.S.A., including Alaska. Discount amount varies with motor size, rigging parts, labor and location. Contact Dean Corbisier at dcorbisier@suz.com or 714-996-7040, ext. 2234, with your needs to work out a solution.

ORVIS COMPANY INC. The Orvis Friends in the Field program provides professionals in the outdoor industry access to the best fly-fishing and wingshooting products offered by Orvis. To register, go to www.orvis.com/OFF and enter "OWAA" in the sponsor field.

UMAREX USA extends up to a 40% discount on website pricing for Umarex Airguns, Axeon Optics and Optical Dynamics products. Use code OWAA-VIP during checkout at: umarexusa.com, axeonoptics.com, and longdistancelight.com.

YO-ZURI INC. provides OWAA members dealer pricing on all products they offer in the U.S.—a substantial savings over retail pricing. For price inquiries and orders, contact Ray, 772-336-2280, Ray.Gardner@Yo-Zuri.com. Additional discounts are being added all the time!

FIREARMS/AMMUNITION

BROWNING/WINCHESTER REPEATING ARMS provides a discount below dealer wholesale on their products. Contact Shaundi Campbell at Shaundi. campbell@browning.com or 801-876-2711, ext. 3278.

ENVIRON-METAL INC., makers of nontoxic shot developed to replace steel in waterfowl hunting, affords a full range of discounted HEVI-Shot products via ExpertVoice. To obtain access to ExpertVoice to view discounted pricing and available products, contact Tina Larsen at tlarsen@hevishot.com.

STURM, RUGER & COMPANY INC. affords a media discount. Contact Paul Pluff at ppluff@ruger.com or 603-865-2668.

SERVICES

DUDE RANCHERS' ASSOCIATION

(DRA) is taking press trip applications. Upon receiving your application, the DRA will share it with their member ranches. If a ranch is interested in hosting you, the DRA will then connect you directly to work out the details. For more information visit duderanch.org and/or send an email to info2@duderanch.org.

IPA COLLECTIVE offers special access pricing to more than 50 leading brands in the outdoor industry. Brands like Marmot, Icebreaker, Osprey, Smith Optics, CamelBak, Dakine and Club Ride are looking for brand influencers like you to use their products. Simply go to ipacollective.com/industry and indicate your relationship with OWAA in the Company/Organization field. Once approved, you'll have access to the brands you select.

MARTIN FLORY GROUP'S public relations services include a variety of manufacturers in the outdoors, boating, fishing and RV markets. Many of these companies work with writers on discounts and product review projects. For a complete list of clients, go to www.martinflory.com, and then contact them at news@martinflory.com or 847-662-9070.

PHOTOSHELTER offers a discount on both standard and pro annual accounts at www.photoshelter.com. Use promo code `OWAA_2014`. PhotoShelter websites are packed with powerful tools that make doing business easier and help photographers generate more income from their work. More than 70,000 professional and serious amateur photographers around the world use its complete solution to display, market, sell, deliver and manage photography online.

SEAGUAR'S VIP program entitles you to purchase products directly at a discounted price. Of course, these products must be for your own personal use. Send an email to support@seaguar.com with the subject line "Seaguar VIP Request-OWAA Member." A Seaguar VIP rep will then contact you to verify your membership and provide you the instructions to register and begin purchasing Seaguar products.

Check out the Members Area of OWAA's website at owaa.org for additional member benefits and discounts including car rental and hotel discounts. **It bears repeating that all of these discounts are for OWAA MEMBERS ONLY. Please do not share the contacts, codes or discounts noted above with anyone who is not a current OWAA member.**

OWAA offers financial assistance

JOHN MADSON FELLOWSHIP

OWAA members, as well as nonmembers, are invited to apply for the 2020 John Madson Fellowship. The John Madson Fellowship honors the legacy of one of OWAA's most talented and respected writers. Read more about him in the online article "John Madson: Words for at Least a Thousand Years." Since its inception in 1994, the John Madson Fellowship has provided OWAA members with more than \$18,000 in funding to continue their education in outdoor communication fields.

