

# OUTDOORS UNLIMITED

OUTDOOR WRITERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

THE VOICE OF THE OUTDOORS

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2019

## CONFERENCE MONEY MAKERS

How to benefit from your  
OWAA membership

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What editors want,  
wildlife photography  
tips AND MORE.



# OUTDOORS UNLIMITED

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2019 | VOL. 80, NO. 6

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### ON THE COVER

**BY SUZANNE DOWNING** | *A black bear raises its head while snacking on grass in Jasper National Park, Alberta, Canada. Black bears throughout the park spend most of their time perusing a patchwork of habitats throughout the year, feeding on vegetation, insects and a variety of reliable, yet lower calorie food sources.*

### FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## The Green Mountain State

One of my earliest memories from grade-school lessons on the Revolutionary War was the legend of Ethan Allen and the Vermont militia known as the Green Mountain Boys.

The story glamorized their exploits in capturing Fort Ticonderoga from the British in 1775.

It seemed like a pretty cool thing to a grade-school kid. Never mind that Ticonderoga wasn't a strategic location in the Revolutionary War, the fact the British recaptured it in 1777, or the fact Ticonderoga is in New York not Vermont, or that Allen isn't a native son of Vermont. He was from Connecticut.

I have no reason for mentioning Ethan Allen other than his name was rattling around in my head in August when Pat Wray, Jessica Seitz, and I joined Gary Moore on a site visit to Jay Peak, the site of our 2020 conference (June 27-29).

It's easy to see why it is called the Green Mountain State.

Mountains in all shades of green are something you will see plenty of when attending next year's OWAA conference.

But it's not the only thing you will see. For example:

- **Maple syrup.** Vermont is the nation's top producer of this sweet liquid with more than 2 million gallons processed this year. That's more than double second-place New York (820,000 gallons).

- **Maple syrup products.** What do you do with 2 million gallons of maple syrup? Besides drenching your pancakes, waffles, or French toast, it's used as flavoring in countless food products – candy, cookies, mustard, ice cream, tea, coffee, Teriyaki sauce, seltzer water, beer, bourbon, and on and on.

- **Witch window.** It's a casement window placed at a 45-degree angle and fitted between two adjacent roof lines at the gable end of a house. The name comes from folk lore that witches can't fly their broomsticks through a

tilted window.

- **Creemees.** Or is it creamies? Or creamees? Whichever way it's spelled, it's what Vermonters call soft-serve ice cream, only with a higher fat content.

- **Beer.** Vermont is one of the least-populated states (No. 45), but according to Craft Brewing Business, it leads the nation in breweries per capita (11.7 breweries per 100,000 residents).

And there are plenty of things you won't see in Vermont. For instance, you will not see:

- **Highway billboards**, which are banned by state law.

- **A McDonald's** in the state capitol, Montpelier.

- **Straight routes to anywhere.** Interstate 91 runs north and south through the state, and I-89 partway, but everywhere in between is winding roads interrupted by quaint villages.

- **Traffic jams.** Except for the occasional road construction sites, you'll not encounter much bumper-to-bumper traffic, which might explain why Vermont doesn't even make the American Insurance Center's list of states exhibiting the worst road rage.

- **Beer or wine** in a liquor store or liquor (bourbon, gin, rum, other spirits) in a grocery store. State law limits beer/wine sales to grocery stores and liquor to liquor stores. However, sometimes you can find all three in the same building but in separate rooms.

- **Yellow cheddar cheese.** Oh, you'll find lots of cheddar cheese in Vermont, but the preference is to keep it the way all cheddars begin – white or pale yellow. Elsewhere, especially Wisconsin, naturally occurring color additives are used to turn cheddars dark yellow. The basic taste is the same, but here you'll find a variety of cheddars ... including some flavored with maple syrup.

— Phil Bloom is OWAA's interim executive director. Reach him at [pbloom@owaa.org](mailto:pbloom@owaa.org) or 406-552-4049.



### 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

# Organizational change and growth in OWAA



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

Tim Mead  
OWAA president  
ancientanglertim@aol.com

OWAA is experiencing a rare opportunity. The resignation of Executive Director Brandon Shuler meant we would need to find someone new. Jessica Seitz has also left. That these positions became vacant gives OWAA an opportunity to re-define what tasks need to be done and who should do them.

As the Board of Directors pondered those questions during the conference in Little Rock, **Tom Sadler**, **Colleen Miniuk**, and **Phil Bloom**, all of whom have experience as ED, outlined what the ED really does. Each told the BOD a large portion, from one quarter to one half, of the ED's time is consumed by bookkeeping – that is paying bills, making bank deposits, keeping records.

Since Jessica gave up member services duties in February, first a contractor and now Phil have devoted another major time slot to processing member applications – adding new members to the roster, removing lapsed members, contacting those who may have intended to renew but did not, and monitoring the website. Consider, for example, the package you get each year as you renew – someone has to assemble the yellow, blue, white and other pages, stuff them in an envelope and mail them off. These activities have to be done, but they are barriers preventing the ED from doing tasks the BOD believes are more central to OWAA's health and mission.

The BOD believes the ED should be recruiting media and supporting groups. Funds to operate OWAA come, in part, from these sources. As a practical matter, the day-to-day operation prevents the ED from recruiting members. The BOD saw the search for a new ED as an opportunity to restructure OWAA management. Jessica's departure means OWAA will

need new conference management.

Phil, at the instruction of the BOD, is researching opportunities to outsource bookkeeping, membership processing, and conference management. In a teleconference of the BOD, Phil was authorized to subcontract accounting and bill paying services. By the time you read this, Phil will have gathered the necessary materials for the Board to make decisions about these matters and in doing so, free the ED to recruit members.

**Paul Queneau**, our Past President, has graciously continued service to OWAA. He is chairing the Search Committee for a new ED. Candidates have been interviewed. Progress is good. We hope to announce a new ED shortly.

During the BOD teleconference, Pat Wray, OWAA 1st VP and conference chair for the 2020 gathering at the Jay Peak Resort in Vermont, outlined progress. Should be an exciting trip to New England.

## HELP NEEDED TO JUDGE EIC

OWAA is built on the contributions of volunteers, and there's no better place to chip in than being a judge in the 2020 Excellence In Craft Contest.

If you would like to be a judge, contact Contest Committee chair Phil Bloom at philbloom.owaa@frontier.com by no later than Dec. 31, 2019.

The only restriction is you can't judge an EIC category that you have entered.

# OWAA awards McDowell scholarship to 9 students

**M**ISSOULA, MONTANA – The Outdoor Writers Association of America awarded Bodie McDowell Scholarships to seven undergraduate and two graduate students totaling \$23,000 in support of their educational costs for the 2019-20 school year.

This year's graduate student recipients are:

- Noah Davis, Altoona, Pennsylvania; master's in creative writing and poetry at Indiana University (\$4,000).
- Anna Butler, East Amherst, New York; master's in creative writing at Chatham University (\$2,500).

Undergraduate scholarship recipients are:

- Maytal Agasi, Raleigh, North Carolina; environmental studies major at University of Colorado (\$3,000).
- Ryan Chelius, Rockville Centre, New York; environmental science major at SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (\$3,000).
- Andrew Dundas, Fairview, North Carolina; media and

journalism major at Asheville-Buncombe Community College (North Carolina) (\$3,000).

- Serena Juchnowski, Richfield, Ohio; marketing and journalism major at Case Western Reserve in Ohio (\$3,000).
- Sarah Schott, Vickery, Ohio; natural resources management major at Ohio State University (\$2,500).
- Ashley Siana, Bozeman, Montana; science, natural history, and film major at Montana State (\$1,000).
- Abigail Kull, Morrison, Illinois; recreation, parks and tourism major at Western Illinois University (\$1,000).

Scholarship recipients also receive a one-year student membership in the Outdoor Writers Association of America. Recipients are paid at the commencement of the fall semester.

This year, 19 students applied for scholarships through the program. Recipients were selected by members of the Education Committee chaired by Ann Simpson.

The 2020-21 McDowell scholarship process will be announced in early 2020.

## OWAA AND SUBMITTABLE PARTNER ON EIC CONTEST

OWAA is partnering with Submittable, a cloud-based submission management system, for the collection and scoring of entries in the 2020 Excellence In Craft Contest.

In order to make the switch to Submittable, the traditional startup for entering EIC is being pushed back from Oct. 1 to Nov. 1 to allow time to refine and test the online contest entry forms.

The new system closely mirrors the online process used on the OWAA website in recent years. Members will access OWAA's Submittable account, register, select from the menu of categories and sub-categories, download and submit entries, and pay the entry fee.

EIC judges also will use Submittable to review and score the entries assigned to them.

Step-by-step instructions will be sent to members prior to Nov. 1.

Books remain a mail-in category. Send entries to OWAA Books, 1816 Romane Dr., Fort Wayne, IN, 46808, by no later than Dec. 1.

Send mail-in entries for other categories to OWAA Contest, 21565 Nine Mile Rd., Huson, MT, 59846.

Submittable

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

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f in t i g y

# Two Millennia of Floods



Water floods the North Jefferson Recreation Area outdoor shelter and playground in July, 2019.  
Photo: Courtesy of Jefferson City Department of Parks, Recreation and Forestry

BY JOEL M. VANCE |  
RUSSELLVILLE, MISSOURI

**M**EL BROOKS AND CARL REINER used to do a comedy skit where Brooks played a 2,000-year-old man. It was hilarious. In the last 25 years I have experienced 2,000 years worth of 500-year floods on the Missouri River, which flows past my hometown, Jefferson City, Missouri.

I guess that makes me somewhat of a 2,000-year-old man, but there's nothing funny about it.

The root cause of these and other climatic catastrophes such as an increase in the number of forest fires, perhaps even hurricanes and tornadoes, is caused by what climatologists call "global warming" or sometimes "climate change." Scientific evidence supports the fact that the climate is warming because of continued and increased release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, which results in warmer temperatures. And that the increase in temperatures will result in more and more dramatic weather-related threats to human existence.

Chances are the young Missouri and Mississippi rivers in Cretaceous times flooded just as they do now, but there was no one around to be affected by

it. There weren't billions of people exhaling carbon dioxide, nor billions of petroleum burning motor vehicles exhausting CO<sub>2</sub>, nor countless fossil fuel-burning industries spewing carbon pollution into the atmosphere. No one was cutting down the world's rain forests that trap atmospheric carbon and help control evaporation. The polar permafrost wasn't melting, ocean levels weren't rising—none of the conditions that directly contribute to increased rainfall were conspiring to cause persistent flooding.

So far, the United States is the only developed nation that has resisted taking action to avoid the effects of climate change. In fact, current policy seems to undo the small gains that have been made over the last 50 years.

The great fantasy writer, Ray Bradbury, wrote a prophetic and memorable short story titled "The Sound of Thunder." Time travel exists in the story, and a hunter going back to the Jurassic period inadvertently steps on a butterfly while he's trophy hunting for a dinosaur. When he returns to the present, he finds that the world has changed in horrible ways all because a historic event as insignificant as killing an insect has magnified over the ages into global catastrophe.

One quote I read summed it up

The term "100-year flood" does not mean that a flood will occur once every 100 years. Rather, it is the flood elevation that has a 1% chance of being equaled or exceeded each year. Thus, the 100-year flood could occur more than once in a relatively short period of time.

Similarly, a 500-year flood has a 0.2% chance of being equaled or exceeded each year.

The 100-year flood standard is used by most Federal and state agencies and is used by the National Flood Insurance Program to determine the need for flood insurance.

SOURCE: FEMA WEBSITE

succinctly: "Pumping carbon pollution into the air is like trying to beat someone playing with crooked dice. We may get lucky for a while, but we can't beat the odds forever." At the rate we're going, uncomfortably near in the future, Miami and Manhattan may become just as flooded as Jefferson City, Missouri, which has been four times in the last quarter century — and it probably won't take 500 years to occur.

One climate change denier on Facebook sneered, "there has always been floods—ask Noah." He said the worst flood in modern times was on the Mississippi River in 1929. The flood actually was in 1927, proving that the fellow's grasp of history was every bit as ignorant as his grasp of climate change.

Long ago, a rabbit biologist told me, "Rabbits are just like people—when there gets to be too many of them they develop ulcers and die." Overpopulation of humans is a subject that many people don't want to talk about. But there is little doubt that we have too many people exploiting a finite amount of natural resources, and that exploitation in the long run, common sense will tell you, is bound to catch up with us.

Beginning in the 1970s there was awareness that we had better do something about air and water quality and do it quickly. The Environmental Protection Agency came into being, as did a number of laws and regulations designed to curtail outrages against the environment. But now it seems that we have those in power dedicated to undoing every gain made over the last 50 years.

The idea that you can prevent forest fires by raking up the leaves on millions of acres of wildlands is so ludicrous on its face that it should be laughed out of existence instead of becoming part of our environmental management system. That's an extreme example of the all-too-common remedy of slapping a Band-Aid on a potentially fatal wound and calling it a cure.

The supposed cure for floodwaters was to build levees to contain rising water as well as systems of dams to hold back accumulating floodwater. Nature scoffs at these stopgap measures, blowing out levees and forcing dramatic releases of stored water which merely passes along your flood to someone downstream.

The world has known that the Missouri River is a fearsome force for more than 350 years. In 1673, Louis Joliet and Father Jacques Marquette explored the Mississippi River from its upper reaches to below St. Louis. Their route led them past the mouth of the Missouri River and the trip journal told a frightening story.

"I have seen nothing more dreadful," recorded Father Marquette. "An accumulation of large and entire trees, branches and floating islands was issuing forth from the mouth of the river, Pekitanoui (the name they called the Missouri) with such impetuosity that we could not without great danger risk passing through it. So great was the agitation, that the water was very muddy and could not become clear." Perhaps the two pioneer explorers were witnessing the result of a 500-year flood on the Big Muddy.

In 1993, a Missouri River flood wiped out a settlement north of Jefferson City—it even closed the two major U.S. highways into the city from the north. If there was an upside to the 1993 and '95 floods it was that many adjacent farmlands became useless as cropland, clogged by many feet of sand. That led to the creation of the Big Muddy National Wildlife Refuge. The refuge was supposed to be 60,000 acres, but federal government acquisition of land for the refuges has fallen considerably short of that (16,700 acres). Instead, a good portion of federal funds went to rebuilding and raising levees.

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**SO FAR, THE UNITED STATES IS THE ONLY DEVELOPED NATION THAT HAS RESISTED TAKING ACTION TO AVOID THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE.**

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Before dams, levees and other channel works came along, when the Missouri and other large rivers flooded, the floodwaters spread out and the force of the flood dissipated. But the lower 500 miles of the Missouri River has been channelized and leveed to ensure a stable depth for barge traffic (which, in more than a century, never has paid for itself). Instead, the channel constricted the river, creating a firehose effect during high water which resulted in levee blowouts and those 500-year floods. In the 2019 flood, 100 levees between Omaha and St. Louis failed. Repairs will take many months—probably years—and taxpayers will foot most of the bill.

So, dozens of state and federal roads and highways close because of high water, bridges shudder under the impact of moving water, farmlands turn into wetlands, fish and wildlife suffer, and Missouri's capital city, along with a number of mud-clogged river towns become victims of the latest 500-year flood.

The Corps of Engineers estimated the cost to repair the 2019 flood damage will exceed \$1 billion. Buried in an Associated Press story are these telling sentences: "It's unclear if there will be enough money to cover all repair costs. Taxpayers can expect to bear some of the hefty price tag."

For the statistic-minded, one study says, "Worldwide from 1980 to 2009, floods caused more than 500,000 deaths and affected more than 2.8 billion people. In the United States, floods caused 4,586 deaths from 1959 to 2005, while property and crop damage averaged nearly \$8 billion per year."

The 2,000 years-worth of floods has not impacted me directly — we live in the hills above the high-water, but that's no consolation to those lowland Missouri River farmers who couldn't plant this year because their fields were flooded. Climate change has consequences. Climate

change likely contributed to, if not directly caused, a forest fire that destroyed a town in California in 2018 and likewise may be contributing to hurricanes that have ravaged Southeastern states. The bottom line is that we do not know yet what calamitous consequences await the world if the climate continues to warm and if there is no curb on carbon emission.

Poet John Donne said it: "Send not to know for whom the bell tolls/It tolls for thee." Those who deny the mounting mass of climate change evidence might want to listen to that evidence more closely—they might hear the all too imminent sound of a tolling bell.

Armageddon is the name for the endgame. Supposedly, that will be the final battle between good and evil before Judgment Day. But wouldn't it be a cosmic irony if Armageddon turns out to be a final battle between humanity and climate change, and Judgment Day is merely something we brought on ourselves?

— Circle of Chiefs articles are written by OWAA members who have received the Jade of Chiefs Award for conservation reporting. The Jade of Chiefs honorees are considered OWAA's conservation council. The article reflects the opinion of the author. If you'd like to add to the discussion, please send a letter to the OU editor at editor@owaa.org.

# F/16 and BE THERE



A pelican swoops in for a landing in Elk Island National Park, Alberta, Canada. Photo by Suzanne Downing.

BY GENE HESTER |  
RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA

**A** NEWS PHOTOGRAPHER IN A LARGE CITY was asked how he got so many great action photos of major newsworthy events.

His answer: F/16 and be there.

What this means for us, is to know how to use our camera and be ready at the right place and time. Digital cameras provide a host of automated features, making it possible to get good pictures almost straight out of the box. But most cameras provide ways to be more creative and get even better photographs. It is important to learn camera settings in advance. You should know how to adjust the speed and aperture as well as the ISO on your camera in fading daylight, and how to adjust the light output from your flash. These things and many others need to be learned in advance as there often is little time to do so once the action starts.

When a flock of ducks suddenly zips

by or a fox emerges from a thicket is not the time to start reading about camera settings.

Even a large telephoto lens may not be enough to provide the detailed and sharp image you want. Sometimes a temporary blind might be the answer. Hunting blinds are inexpensive and can be transported and erected almost anywhere. They enable the photographer to be hidden and comfortable while remaining close to wild animals and minimizing disturbance. Place your blind to make effective use of sunlight.

Getting close to wild animals is always a challenge. Try bird feeders and photographing from a concealed position. Remember that some birds prefer to feed from hanging feeders, but others prefer seeds on a shelf or on the ground. Black oil sunflower seeds are a favorite of many species, but insect-feeders will prefer mealworms or suet. Prepared suet can be bought, but it can be made from various combinations of corn meal, flour, lard or

bacon grease and peanut butter. Simple peanut butter placed in pine cones or tree bark will attract several species. The internet can provide a wealth of information about bird identification, feeders, preferred foods and interesting bird behavior.

Another way to get close for photography is by placing nest boxes. Frequent trips by parents to build nests and care for the young makes photography easy and interesting. The more you know about the preferred nesting habitat of the species, the more successful you will be in selecting the right location. Box size, entrance hole and height from the ground or water are important considerations. This information is easy to find in books or on the internet.

Some of the best places to photograph wild animals are in parks and refuges where they are protected and therefore less wary. Photographing from a vehicle is a good idea since it alarms animals less. The internet can be helpful. Google

[www.fws.gov/refuges](http://www.fws.gov/refuges) to find national wildlife refuges, or <https://www.nps.gov/findapark/> to find national parks. Most states and counties have similar ways to locate local areas. Stop by the headquarters or visitor center to find out what animals are there and where to find them. Information specialists and biologists often have up-to-date information about the animals, as well as natural features. Networking with other photographers is another great idea.

It is important to learn about the behavior of wild animals you intend to photograph. They are creatures of habit and will often arrive and leave at the same time each day. They might use the same feeding spot or perch or tree cavity. The more you understand and can predict their actions, the more you can be at the right place and time to get your photographs. The weather influences the timing and location of bird and mammal migrations, but even migrations happen at about the same time and place each year. In winter, ducks and geese will have migrated to southern refuges and many songbirds will have migrated to Central or South America, but they will return in the spring. Fortunately, many things in nature are predictable. The time certain flowers bloom, or the tree leaves change color in autumn vary little from year to year. I find that where I live, swamp roses bloom in late June and cypress leaves turn rusty-red in mid-No-

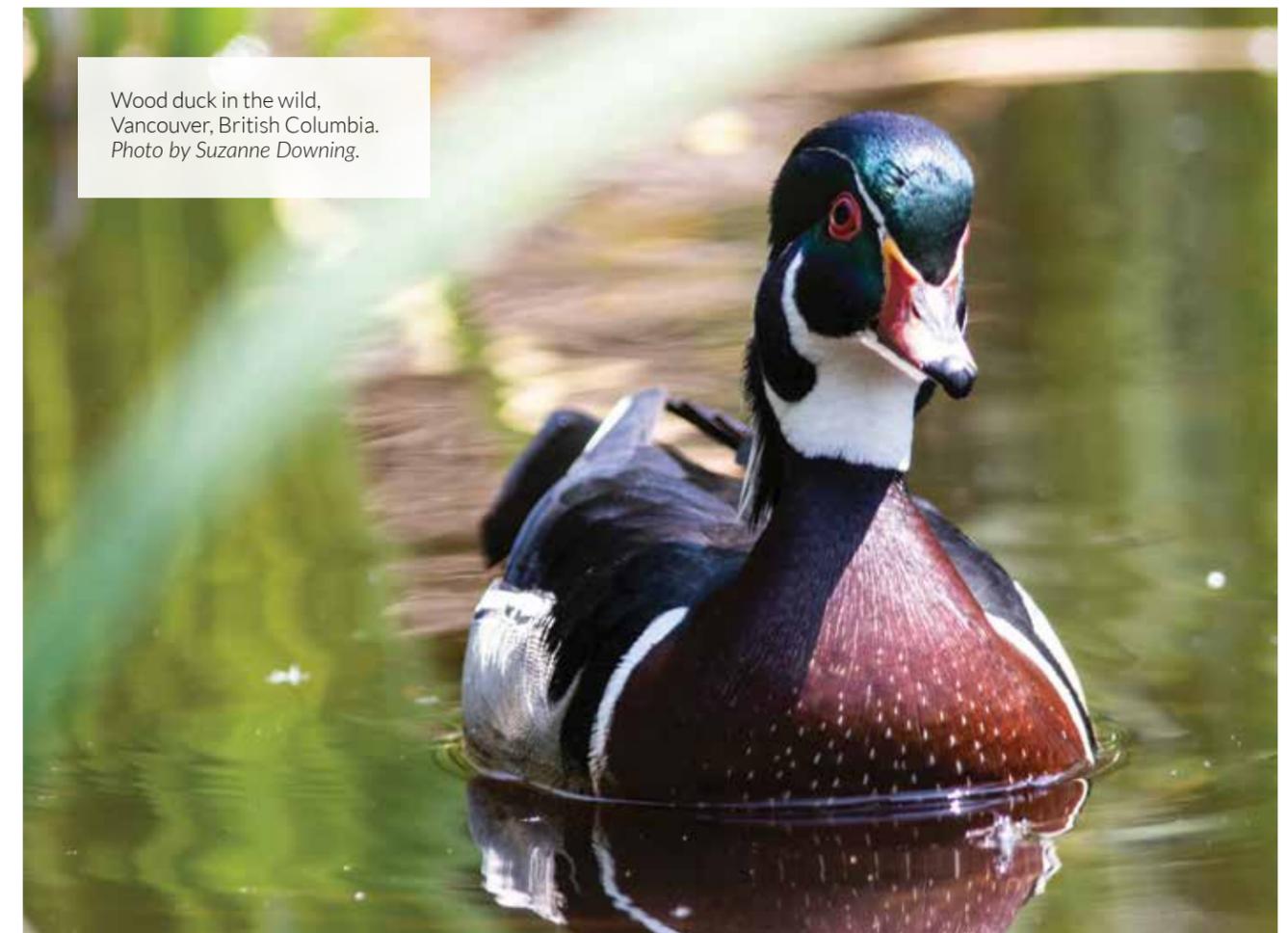
vember. Year after year black bears return to the same black walnut and hickory trees for nuts and to other trees for ripening black cherries.