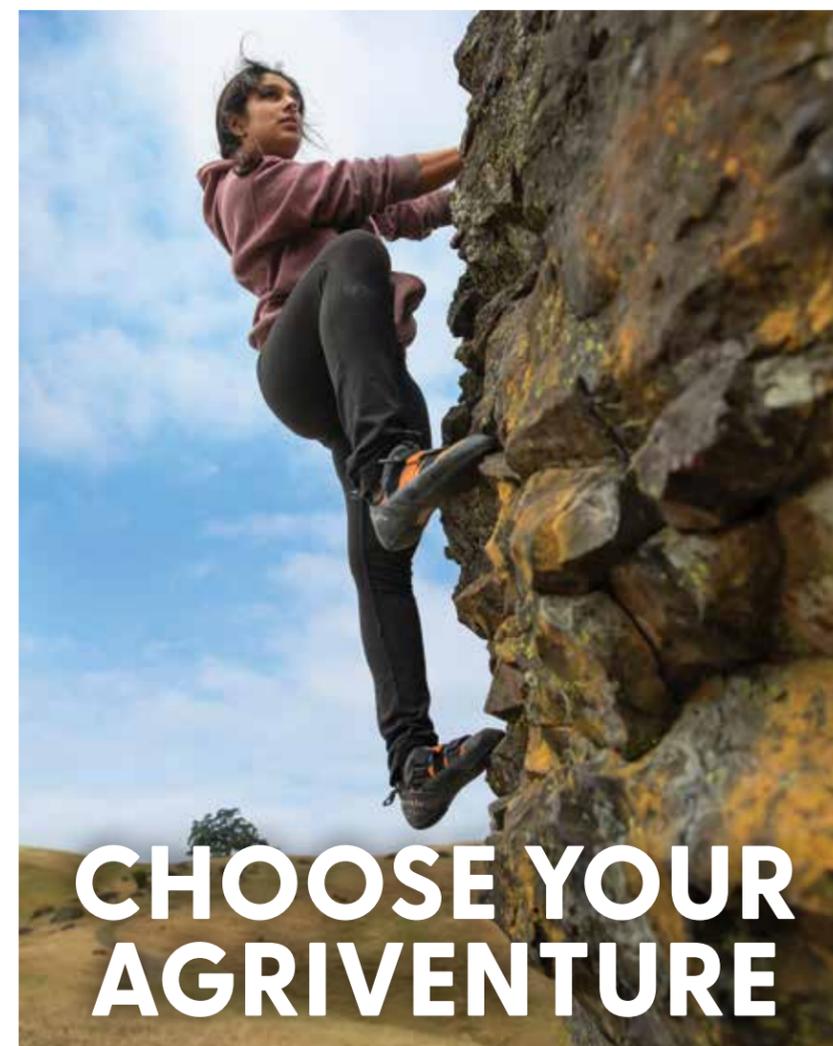
In 2020, OWAA will award up to \$3,000 to selected outdoor communicators seeking to enhance their professional skills as writers, photographers, videographers, broadcasters, etc. The money can be used to attend OWAA's annual conference, college courses or professional seminars and can be applied to tuition, registration, room and board costs, as well as qualifying travel expenses. The fellowship is funded through the John Madson Fellowship Fund, an endowment com-

posed primarily of OWAA member contributions and fundraising efforts. Its goal is to enhance professional communication skills for OWAA members and nonmembers. Funds are invested and managed by OWAA endowment trustees.

BODIE MCDOWELL SCHOLARSHIP

OWAA is accepting applications for its Bodie McDowell scholarship program. Scholarships are for the 2020-2021 academic year. Established in 1966, more than \$140,000 in scholarships have been awarded since 2002. Approximately \$24,000 in scholarships will be awarded in 2020-2021. Each scholarship includes a one-year student membership with OWAA. The Bodie McDowell scholarship program is open to undergraduate and graduate students at any school who demonstrate a record of accomplishment in, and commitment to, fields in outdoor communication. Applications for the 2020 award are now available.

To apply, go to www.owaa.submittable.com and create a free account, which allows access to the John Madson Fellowship and Bodie McDowell Scholarship application forms. Applications must be submitted by March 1, 2020 using this online form.