Wildlife photography is exciting and rewarding. Prepare for it and get great photographs.

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**ANOTHER WAY TO GET CLOSE FOR PHOTOGRAPHY IS BY PLACING NEST BOXES. FREQUENT TRIPS BY PARENTS TO BUILD NESTS AND CARE FOR THE YOUNG MAKES PHOTOGRAPHY EASY AND INTERESTING. THE MORE YOU KNOW ABOUT THE PREFERRED NESTING HABITAT OF THE SPECIES, THE MORE SUCCESSFUL YOU WILL BE IN SELECTING THE RIGHT LOCATION.**

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Wood duck in the wild,  
Vancouver, British Columbia.  
Photo by Suzanne Downing.

# Checks from oddball opportunities

BY STEVE GRIFFIN |  
MIDLAND, MICHIGAN

**B**IG CHECKS AND LITTLE CHECKS, outdoor-writing checks and just-plain-writing checks; it takes a mix of all of them to wrangle some kind of living out of this wonderful lifestyle.

Let's talk about some overlooked places where there might be a check hiding for you.

Think about brochure writing, for print or online. Or blog posts – they're satisfying, by-lined, and for 400 words, they can pay the same as a 2,000-word magazine piece. Web content written for others, non-by-lined, is even more lucrative.

Those are but slight steps off the well-trod path, though. Some opportunities are more novel.

I've had revue/consultant gigs, for a university invention/entrepreneur program, that paid me to assess products and ideas relating to the outdoor field, and their likelihood of success.

I worked a bunch of holiday weekends, at prime rates, flying along as an aerial observer of traffic conditions, for an insurance company's "Holiday News Service." My phone reports were merged with others into a radio script.

Speaking of scripts, almost every video needs one, and it takes a deft hand to turn one that seems somehow both natural and exquisitely planned. It's closer to playwriting than to conventional prose, and a playwriting course wouldn't hurt.

Museums and halls of fame are my special niche, and I'm not going to tell you much about them except that: You're limited to very few words, and each must be precisely right; you'll likely need to satisfy a committee, and that's tough;

what goes on the wall (or interactive, or whatever) won't be exactly what you wrote, and your name won't be on it. In exchange, the pay is good, if you can learn, condense and share.

Other ideas?

People love to write and want to do it better. Or, they hate to write, but need to learn to do it better. You can be an instructor, in paid gigs with colleges and universities, or through arts organiza-

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**CLINIC AND WORKSHOP GIGS CAN SHAKE LOOSE A FEW HUNDRED DOLLARS FROM TIME TO TIME; BE READY TO CATCH THEM WITH A SNAPPY PROGRAM AND PROVEN POINTERS.**

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tions.

For 10 years I taught newspaper feature and magazine writing as an adjunct—one or two courses per term—in Central Michigan University's Journalism Department. Not a living, but it helped assemble one. Gave me some extra credibility. And I learned a lot.

Clinic and workshop gigs can shake loose a few hundred dollars from time to time; be ready to catch them with a snappy program and proven pointers.

Do what you love and are good at. I've won several hundred dollars in cash and admission tickets with bawdy limericks entered in a contest at an Irish Music Festival in Michigan. Those checks were

just as handy as those I earned writing newspaper stuff! (Samples available on request!)

Sometimes working for no pay is okay. I got drafted to write an obituary for a friend's failing father—at his request, while he was still alive! We did an interview in his hospital room, I wrote and refined it in the lounge next door, read it to him, and made all the revisions he wanted. He died the next day. No check—but who'd pass up an experience and story like that? You're a writer. Celebrate it! Sometimes a friend—sometimes the world—needs one, and it might be you. It can also pay dividends, though not in cash, to hammer out an OU piece from time to time. Professional satisfaction, friendships, giving back, etc.

In lighter times, I've worked with a couple of friends who were writing books, providing early editing and manuscript review, helping them tame wandering stories. No checks these first two times—but there are a couple of similar deals simmering that will pay pretty well.

If there's a common theme in these uncommon pursuits, it's that you're often best paid when there's no byline.

I know, I know, you need "exposure." But the people looking to hire someone will hear about you from those who've hired you and found you both pleasant and proficient; they'll track you down. A follow-up note to a client can softly thank them in advance for any referrals they might provide, too.

Just remember, after all: Often the most satisfying byline reads, "Pay to the order of..."

— Steve Griffin, has been a full-time freelance outdoors writer/photographer since 1975 and an OWAA member since 1976.

# 4 ways to keep your back pocket full of story ideas

BY MATTHEW DICKERSON | MIDDLEBURY, VERMONT

**I**CAME INTO OUTDOOR WRITING THROUGH A BACK DOOR. An editor at a local newspaper knew I was an avid angler and outdoor enthusiast as well as a published author: A novelist who had written a couple magazine pieces and taught college writing. He asked me to write a monthly fishing column, which soon turned into a bi-weekly outdoors column.

That was 21 years ago. Since then I've written four books about trout, rivers, and fly fishing; articles for a variety of fly-fishing magazines; several narrative non-fiction essays for nature or environmental journals; and a couple other books and chapters on environmental literature.

Although my newspaper column launched me into outdoor writing—and around town folks know me as the "fishing writer" (and some even imagine that writing a column every other week is my full-time job)—my outdoors column is a small part of my writing income and consumes only a few hours a month.

All of that is to say, in the midst of other responsibilities, my bi-weekly deadline sometimes slips up on me subtly and unannounced, like a brown trout sipping spinners or a rainbow inhaling a #22 nymph. (Though in those moments when I realize I have a story due in just a few minutes, I can feel more like surface fly ambushed by a pike.) Even when I plan a story weeks in advance, a thunderstorm or canceled outing can ruin my plans and leave me scrambling last minute.

For that reason, it's nice to have a back pocket full of ideas I can draw on when the usual bevy of stories aren't panning out. Fortunately, after more than two decades writing this column, I have leeway to cover national as well as local stories; environmental or conservation concerns as well as human interest; and also personal experiences.

I used to feel a push to regularly put out a piece on "where to go and what to use in local waters in the current season." And I do that from time to time. But I get the most positive feedback from narratives and descriptive stories drawn from personal experiences. Folks will tell me, "I'm not a hunter or angler, but I really enjoy your columns. I loved reading your descriptions about your trip to —." A series of those columns I wrote in 2017 won first place in the New England Newspaper & Press Association contest for best sports column of the year.

It's easy to forget, but also good news (since it's what drew many of us to outdoor writing in the first place): Some the best back-pocket stories simply come from spending time outdoors doing what we love, and sharing that with good descriptive prose that conveys that passion. Beyond that, here are four other ways I keep my back pocket full. Some are obvious, but sometimes all you need are just one or two.



Subscribe to the state's fish and wildlife e-mail list. Most states also have a "newsroom" on their website with recent official postings, but if you don't mind receiving a few more mailings in your in-box and can take a minute to briefly scan the headlines, it can be enough to prompt a story.

In a similar vein, I subscribe to various conservation-oriented national news sources. My brother connected me to the Northern Climate Observer, which is both useful and often discouraging in the sense that Aldo Leopold once warned: "One of the penalties of an ecological education is that one lives alone in a world of wounds."

It's great to cultivate relationships with local sporting goods retailers, especially smaller independent ones. Just hanging out in the stores prompts stories, and the proprietors and managers stay up to date on local happenings and product trends. Similarly, make a point of getting to know the local game wardens and biologists (state as well as federal), and hatchery workers, and tapping into them for stories.

— Matthew Dickerson ([www.matthewdickerson.net](http://www.matthewdickerson.net), [www.trout-downstream.net](http://www.trout-downstream.net)) has been an OWAA member since 2015. In addition to writing about trout, fishing, and rivers in a variety of books, magazines, and newspapers, he also has managed to incorporate fishing and hunting seasons into his historical novels and works of fantasy literature.

# What editors want

Magazine editors talk pitches & more

BY SUZANNE DOWNING |  
HUSON, MONTANA

**T**O BE A SUCCESSFUL FREELANCER, you need a solid list of publications for pitching your stories or photos.

But a list isn't enough. You need to know what magazine editors want from you before you pitch. Take time to read the magazine. Read the contributor guidelines. Look at style. Look at word count. Look at themes. Look at imagery.

It takes time to get to know a magazine's heart and soul, but doing your homework can make your pitch stand out in an editor's inbox. Six editors in this two-part series from various magazine styles share what they want from you. And what they don't want.

## SIDETRACKED INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE

**Editor:** Andrew Mazibrada  
andrew@sidetracked.co.uk  
www.sidetracked.com

**The Skinny:** Sidetracked is a UK-based magazine featuring personal stories of adventure, travel, journeys and expeditions. Sidetracked seeks to capture the emotion and experience of global travel to inspire others. The magazine has a distinctive feature style, and yes, they take U.S. submissions.

"We tell stories," editor Andrew Mazibrada said. "Stories have conventions and we all know what they are—we've all read fiction; we've all read great short stories or novels that move us. That's what we're looking for, but with the added beauty that it really happened."

Mazibrada looks for dramatic, professional-quality imagery.

"Anyone who has picked up a copy of Sidetracked will see instantly that the images mean as much to us as the words of the narrative."

With inexpensive lightweight mirrorless cameras and endless online photography tutorials, Mazibrada said there really is no excuse for not having powerful, dramatic imagery alongside the words you submit to an outdoor or adventure travel publication.

He urges anyone pitching to him to imagine all the conventions of storytelling in their piece: Plot, character, setting, climax and ending, all tied together by a coherent theme. "What is your story about? Why are you telling it? What do you want others to feel when they read it?"

"Our stories are intended to inspire, to invoke powerful emotions through the reader experiencing the event just as the writer did," he said.

He said formal pitches don't need to be in any particular format.

"Just inspire us with the story you want



to tell, and tell us why you want to tell it, how it changed you, how it will inspire your readers. If your pitch, whatever format it takes, is beautifully written, we are more likely to take a chance on you. If your story is compelling and the images are amazing, then even if your writing is not your strength, we'll work with you."

Sidetracked features not only elite adventurers, but also ordinary people doing extraordinary things. It's not a travel magazine. It's about the unexpected, personal and physical limits, adventure, inspiration and being moved by the emotive power of amazing experiences in rare and wonderful places.

For Mazibrada, standout pitches cover places Sidetracked hasn't featured, "... where few people go, but which have great stories waiting to be told; or experiences that truly stand out because of their raw, emotional power."

"Get out of your comfort zone," he said. "Travel to far-flung, less well-known places and meet people. Immerse yourself in local culture and learn something new from it.

Be changed by your experiences. Otherwise, what you're offering us is a travel blog and that's not what we're looking for."

## ATLAS OBSCURA ONLINE MAGAZINE

**Deputy editor:** Samir S. Patel  
samir.patel@atlasobscura.com  
www.atlasobscura.com

Atlas Obscura is an online magazine featuring stories to inspire wonder and curiosity through best-in-class journalism about hidden places, incredible history, scientific marvels and gastronomical wonders. "The last refuge of Eurasia's giant river dwellers" and "Why does the U.S. Army own so many fossils?" are examples of the odd and unusual stories Atlas Obscura seeks.

Atlas Obscura deputy editor Samir Patel wants pitches to be succinct, but not too brief.

"A paragraph that doesn't provide any sense of setting, narrative, or reporting

strategy is hard to judge," Patel said, "And we're very likely to pass on these in favor of pitches that are more completely thought-through, even if the kernel of the idea has potential. 'Here's an interesting thing' isn't a story."

She adds that there are many publications out there for essays, personal reflection, first-person musing. "We're not one of them. When we get these, it's something of an indication that the pitching writer isn't familiar with Atlas Obscura."

And she wants to be a part of the story creation, so sending an unsolicited manuscript won't help you get published.

"I appreciate when a writer has a clear vision of what they want and are so excited by their material that they have a few thousand words ready to go, but editors like to be involved in the conception and direction of a story, so a story that's already written almost never has a place

with us."

For Patel, a pitch stands out when there's a strong sense of what's appropriate for the spirit of Atlas Obscura, why the writer is well-equipped to provide it and a sense that the writer has put some time and thought into how to tell the story.

Patel responds to all pitches, "...but I've noticed recently that writers have been following up after just a few days. Be patient. We'll be in touch!"

She also recommends doing your homework online before pitching.

"We're not squarely in the outdoor space, and we're not straight travel writing. It means there's a bit of an Atlas Obscura code to crack—but there are lots of stories out there around amazing places, interesting people, and unusual objects. Read as much of the site as you can and look for a form or model for what you'd like to do for us."

## HIGH COUNTRY NEWS REGIONAL MAGAZINE

**Associate editor:** Emily Benson  
emilyb@hcn.org  
www.hcn.org

High Country News publishes stories covering important issues that define the American West. Its mission is to inform and inspire people—through in-depth journalism—to action on behalf of the West's diverse natural and human communities. A recent story explored one of the West's harshest penal systems, where incarcerated wildfire fighters learn to see themselves anew.

Associate editor Emily Benson gets more pitches in her inbox than she can commission.

"Most successful pitches include the basics of the story—what happened, who was involved, what's at stake and what's the scope of the issue—as well as the bigger picture," Benson said. "How would this story reframe our understanding of the West, or get at a larger idea or context?"

She said the most common thing writers leave out is this broader "so-what" that is crucial for her to understand before she accepts a pitch.

And it's best to let her know who you

are. "Please don't forget to include a line about yourself if we don't already know each other (where you live, what you do, in brief); and please read the submission guidelines! They're long, but we keep them up-to-date, and they really do articulate what we're looking for."

A pitch stands out in her inbox when it has a compelling character, a sharp news angle, a gripping narrative and a clearly articulated understanding of the bigger picture that your story fits within.

"Oh, and something I haven't heard or read about—surprise me," she said.

Idea pitches, rather than finished pieces, with the idea clearly spelled out are best.

"I don't have time to read a finished piece when it lands in my inbox," she said. "If the pitch is for an essay or another type of story that depends strongly on style and voice, I may ask for a draft if you have it. But please don't send it out of the blue."

She also receives a lot of pitches she wishes she could commission but can't for various logistical reasons. "Perhaps we ran a similar story relatively recently, or perhaps our schedule is full for the next two months and the story would be stale by then."

If your pitch is rejected, don't give up. "Rejections are rarely personal, though I know they can feel that way. And if you



do receive a rejection, don't be afraid to pitch me another story sometime down the road."

For stories from AK, ID, MT, OR, WA and WY, contact Emily Benson. For stories from AZ, CA, CO, NM, NV and UT, contact Paige Blandenbuehler at paigeb@hcn.org. For stories for an indigenous audience contact Tristan Ahtone at tristanahatone@hcn.org.

Stay tuned! In the next issue, you'll hear from editors at Arkansas Wildlife, Mountain Life and Fly Tyer.

# How I found my rhythm with the Freeflow Institute

BY STEPHANIE MALTARICH |  
MISSOULA, MONTANA

IN FOURTH GRADE, MY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL offered a program called “Readers Writers Workshop.” I spent many afternoons freewriting and filling the pages of my journals. I took a love for writing and storytelling away from these workshops.

Two years ago, after a meandering path and career exploring wild places like Colorado’s Rocky Mountains and Ecuador’s Galapagos Islands—leading groups into the wild—I returned to academia to explore writing as a career. I didn’t know much about how or why I wrote, I just did it. So, I enrolled in the University of Montana’s Environmental Writing program.

On a visit to campus, I methodically scanned the colorful posters lining the window for useful information; I wanted to know more about the happenings in the place I would soon call home. My eyes paused on a photo of a meandering river in the wilderness set against a glowing sunset. Bright pink writing asked:

Do you like to write? Do you dream of creative adventure through wild spaces? Are you interested in experiencing the nexus of human and wild experiences?

I looked closer at the fine print: The Main Salmon. Pulitzer Prize Finalist writing instructor. University of Montana graduate credit. The Freeflow Institute.

Within days, I signed up for this free flowing river writing workshop on the Main Salmon River in Idaho to float alongside instructor, William deBuys, Pulitzer Prize finalist famed for his writing on conservation and climate change.

For six days, I floated the Main Salmon River on a raft through rapids and eddies. In 1980, the river was designated Wild and Scenic for its rich ecological and human history. Along the way, between rapids, I learned about the significance of confluences, the threat of upstream dams,

and the history of prolific wildfires. Each morning the rich scent of coffee woke me from my tent.

Coffee in hand, I sat quietly on the beach writing in my journal as the river’s waves lapped against the shore. deBuys began each morning with a mini-lesson, and the small group of 15 spent the day processing his lecture on the boats.

We learned about the tools and craft of writing: The value of verbs, telling details and showing instead of telling. Everyone read their pieces out loud, and the group provided praise and critique. We grew close as a cohort of writers from all backgrounds—teachers, university professors, outdoor adventure writers and soon-to-be novelists.

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**“ALL WRITERS AND ARTISTS BENEFIT FROM TIME SPENT OUTSIDE—IN THE ESSENTIAL RE-WILDING OF THE CREATIVE SPIRIT.”**

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That week on the river helped me get back into the rhythm of writing. I stepped outside my comfort zone by sharing stories out loud with a shaky voice to strangers who later became friends.

I returned home after a week on the Main Salmon feeling inspired and confident. With the time and space to write coupled with professional instruction from a seasoned writer; I was prepared to start my master’s program. The wild river and open air helped me find my rhythm and flow in writing, which is exactly what I needed. I learned there is a structured and methodical way to approach my writing instead of a rambling free flow moment.



Stephanie Maltarich sits alongside the Salmon River with her journal. Photo by Nicholas Triolo.

Freeflow Institute is a Montana-based collaborative offering seminars, workshops and adventures for creative people in Earth’s wildest classrooms. They believe that “all writers and artists benefit from time spent outside—in the essential re-wilding of the creative spirit.”

Not in the Montana area? Simply find an outdoor writing workshop near you. Short on funds? Try pitching a publication with a solid story idea before your trip and get your trip paid for.

— OWAA student member, *Stephanie Maltarich is based in Missoula, Montana, while she pursues an M.A. in Environmental Studies with a focus on Environmental Writing. Before returning to school, she spent 10 years leading teenagers, young adults, youth, and individuals with disabilities on adventures in the U.S. and abroad. She’s written for Crested Butte Magazine, NRS Blog: Duct Tape Diaries, and Misadventures Magazine.*

## 7 Tips to an online photography portfolio

BY ELORA AKINS

A GOOD PORTFOLIO can help launch your career, but a bad one can put a stopper in getting a job. With everything online now, even portfolios have to be online. Having your portfolio online makes it available to anyone and everyone with a click of a button and press of a finger. Need some help to make it perfect? Here are seven tips to make your new online photography portfolio stand out!

**1 Include a gallery and contact section.** An online photography portfolio is intended to either attract clientele, show off images and/or serve as a resume. Some photographers choose to have a reference area or an about section but a photo portfolio must contain a gallery and a contact section to be successful.

**2 Organize your work.** Make sure to organize your work by subject or theme. You wouldn’t have fishing and wedding photos in the same folder for your records so why display your work that way? Potential employers and/or clients want to see work that pertains to them so make sure they aren’t searching for it. Drop down bars or subject dividers are great for this.

**3 Limit your work but show your best.** You want people to see the best of the best, not everything you’ve ever captured. Twenty photos of the same thing or relatively same thing is too much but three or four photos that really stand out is a safer way to go. If you organize by subject, make sure to have no more than three or four of your best work in that subject. Otherwise, it just becomes too much.

Have other people help with this, someone else may see something in your photos that you do not. Multiple perspectives and opinions will greatly help when deciding what your best work is!

**4 Use high resolution photos.** Whoever comes to view your portfolio will expect professional images. Don’t display “full size” images at 300px by 300px, the viewer is there to look at your work at its quality so make sure they can! Also, try to keep the contrast high. Images usually look better on a black background. Contrast helps bring out the colors of the photo, which can make the image appear more vivid and stunning.

**5 Provide a little detail.** Viewers like to know who they are looking at or why you shot the image. If you find it satisfactory then provide a little information about the photo. Not every image needs a “title,” but a one sentence description could go a long way.

**6 Use SEO (search engine optimization).** A lot of the times photographers will create beautiful sites but then they wait for people to see it and forget to set up an SEO strategy. Use a portfolio set up service that allows you to take control of your SEO and includes search engine friendly URLs, crawl-able content, and unique tags. These specific features will help drive traffic to places within your portfolio.

**7 Connect your site to social media.** Visitors can share your photos on social media platforms with a simple click. This will allow more visibility and a larger span for your work. Make sure you put the site for your portfolio on applications and business cards. Get your portfolio anywhere and everywhere that you can!

Every little bit helps and every bit counts. The more work you put into your portfolio, the more passionate the viewer will see you as. The format and detail in which you present your portfolio are just as important as the photos displayed.

— Elora Akins is a former OWAA intern.

## LOWA: Boots for all seasons...



Photo: ©Max Seigal

### COLD WEATHER:

LOWA's new Cold Weather Boot Collection that was introduced after Labor Day is all about expanding options for what to wear from cool autumn days through to spring, not just winter.

They use a range of GORE-TEX linings and insulations that stay dry even on wet days – like GORE-TEX Panda (for when it's cool) or GORE-TEX Partelana (for when it's really cold). They offer choices of different outsoles for great grip on muddy, icy, snowy and wet surfaces. And they've designed style options from rugged outdoor boots for snowshoeing and cold weather hiking to casual lifestyle models in an array of heights and materials.

### ALL SEASONS HUNTING AND SHOOTING:

LOWA excels in products for outdoorsmen and women who big game hunt, field hunt for birds or enjoy practice shooting on the range.

How many of you have found yourselves in the mountains, on a trail or crossing a field with the best that money can buy in guns and clothing, only to find that your day is ruined by foot-

wear that does not fit, gets wet, slips on rocky terrain or just plain hurts? LOWA boots can prevent this scenario. They are multipurpose, specialty boots for those who require the best in support, comfort and durability.

As always, all LOWA footwear is 100% handcrafted in company-owned factories in Europe, under the world's most stringent labor and environmental standards.

### CHECK LOWA'S OUT:

For OWAA members interested in checking out a LOWA for themselves, LOWA is offering its VIP discount of 30% off retail through Nov. 15 after which time inventory levels are traditionally low.

For OWAA members who have editorial outlets, LOWA is happy to discuss alternative arrangements.