From a backroads road trip through the outskirts of town in search of produce stands and alpaca farms to exhilarating hikes up oak studded hills, adventurous souls can fuel their quest for adventure with an off-the-beaten-path tour of Vacaville, California.

OUTDOOR EXPEDITIONS

Start by tackling one of the challenging hiking trails at Lagoon Valley Park. The tower climb is a local favorite: its 620-foot elevation gain gives climbers who make it to the top unbelievable views of Vacaville, Fairfield, and beyond. Or head to the north part of town to explore the Browns Valley Open Space, where basalt boulders offer climbs from easy to challenging. Bring a crash pad if you plan to tackle the more difficult holds!

FARM TO FORK FLAVORS

Ready to wind down and explore the outskirts of town? Cruise through the historic agricultural heartland of Pleasants Valley to find farm-fresh lavender, eggs, cheeses and produce. Longtime local favorite Morningsun Herb Farm carries herbs, vegetables, and fruit trees you won't find anywhere else. Across town, Lockewood Acres presses fresh jellies, syrups, and shrub (a fruity, sweetened

vinegar) from produce grown in their orchards and fields. Sample these and other one-of-a-kind local products when you explore Vacaville's farming community.

PACKS OF 'PACAS

Vacaville is home to Menagerie Hill Ranch, an alpaca farm that is packed with alpacas and all sorts of 'paca products like yarn, clothing, and more. Alpaca fiber is warmer and lighter in weight than cashmere wool and can be used in knitting and weaving, so make sure to pick some up for yourself or a friend. The farm is open by appointment only, so call ahead or visit their website, menageriehillranch.com, for more information about tours or to set up a time to visit.

Ready to plan your Agriventure?

Head to VisitVacaville.com to get started, or download the Visit Vacaville app for an interactive trip planner and events guide.



OUTDOOR WRITERS
ASSOCIATION
of America

OUTDOOR WRITERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

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February/March 2020
Vol. 80, No. 8

Meet a member



NAME: Eric Chandler

RESIDENCE: Duluth, Minnesota

OWAA MEMBER SINCE: 2016

WEBSITE:
ericchandler.wordpress.com

AREAS OF OUTDOOR COMMUNICATION?

I'm a freelance writer and I contribute to outdoor magazines in the Upper Midwest. I've also written about outdoor recreation for my blog, my local newspaper, and several websites.

WHAT DREW YOU TO THE FIELD?

I like to write down my outdoor family adventures, mostly so I can remember them. About 17 years ago, I started submitting stories and was pleased to find a market for them. I hope I've motivated readers to go on outdoor trips with their own families. Also, I had regular samples of great outdoor writing here in my neighborhood from Shawn Perich, Sam Cook, and Michael Furtman. I aspire to write like them.

WHAT ENTICED YOU TO JOIN OWAA?

I write for Northern Wilds Magazine and the publishers there posted pictures of their trips to the OWAA annual conference on social media. It looked like fun and the Duluth conference was on the horizon, so I joined up.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE OUTDOOR ACTIVITY?

I've been cross-country skiing since I could walk. The whole family partakes.

We even take our dog Leo skijoring. My son (now in college) raced at the high school level and my daughter does, too. It's simply the best outdoor activity in the world. You may disagree. You may also be wrong.

WHAT ARE YOU CURRENTLY WORKING ON?

I'm putting together a book-length collection of 80 of my articles for a publisher who showed some interest. I hope to get that one across the finish line. In 2018, I wrote a poem after every run, hike, ski, or paddle. I just submitted that book manuscript to a few places and can't wait for the rejections to pour in. I'm also trying to find a home for a piece about my disagreement with some current federal land management policies. This essay was actually inspired by two things I heard at the Duluth OWAA Conference in 2017.

WHAT HAVE YOU GAINED FROM THE ORGANIZATION?

Inspiration from the writers I've met and their work that I've read. I placed a story with a new market because of people I met at the OWAA conference. The writers I've met have been very supportive and sometimes, alone at your desk, that support matters. I get a lot of miles out of a few helpful words.