Either way, just contact Ingrid Niehaus for more information at 949-499-2225 or [ingridniehauspr@gmail.com](mailto:ingridniehauspr@gmail.com)

She can set you up with the VIP form and/or send you links to whatever category of footwear interests you. You can also go directly to [lowaboots.com](http://lowaboots.com).

## An affinity for the outdoors

BY SHEKINAH COREA

**W**HAT DO YOU GET WHEN you give a city girl a chance to meet people who love the outdoors? A girl who quickly falls in love with the one thing she never had before. Being born and raised in the heart of Los Angeles does not exactly afford many chances to make an outdoor dream a reality.

Coming to the OWAA conference in Little Rock, I had no idea what to expect, and what I got was more than I knew was possible. OWAA members are a community of welcoming, passionate, and intelligent individuals who love what they do and love to share it. I instantly felt welcomed from the first encounters onwards. Every conversation was rich and full of things that left me in wonder. I made amazing connections to people from everywhere with so many stories, so much wisdom, and even more enthusiasm to offer. I was enthralled with every story, every session, every event.

One of the most exciting opportunities I had was to join the group on a trip to a shooting range a little way from our hotel. As you can imagine, coming from California guns are not viewed in a positive light by most and not usually a part of daily life. I had always wanted to learn to use a firearm as a firm believer that I had a right to protect myself and that guns were bad only in the wrong hands and intentions. Imagine my excitement as I was finally able to spend some hours being taught how to handle an assortment of guns for the first time. Then there was the pride of shooting pretty well as the targets proved. This was particularly exciting to me as someone who suffers from essential tremors in my hands. Even there, I was supported and cheered on by the OWAA members who knew this was a new experience for me.

I am so thankful to Toyota for awarding me the Let's Go Places scholarship that brought me to the OWAA conference, because it opened up a door to a whole world I thought was closed to me. As I discussed with a few individuals, I find that often those like me who grow up in urban areas and have an affinity for the outdoors often lose the dream. There is a feeling that we missed some deadline to join the outdoors community if we weren't raised in it; we have to have learned young and



Shekinah Corea learns to fire a .22 rifle for the first time at the 92nd annual OWAA conference during the field skills day at the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission Dr. James E. Moore Jr. Camp Robinson Firing Range in Conway, Arkansas.

Photo: Suzanne Downing

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**THE OUTDOORS HAS NO AGE LIMIT.  
IT HAS SO MANY THINGS FOR US TO  
LEARN FROM, WRITE ABOUT, TALK  
ABOUT AND LOVE.**

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grown up in it. Or so we think. I'm going into my sophomore year of college having just learned to shoot a gun, the importance of conservation balanced with hunting and that even a man in a foot brace can win a push up contest at the leftover luau.

The outdoors has no age limit. It has so many things for us to learn from, write about, talk about, and love. I can't wait for the times to come as I learn what the outdoors has to offer from the people at OWAA.



# Turn conference into A MONEY MAKER

BY PAT WRAY

**A**RE YOU GETTING EVERYTHING YOU CAN from your OWAA membership? If your answer isn't an unequivocal YES then let's talk about how to make it so. Let's start with our annual conference.

Attend each and every conference, starting with 2020 at the Jay Peak Resort in Vermont. It's the biggest and best feature of your OWAA membership and it will pay for itself many times over but only if you work at it.

So...how do you make the conference pay?

- **Make your decision to attend early.** Buy your plane ticket well in advance to take advantage of lower prices and make your hotel reservation yesterday. You want a room in the conference hotel and latecomers sometimes end up in outlying hotels.

- **Develop a production plan,** preferably for a year following the conference, but at least for several months. Incorporate pre and post-trips you would like to take associated with the conference. Work out a schedule of stories/photos/broadcasts/podcasts you can produce from each of

the trips. If you can't expect to pay for costs of the trip (including tips) with the resulting production, don't take the trip.

- **Study the conference agenda carefully,** newsmaker as well as craft improvement speakers. There are stories and articles everywhere.

- **Find out about the editors and publishers who will be attending** and study them and their publications/companies. Prioritize the ones you most want to talk with and make it your business to do so. Work at it. Prepare your pitch and

use meals, hospitality suites and breaks between sessions to introduce yourself and your ideas.

- **Contact the OWAA office two weeks before the conference** and ask for a list of registrants. Read up on each of them in the OU Directory. Many OWAA members are nationally and internationally known in their fields. They are stories in their own rights, and all are a wealth of information as well as priceless pieces of your growing network that will be the foundation of your career in years to come.

- **Attend every session you can.** Conference organizers invite experts in timely issues of the day. Features and columns about those issues will sell in outlets everywhere. Craft improvement seminars are equally important; they will help you stay up with the everchanging technology and needs of the communication business.

Have fun! Granted, the conference is full of business opportunities, but it's also a great time to enjoy yourself and make lifelong friends. There's a reason so many OWAA long-time OWAA members continue to attend every conference, even after they've retired. It's for the chance to see many of their very best friends and to take part once again in an organization that has become a linchpin of their lives.

## HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR OWAA MEMBERSHIP

The first, and perhaps most important thing I ever learned about the Outdoor Writers Association of America became clear at my first conference in Traverse City, Michigan. It was this: Everyone wanted to help me. They introduced themselves, shook my hand, did everything they could to make me feel comfortable. They also—and I was amazed at the time—went out of their way to help me become a more successful writer.

My late mentor, Ed Park, a giant in our industry, explained their attitude best. "Our business is not a zero-sum game. The money and stature you attain will not be subtracted from mine. There are an infinite number of ways for each of us to succeed and they are changing every day. Any success you achieve will reflect back and help us all. When one of us succeeds, everybody wins." That attitude is the underpinning of OWAA and the foundation of your career in outdoor communication...if you are smart.

Don't get me wrong. You need talent and the more talent the better, but there are plenty of talented people who have fallen by the wayside because they never made the necessary connections, never

showed their talent to its true advantage, never learned how to make their OWAA membership pay.

In addition to making the annual OWAA Conference a money-making proposition for you. Here are a few more ideas to consider throughout the rest of the year.

- **Read Outdoors Unlimited cover to cover.** Everything from job notifications to articles about major topics of the day are available in each issue. Many of us write features and columns based on what we read in the magazine. It's also a forum where you can learn all about OWAA and have a say in the direction of the organization as well.

- **Enter the OWAA Excellence in Craft Contest.** It allows you to test yourself against your peers and make money, too. Learn the requirements and plan some of your work to enter in the contests. You can be one of those OWAA members who regularly wins enough money to pay for travel, lodging and food at the annual conference.

- **Access OWAA's ethics committee.** Are you having difficulty in your professional life with unethical or illegal activities? We have an Ethics Committee, the chairman of which can provide advice and recommendations and, if the offending party is an OWAA member, can initiate ethical proceedings.

- **Access OWAA's legal counsel.** Are you in need of legal advice? **Bill Powell, Esq.,** offers OWAA members legal guidance. You can contact him at [powell@smith-lewis.com](mailto:powell@smith-lewis.com).

- **Connect with other members.** Not sure how to proceed with a major project? Get to know OWAA members and reach out for help. Someone in this organization has the expertise you need. Guaranteed.

Case in point: When I decided to write and self-publish a book about chukar hunting, the quintessential small niche

market, I became a fixture at the sides of **Tom Huggler** and **Mike Furtman**, both experts in the publishing field, during meals, breaks and hospitality suites, picking their brains at every opportunity. It is not true that I followed them into restrooms. Those meetings were accidental.

When I needed photographs for the book, I contacted former OWAA member Ron Spomer, who provided a spectacular cover photo and seven inside photos at a steeply discounted rate. Multiple OWAA members edited the manuscript for me. **Kevin Rhoades** handled layout and design, as he has for two subsequent books. When the book was done, I sent review copies out to OWAA newspaper outdoor editors **Bill Monroe, Tom Wharton, Mark Freeman, Rich Landers, Dave Buchanan** and others. They were kind enough to review the book prior to Christmas of that year, virtually guaranteeing a successful release. The book was an OWAA effort from beginning to end and a remarkable success as a result. There are dozens, if not hundreds of similar stories attributable to OWAA membership. Because when one of us succeeds, everybody wins.

We're going to delve into that idea much more deeply during our annual conference at the Jay Peak Resort in Vermont, June 27-29, 2020 with a session entitled "OWAA: Where We've Been, Where We Are, Where We Want to Go," a 3-hour, open-discussion workshop that will look at our past, present and future. **Tom Huggler** and **Glenn Sapir** are two of the most knowledgeable of all our members. There is no one better to summarize and explain the background and history of our organization. Emily Stone is an astute observer with an OWAA family history and a laser-focused idea of where she would like us to go as an organization. An extended discussion between those three speakers, which will include plenty of input from the audience, will help to lay the groundwork for a healthy future that can then be incorporated into an upcoming Strategic Plan. This will be your chance to make your mark on OWAA, now and in the future.

# Supporting your supporting groups

BY JOHN KRUSE |  
WENATCHEE, WASHINGTON

AS A MEMBER OF OWAA, when you think of our Supporting Groups, what comes to mind? Perhaps you are thinking...

**1** These are the organizations (like the PEW Charitable Trust, Realtree and the Izaak Walton League of America) who sponsor several Excellence in Craft contest categories that really add to the money you can get if you win one of their

**2** They are the companies or organizations who sponsor our meals and hospitality suites at the conference where we get free food and drinks.

**3** These are the vendors we see at our conferences during Demo Day and Field Skills Day who often give us goodies.

**4** They are the tourism and visitor convention bureaus that offer us free press trips in exchange for published stories and photographs.

**5** These are the ones who offer us discounts found in the "Members Only" section of our OWAA website at [www.owaa.org/members-area/discounts/](http://www.owaa.org/members-area/discounts/)

All of these are true. Our supporting members do offer all of this to us as individual members of America's largest group of professional outdoors communicators. However, have you ever thought of WHY these organizations offer us these wonderful benefits?

It's probably not altruism, though some of our Supporting Groups do likely have a soft spot for some of us starving artists. No, they do it because they want coverage from us.

The fact of the matter is we have been



Paddling amongst the cypress trees of the Little Maumelle River during a pre-conference trip offered by the Little Rock CVB and The Nature Conservancy.

losing some of our Supporting Groups. Why is that? In some cases, maybe they don't think they are getting anything back for their support. It's understandable really. Our organization should be about "win-win" relationships where everyone benefits. However, when Supporting Groups pay their annual fees year after year, offer discounts few members take advantage of, or invest in our conferences with little media generation to show for it, you can't really blame them if they pull out of our organization.

With that in mind it's fair to ask the question, how do we support our Supporting Groups? Here's a few ways you can do so:

**1** Go on those press trips at the conference or any other time of year they are offered and make it a point to send tear sheets or finished video or audio back to those bureaus or organizations that host you so they know exactly what return they got on their investment.

**2** Take those Supporting Groups up on the discounts or items they have available for you to review. Give them private feedback if you think there are things that

can be improved on and generate product reviews to the public. Again, make sure those companies get a copy of what you produce.

**3** Looking for story ideas? Start with our membership directory and see if our Supporting Groups have a story worth sharing. Every one of them does and they are hoping you will tell it. Make it a point when you contact them to let them know you are doing so because they are a Supporting Group of OWAA.

**4** Say "Thank you." As we mentioned at the beginning of this article, our Supporting Groups give us a lot. At the very least, make it a point to let them know how much you appreciate that.

If all of us as OWAA members do these things, we'll not only stop the loss of Supporting Groups from our organization, but also will likely see a whole bunch of new ones clamoring to join as the word gets out about how valuable a Supporting Group can be with the Outdoor Writers Association of America

— John Kruse is an OWAA Board Member and the host of America Outdoors Radio.

# Help needed in the creation of OWAA History 1992-Present

BY PAT WRAY | CORVALLIS, OREGON

Back in January I sent an e-mail requesting input from you for our updated OWAA History, 1992-Present. The response was underwhelming. I'm assuming your e-mail was down, electricity cut off or your dog ate the computer and I'm trying this again. Please don't let me down. I'm not pretty when I cry.

I need your contributions. We've got a pretty good start from our past presidents, but we need your memories and reminiscences about your experiences in OWAA. Maybe from the conferences or experiences with other members, things you learned, maybe even things you wish you hadn't learned. I'll be happy to send you what we've got thus far, to give you an idea where we're going.

This is going to be as factual and unvarnished as possible without being fodder for the courts. Humor is welcome. Please send me ([patwray@comcast.net](mailto:patwray@comcast.net)) your input, as short or as long as you need. I'm working on developing a website where everyone can visit to see what's there and upload their stuff, but only a select few will be able to remove or edit.

Which brings me to the second part of my request: I need someone who can write a grant that will fund the creation and maintenance of such website. I've been assured that there are organizations that treasure histories of this type and will perhaps underwrite our effort. If you've got the skill and time, or know someone who does, please contact me.

Remember: The only things worse than histories unread are histories unwritten.

## 2018 NORM STRUNG YOUTH WRITING AWARDS CONTEST WINNERS

OWAA has selected 12 winners in the annual Norm Strung Youth Writing Awards contest, which awards prizes for the best in poetry and prose by students in two age divisions.

The junior division is for students in sixth through eighth grade, and the senior division is for high school students.

The winners were selected by a panel of judges from OWAA's Education Committee, chaired by Ann Simpson.

This year's contest was sponsored by OWAA members Ruth Hoyt, John Kruse, Tim Mead, Paul Queneau, and Joel Vance. In addition to cash prizes, winners are receiving cast iron cookware from Lodge Manufacturing.

### JUNIOR POETRY

- First place, "Ocean Beauty" by Kestrel Linehan, Westport Island, ME
- Second place, "Kalaloch" by Nestor Powers, Windsor, ME
- Third place, "Canoe on the Lake" by Zach Burton, Kirbyville, MO

### JUNIOR PROSE

- First place, "Celebrating My First Successful Hunt" by Ryan Marinak, Altoona, PA
- Second place, "Sharing the Heritage" by Annie Brannon, Chandler, OK
- Third place, "Extending My Time on the Trap Line" by Kendra Smith, Houtzdale, PA

### SENIOR POETRY

- First place, "The Watering Hole" by Landis Blubaugh, Bellville, OH
- Second place, "A Letter to My Parents" by Riley Levine, Blauvelt, NY
- Third place, "Kayaking: A Whale of an Adventure" by Nathan Phuong, Fort Wayne, IN

### SENIOR PROSE

- First place, "Hunting for Humility" by Natalie Scott, Clayton, WA
- Second place, "Old Enough" by Lee Van Dyck, Winona, MN
- Third place, "A Winter's Hunt to Remember" by Shane O'Shea, Plymouth Meeting, PA.



LEFT PAGE: Ross Purnell with a fish on while fishing at the base of a waterfall near El Saltamontes Lodge which is close to the town of Coyhaique in Chile's northern Patagonia. Harper is hosting a trip there next Spring and still has two spots available.

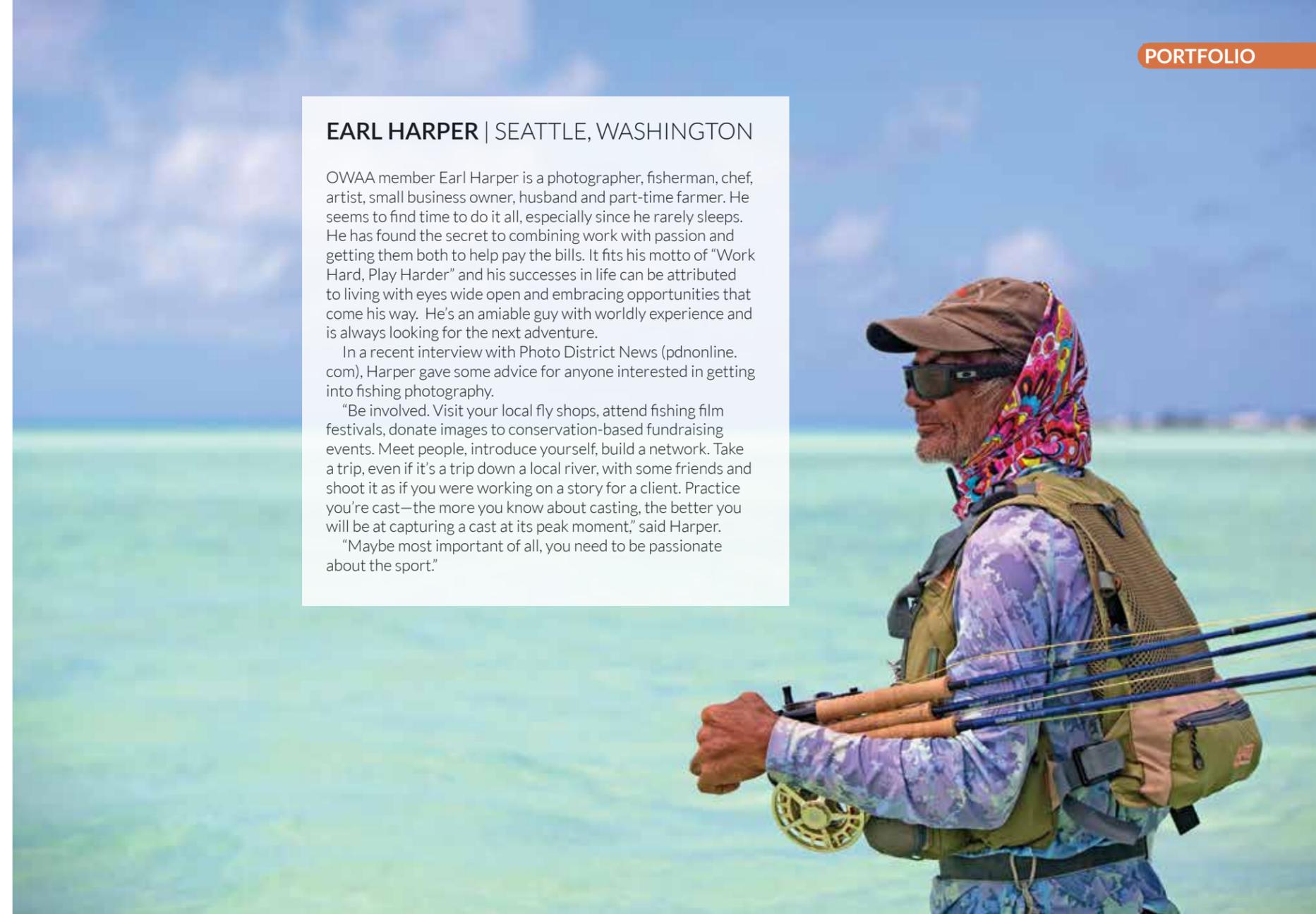
## EARL HARPER | SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

OWAA member Earl Harper is a photographer, fisherman, chef, artist, small business owner, husband and part-time farmer. He seems to find time to do it all, especially since he rarely sleeps. He has found the secret to combining work with passion and getting them both to help pay the bills. It fits his motto of "Work Hard, Play Harder" and his successes in life can be attributed to living with eyes wide open and embracing opportunities that come his way. He's an amiable guy with worldly experience and is always looking for the next adventure.

In a recent interview with Photo District News (pdnonline.com), Harper gave some advice for anyone interested in getting into fishing photography.

"Be involved. Visit your local fly shops, attend fishing film festivals, donate images to conservation-based fundraising events. Meet people, introduce yourself, build a network. Take a trip, even if it's a trip down a local river, with some friends and shoot it as if you were working on a story for a client. Practice you're cast—the more you know about casting, the better you will be at capturing a cast at its peak moment," said Harper.

"Maybe most important of all, you need to be passionate about the sport."



TOP RIGHT: The late Christmas Island fishing guide Moana Kofi on a flat with an assortment of Sage rods at the ready.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Shooting down into a Icelandic canyon while Chad Shmukler and Fish Partner guide Kristjan Rafnsson fish for Arctic char and Brown trout.





TOP LEFT: A beautiful Brown trout taken, then released back into the waters of Lake Thingvalavatn. Iceland is a beautiful mixture of intense scenery, big fish, and expensive beers!

BOTTOM LEFT: Pira Lodge at sunrise. Pira Lodge has great accommodations, tasty food and wine, and offers the chance of catching a big Golden Dorado.

TOP RIGHT: Harlon Sands, a guide for Bair's Lodge in the Bahamas holds a big Cuda that was taken on a fly.



BOTTOM RIGHT: Travis Sands, one of the most fun guides you can fish with has been guiding for Abaco Lodge in the Bahamas. Latest news reports say Travis is safe from the hurricane but the lodge itself may not have fared very well.

**Harper Studios, Inc.**  
 5531 Airport Way South,  
 Studio C,  
 Seattle, WA 98108

**Photo Studio: 206.763.9101**  
**Imaging & Production:**  
 206.764.1775  
<http://www.harperstudios.com>

# OVERVIEW OF 2020 CONTEST RULES

Categories, deadlines and everything you need to know to enter

## IMPORTANT EXCELLENCE IN CRAFT CONTEST INFORMATION

- Excellence In Craft contests annually recognize the best work of OWAA members.
- The EIC contest opens Nov. 1.
- “Published” shall be either in traditional media or on the internet. All entries must be related to the outdoors and must be a professional effort, meaning the member has received direct payment or otherwise derived income through advertising or other sponsorship related to the entry.
- To enter, go to <https://owaa.submittable.com>, fill out the entry forms and submit.
- Book/E-book contest require mail-in entries. Send to OWAA Books, 1816 Romane Dr., Fort Wayne, IN, 46808, by no later than Dec. 1, 2019.
- Sponsors will be added in the coming months.
- Email contest questions to [eic@owaa.org](mailto:eic@owaa.org).
- Check for updates and find entry forms at [www.owaa.org/eic](http://www.owaa.org/eic).

### TELEVISION/VIDEO/ WEBCAST

The entrant must select one or more of following roles on the entry form: Producer/Director, On-Camera Talent, Videographer, and/or Editor. The entry shall be judged only for the entrant’s role(s) in the production.

#### Categories:

#### 1. HUNTING OR SHOOTING SPORTS

— This includes hunting for both large and small game, and competitive or recreational shooting. This includes archery, firearms and other methods. Recreational shooting stories can be human interest stories or inspiring stories about a competition.

#### 2. FISHING

— This includes freshwater and saltwater, any tackle. Emphasis should be on human interest or adventure within the sports.

#### 3. CONSERVATION OR NATURE

— Emphasis on successes or challenges within conservation; interesting new discoveries within nature; or a fascinating tale about a creature, plant or ecosystem.

#### 4. GEAR/TECHNICAL

— Must be informative about gear; or instructional in how to use outdoor equipment in an entertaining yet easy-to-understand manner.

#### 5. OUTDOOR FUN AND ADVENTURE

— Best outdoor recreation story from the various non-consumptive sports. This includes, but is not limited to, outdoor

sports such as camping/backpacking, boating, hiking, birding, snow skiing, orienteering, mountain biking and general outdoor activities.

**6. FAMILY PARTICIPATION/YOUTH OUTDOOR EDUCATION** — Recognizes excellence in communicating the value and enjoyment of family participation and youth education in the outdoors.

### RADIO/PODCAST

Encompasses all forms of audio-specific production. Entries must be submitted as originally produced for air, podcast or subscription.

#### Categories:

#### 1. HUNTING OR SHOOTING SPORTS

— This includes hunting for both large and small game, and competitive or recreational shooting. This includes archery, firearms and other methods. Recreational shooting stories can be human interest stories or inspiring stories about a competition.

#### 2. FISHING

— This includes freshwater and saltwater, any tackle. Emphasis should be on human interest or adventure within the sports.

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— Best outdoor recreation story from the various non-consumptive sports. This includes, but is not limited to, outdoor sports such as camping/backpacking, boating, hiking, birding, snow skiing, orienteering, mountain biking and general outdoor activities.

**6. FAMILY PARTICIPATION/YOUTH OUTDOOR EDUCATION** — Recognizes excellence in communicating the value and enjoyment of family participation and youth education in the outdoors.

### MAGAZINE/E-ZINE

The entry must be published during the contest period in a printed magazine or on a website (e-zine).

#### Categories:

#### 1. HUNTING OR SHOOTING SPORTS

— This includes hunting for both large and small game, and competitive or recreational shooting. This includes archery, firearms and other methods. Recreational shooting stories can be human interest stories or inspiring stories about a competition.

#### 2. FISHING

— This includes freshwater and saltwater, any tackle. Emphasis should be on human interest or adventure within the sports.

#### 3. CONSERVATION OR NATURE

— Emphasis on successes or challenges within conservation; interesting new discoveries within nature; or a fascinating tale about a creature, plant or ecosystem.

**4. HUMOR** — Better be funny and outdoors oriented.

**5. GEAR/TECHNICAL** — Must be informative about gear; or instructional in how to use outdoor equipment in an entertaining yet easy-to-understand manner.

**6. OUTDOOR FUN AND ADVENTURE** — Best outdoor recreation story from the various non-consumptive sports. This includes, but is not limited to, outdoor sports such as camping/backpacking, boating, hiking, birding, snow skiing, orienteering, mountain biking and general outdoor activities.

**7. FAMILY PARTICIPATION/YOUTH OUTDOOR EDUCATION** — Recognizes excellence in communicating the value and enjoyment of family participation and youth education in the outdoors.

### NEWSPAPER/NEWS WEBSITE

The entry must be published during the contest period in a printed newspaper or on a news website.

#### Categories:

#### 1. HUNTING OR SHOOTING SPORTS

— This includes hunting for both large and small game, and competitive or recreational shooting. This includes archery, firearms and other methods. Recreational shooting stories can be human interest stories or inspiring stories about a competition.

**2. FISHING** — This includes freshwater and saltwater, any tackle. Emphasis should be on human interest or adventure within the sports.

#### 3. CONSERVATION OR NATURE

— Emphasis on successes or challenges within conservation; interesting new discoveries within nature; or a fascinating tale about a creature, plant or ecosystem.

**4. HUMOR** — Better be funny and outdoors oriented.

**5. GEAR/TECHNICAL** — Must be informative about gear; or instructional in how to use outdoor equipment in an entertaining yet easy-to-understand manner.

**6. OUTDOOR FUN AND ADVENTURE** — Best outdoor recreation story from the various non-consumptive sports.

## DEADLINES

CONTEST	DEADLINE	EXTENDED
Television/video/webcast	Jan. 10, 2020	Jan. 31, 20120
Radio/podcast	Jan. 10, 2020	Jan. 31, 20120
Magazine/e-zine	Jan. 10, 2020	Jan. 31, 20120
Newspaper/website	Jan. 10, 2020	Jan. 31, 20120
Blog	Jan. 10, 2020	Jan. 31, 20120
Column	Jan. 10, 2020	Jan. 31, 20120
Book/e-book	Dec. 1, 2019	N/A
Illustration/graphic	Jan. 10, 2020	Jan. 31, 20120
Photography	Jan. 10, 2020	Jan. 31, 20120
Photography essay	Jan. 10, 2020	Jan. 31, 20120

This includes, but is not limited to, outdoor sports such as camping/backpacking, boating, hiking, birding, snow skiing, orienteering, mountain biking and general outdoor activities.

**7. FAMILY PARTICIPATION/YOUTH OUTDOOR EDUCATION** — Recognizes excellence in communicating the value and enjoyment of family participation and youth education in the outdoors.

### BLOG

The entry must be published during the contest period.

#### Categories:

#### 1. HUNTING OR SHOOTING SPORTS

— This includes hunting for both large and small game, and competitive or recreational shooting. This includes archery, firearms and other methods. Recreational shooting stories can be human interest stories or inspiring stories about a competition.

**2. FISHING** — This includes freshwater and saltwater, any tackle. Emphasis should be on human interest or adventure within the sports.

#### 3. CONSERVATION OR NATURE

— Emphasis on successes or challenges within conservation; interesting new discoveries within nature; or a fascinating tale about a creature, plant or ecosystem.

**4. HUMOR** — Better be funny and outdoors oriented.

**5. GEAR/TECHNICAL** — Must be informative about gear; or instructional in how to use outdoor equipment in an entertaining yet easy-to-understand manner.

## CONTESTS OPEN NOV. 1

To enter the 2020 EIC contests, fill out entry forms and upload digital copies of your entries\* at [www.owaa.org/eic](http://www.owaa.org/eic).

\*Book/E-Book contests require mail-in entries.

**6. OUTDOOR FUN AND ADVENTURE** — Best outdoor recreation story from the various non-consumptive sports. This includes, but is not limited to, outdoor sports such as camping/backpacking, boating, hiking, birding, snow skiing, orienteering, mountain biking and general outdoor activities.

**7. FAMILY PARTICIPATION/YOUTH OUTDOOR EDUCATION** — Recognizes excellence in communicating the value and enjoyment of family participation and youth education in the outdoors.

### COLUMN

From newspaper, magazine, website or blog. Three samples required. This can be on any outdoor recreation, nature or conservation topic, but must be a regularly published, opinion-style column, not a general news or feature story.

#### Categories:

**1. OVERALL 1ST, 2ND, 3RD. NO SUBJECT-BASED CATEGORIES.**

## BOOK/E-BOOK

A work of 30 pages or more on any outdoor subject. A book can be entered in only one book category.

### Categories:

- 1. GENERAL AUDIENCE** — Must be a factual and informative book about an outdoor recreation or conservation topic.
- 2. YOUTH AUDIENCE** — Must be a factual and informative book about an outdoor recreation or conservation topic and written for a youth audience.

## ILLUSTRATION/GRAPHIC

Must be published in newspaper, magazine or online. Cartoon/cartoon strips accepted. (Excludes photographs.)

### Categories:

- 1. GENERAL/OVERALL OUTDOOR** — Based on outdoor recreation or nature.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

Black-and-white AND color photos. The entry must be published; sold as fine art in a gallery, on a website or other public display; or otherwise created revenue for the photographer or a nonprofit organization as a donation by the photographer, during the contest year.

### Categories:

- 1. ACTION** — Captures action (movement, motion) in an outdoor subject.
- 2. PEOPLE** — Primary subject is one or more people in an outdoor setting.
- 3. SCENIC** — Portrayal of a landscape or other outdoor scene in which the general view, rather than a specific person, animal or plant, is the theme of the image.
- 4. FLORA** — Wild plant(s) is the main subject in its natural setting.
- 5. FAUNA** — A wild animal, bird, fish, insect or other live creature is the main subject in its natural setting. Human beings are excluded from the subject matter.
- 6. OUTDOOR FUN AND ADVENTURE** — Best outdoor recreation story from the various non-consumptive sports. This includes, but is not limited to, outdoor sports such as camping/backpacking, boating, hiking, birding, snow skiing, orienteering, mountain biking and general outdoor activities.
- 7. FAMILY PARTICIPATION/YOUTH OUTDOOR EDUCATION** — Recognizes excellence in communicating the value and enjoyment of family participation and youth education in the outdoors.

## ENTRY FEES

**\$10 per digital entry. \$20 per entry sent via postal mail.\***

\*All CDs, DVDs and book entries are \$10 per entry even though they are sent via postal mail.

Entry fees can be paid by individual or employer. Limit of two entries per category. All entries submitted electronically (or postmarked, if applicable) after Jan. 10, 2020, will be assessed a late fee of \$5 per entry. Late fees must accompany entries submitted after Jan. 10, 2020. Entries received after Jan. 31, 2020, will be disqualified. Entry fees will not be returned in event of disqualification. Entry fees will be refunded for those submitted to any category that did not receive enough entries (minimum of three) to be judged.

Electronic payment (credit card or PayPal) is encouraged. Personal checks will also be accepted. See the OWAA website for details.

## PHOTOGRAPHY ESSAY

A series of 3 to 20 photographs around a common theme or that tell a story through images related to the outdoors/nature. Black-and-white and/or color photos. The photographs must be published together simultaneously in a printed newspaper, news website, magazine, online magazine (e-Zine), blog; displayed as a cohesive collection as fine art in a gallery (e.g. exhibition where at least one print sold); or have otherwise created revenue for the photographer or a nonprofit organization as a donation by the photographer, during the contest year.

### Categories:

- 1. OVERALL 1ST, 2ND, 3RD. NO SUBJECT-BASED CATEGORIES.**

## CONTEST RULES:

### TELEVISION/VIDEO WEBCAST

Television/video entries shall be submitted by DVD or via website link, accompanied by the entry form available on the OWAA website. All DVDs should be viewable using Quicktime and Windows Media Player. Entries submitted via website link must be viewable without password or subscription. One entry per website link or DVD.

- Entries must have been broadcast between Jan. 1, 2019 and Dec. 31, 2019.
- Submit entries either via a website link (e.g. YouTube, Vimeo) or three DVD copies via postal mail. On each DVD, include your name and your role(s) in

the production. Proof (such as a letter from station manager) of broadcast date and byline can be uploaded to the online form or mailed with DVDs. DVDs or links may contain ONLY the segment to be judged. Any DVD or link that contains multiple entries will be disqualified.

- Copies of entries will not be returned.

### RADIO/PODCAST

Radio/podcast entries shall be submitted as mp3/mp4 files on CD or via website link, accompanied by the entry form available on the OWAA website. One entry per website link or CD.

- Entries must have aired between Jan. 1, 2019 and Dec. 31, 2019.

- Submit either via website/electronic link showing byline or three CD copies via postal mail. Include title of program on each. Proof (such as a letter from station manager) of broadcast date and byline can be uploaded to the online form or mailed with CDs. CDs or links must contain ONLY the segment to be judged. Any CD or link that contains multiple entries will be disqualified.

- Copies of entries will not be returned.

### MAGAZINE/E-ZINE AND NEWSPAPER/NEWS WEBSITE

Magazine/E-zine and Newspaper/News Website entries shall be submitted as PDF/JPEG files, accompanied by the entry form on the OWAA website.

- Entries must have been published

between Jan. 1, 2019 and Dec. 31, 2019.

- Remove article from magazine or newspaper section.

- A multi-part series may not be submitted as a single entry.

- Submit two PDF/JPEGs: Submit one legible PDF/JPEG with publication name, date and byline included and one legible PDF/JPEG for judges with bylines and photos credits rendered unreadable. (If names and photo credits can still be seen through black marker, etc., entry will be disqualified.) Headlines, photos and graphics accompanying the article need not be removed.

## BLOG

Blog entries shall be submitted as text-only PDFs along with a web address that links to the original source. If public access to the original source is not available, the entrant should provide an additional pdf or image of the blog which shows the original webpage. These files and links shall be accompanied by the entry form on the OWAA website.

- Entries must have been published between Jan. 1, 2019 and Dec. 31, 2019.

- Submit one PDF: Submit one PDF with just the text of the article and no byline – this can be accomplished by copying and pasting the text if a text-only PDF cannot be generated from the website.

A website link to the original posting containing byline and publish date should also be provided. If the content is only available by paid subscription or some other kind of restriction, the entrant should provide an additional pdf or image of the blog which shows the original webpage with byline and publish date.

## COLUMN

Column entries shall be submitted as PDF/JPEG files, accompanied by the entry form on the OWAA website.

- Entries must have been published between Jan. 1, 2019 and Dec. 31, 2019.

- Three samples required. This can be on any outdoor recreation, nature or conservation topic, but must be a regularly published, opinion-style column, not a general news or feature story.

- Remove article from magazine or newspaper section.

- Submit two PDF/JPEGs of each sample: Submit one legible PDF/JPEG with publication name, date and byline included and one legible PDF/JPEG for judges with bylines and photos credits rendered unreadable. (If names and photo credits can still be seen through black marker, etc., entry will be disqualified.) Headlines, photos and graphics accompanying the article need not be removed.

## BOOK/E-BOOK

Book/e-book entries may be submitted hard-bound or paperback; e-books shall be submitted as PDF files on CDs. Mail entries to OWAA Book Contest, 1816 Romane Dr., Fort Wayne, IN, 46808.

- Entries must have been published between Dec. 1, 2017 and Nov. 30, 2019.

- Submit via postal mail: Three CDs or three copies of each hard-bound/paperback book. Entries will be donated to judges.

- If your entry is a second edition, at least 20 percent of the book must be revised or contain new material.

- Republished books may only be submitted if the republish dates falls within the date range above AND the original published version was never entered into a previous OWAA EIC contest.

- Editor bylines are not acceptable. Entrant must be listed as the book author.

- Copies of entries will not be returned. Special deadline: Deadline for this contest is Dec. 2, 2019. No exceptions.

## ILLUSTRATION/GRAPHIC

Illustration/graphic entries shall be submitted electronically (300 dpi, high-resolution PDF/JPEG at a maximum size of 10MB), accompanied by the entry form on the OWAA website.

- Entries must have been published

## PRIZES:

Prizes will be awarded to the top three entries in each category. Honorable mentions may also be awarded at the judges' discretion. A minimum of three entries are required in a category; prizes will be awarded at the judges' discretion. If no prizes are awarded in a category due to insufficient entries (two or less), then entry fees for that category shall be returned to participants.

### EXCLUSIVELY SPONSORED CATEGORY

Value in cash plus prizes, distributed as follows:

**First:** \$350 + plaque  
**Second:** \$200 + certificate

**Third:** \$125 + certificate  
**Honorable mention:** Certificate only

### SPONSORED AND UNSPONSORED CATEGORY

All sponsorship proceeds plus portion of entry fees divided equally and distributed as follows:\*

**First:** 50% (up to \$500) + plaque  
**Second:** 20% (up to \$200) + certificate

**Third:** 10% (up to \$100) + certificate  
**Honorable mention:** Certificate only

\*Aside from dispersing monies to 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners, 20% will go toward the price of plaques and administrative costs.

between Jan. 1, 2019 and Dec. 31, 2019.

**B.** Submit two PDF/JPEGs: Submit one legible PDF/JPEG from magazine, newspaper, book, brochure or calendar/calendar page with publication name, date and photo credit included, and one legible PDF/JPEG for judges with photo credits, mug shots of yourself, and bylines rendered unreadable. (If names still can be seen through black marker, etc., entry will be disqualified.) Captions need not be blacked out. The judging copy may include only the entry to be judged. (Extraneous photos must be Xed out, covered or removed.) One image constitutes as an entry; multiple images entered as a single entry will be disqualified (excluding comic strips).

**C.** Each entry must have a title.

### PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography entries shall be submitted electronically (300 dpi, high-resolution JPEG at a maximum size of 10MB), accompanied by the entry form on the OWAA website.

**A.** Photos may have been taken at any time, but must have been published or sold as fine art between Jan. 1, 2019 and Dec. 31, 2019. Calendar entries must carry 2019 date.

**B.** Submit two PDF/JPEGs: (1) Submit one high-resolution JPEG as it was submitted for publication or display. (2) Each entry shall be accompanied by a JPEG or PDF of the image as it appeared in publication, if applicable. If a tear sheet or visual proof of display is not available, then proof of revenue to the photographer or to the charity to which the photographer donated the photo art must be submitted. The proof of publication or display must include a photo credit or otherwise show the photographer's name. The judges will only receive the original photograph (not the tear sheet) so they are not influenced by the quality of reproduction.

**C.** Winning entries may comprise the OWAA traveling photo exhibit during 2019-2020 and will be displayed at the OWAA annual conference. Suitable prints of winning images will be made by OWAA and used for one year in the traveling photo exhibits. Winning entries may be reproduced for exhibitors to use for publicity purposes.

### PHOTOGRAPHY ESSAY

Photography essay entries shall be submitted as PDF/JPEG files, accompanied by the entry form on the OWAA website.

**A.** The photos featured in the essay may have been taken at any time, but must have been published between Jan. 1, 2019, and Dec. 31, 2019.

**B.** A minimum of 3 and a maximum of 20 photographs may be submitted.

**C.** Photography entries shall be submitted electronically (recommended specs: 72 dpi JPEG sized to approximately 14 inches on the longest side), accompanied by the entry form on the OWAA website.

**D.** Submit two sets of PDF/JPEGs: (1) Submit one JPEG for each photograph featured in the photographic essay. (2) Each entry shall be accompanied by a JPEG or PDF of the images as they appeared in publication, if applicable. The proof of publication or display must include a photo credit or otherwise show the photographer's name. If a tear sheet or visual proof of display is not available, then proof of revenue or exhibition must be submitted.

## ADDITIONAL RULES

- All entries must be related to the outdoors and must be a professional effort, meaning the member has received direct payment or otherwise derived income through advertising or other sponsorship related to the entry.
- Members must pay 2020 dues prior to submitting entries.
- Letter of verification from editor/publisher must accompany newspaper and magazine entries not containing bylines or containing pen names.
- Co-authored, co-photographed and co-produced creations may be entered only once, regardless of how many people received bylines/credits. For co-authored, co-photographed and co-produced entries, all authors/photographers/producers must be OWAA members, with the exception of the Book contest in which only one author must be an OWAA member. The prize will be split among the co-authors/photographers/producers and one certificate will be awarded with all co-authors/photographers/producers' names on it.
- Entries may be entered in multiple categories (e.g., Hunting or shooting sports, gear/technical, etc.) if the category description applies, but with the exception of the column and children's story contests that span different media, an entry may only be entered in a single contest. For example, a single piece may not be considered both a blog and a new website piece. This would not prohibit portions of a text-photo package or other multimedia project from being entered separately into their respective contests.
- Entry constitutes a waiver of copyright restrictions on reprinting or reproducing entries by OWAA and the contest sponsor for the purpose of circulating entries between OWAA and other interested parties.
- Family or friends may enter deceased OWAA members' works, published or broadcast during the contest year.
- Award certificates and checks are made out to individuals, not organizations, publications or broadcast stations.
- Entries submitted during a previous contest year, even though re-published or re-broadcast, may not be entered.
- For entries that are to be sent via postal mail, send to: OWAA Contest, 21565 Nine Mile Road, Huson, MT, 59846.
- Entries will not be returned.

The judges will only receive the original photographs (not the tear sheet) so they are not influenced by the quality of reproduction.

**E.** Individual photographs contained within the collection may be submitted to other EIC contest categories.

**F.** Winning entries may be displayed at the OWAA annual conference, the OWAA traveling photography exhibit, and/or Outdoors Unlimited.

### THE VOICES OF RIVERS: Reflections on Places Wild and Almost Wild

**AUTHOR:** Matthew Dickerson

**INFO:** Homebound Publications; paperback; B&W photos; \$17.95.

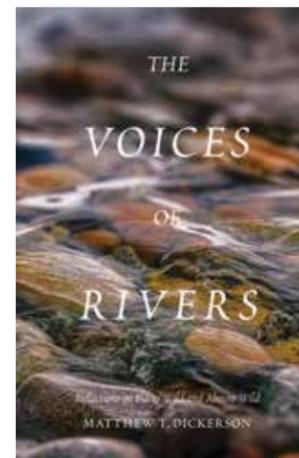
Dickerson's lovingly crafted narratives take us to waters from sockeye spawning streams of Alaska's Lake Clark and Katmai National Parks, to Rocky Mountain rivers in the national parks and forests of Montana and Wyoming, to the little brook trout creeks in his home waters of Maine. Along the way we will fall in love with arctic streams, glacial rivers flowing green with flour, alpine brooks tumbling out of melting snow, and little estuaries where lobsters and brook trout swim within a few yards of each other; with wide deep lakes, little mountain tarns with crystal clear water, and tannin-laden beaver ponds the color of tea. The narratives are creative, personal, and compelling, yet informed by science and history as well as close observation and the eye of a naturalist. The characters in the stories are fascinating, from fly fishing guides to fisheries biologists to wranglers to Dickerson himself who often explores the rivers with a fly rod in hand, but whose writing transcends any sort of fishing narrative. But the most important characters are the rivers themselves whose stories Dickerson tells, and whose music he helps us to hear. Order online: [homeboundpublications.com/product/the-voices-of-rivers-by-matthew-dickerson/](http://homeboundpublications.com/product/the-voices-of-rivers-by-matthew-dickerson/), or [www.indiebound.org/book/9781947003415](http://www.indiebound.org/book/9781947003415)

### WHY WOMEN HUNT

**AUTHOR:** K. J. Houtman

**INFO:** Wild River Press; hardcover; 234 pp.; 90 full color images; \$49.95.

In this revealing, first-of-its-kind new book titled *Why Women Hunt*, author and hunter K. J. Houtman of Minnesota takes an intimate look at the lives of 18 adventurous outdoor women. Their diverse personal stories explore what motivates them to connect—spiritually and physically—with the natural world in one of humankind's most ancient food-gathering rituals. [www.whyyomenhunt.com](http://www.whyyomenhunt.com)



### FRESHWATER FISH FIELD GUIDES

**AUTHORS:** Joe Tomelleri and Craig Springer

**INFO:** Quick Reference Pub Inc; 12 page guide; illustrated; waterproof; \$7.95 each.

OWAA Active member Craig Springer and Joe Tomelleri, "the Audubon of fishes," have published 30 freshwater fish field guides covering nearly the entire U.S. Each state- or region-specific guide profiles 65 species where you fish. If you can catch it on a hook, it's in the guide: All the sport fishes and rough fishes—and perhaps some you never heard of. The durable 12-panel guides are richly illustrated, waterproof and easily fit in a vest or tackle box. Guides are \$7.95 and available at [amazon.com/author/craigspringer](http://amazon.com/author/craigspringer) or [QuickReferencePublishing.com](http://QuickReferencePublishing.com) Email [craig@lobo.net](mailto:craig@lobo.net) or call or text 505-423-2501

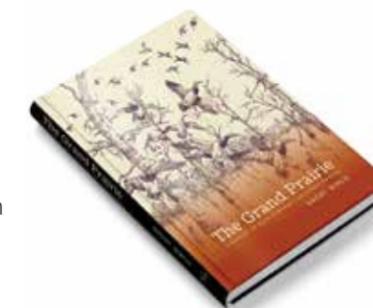


### THE GRAND PRAIRIE: A History of Duck Hunting's Hallowed Ground

**AUTHOR:** Brent Birch

**INFO:** Grand Prairie Media, LLC; 348 pp; Full Color photos; Softcover (\$50); Hardcover (\$90); Limited edition collector's edition (\$125) with embossed cloth cover and slip case.

Perhaps no other place on the planet is as steeped in duck hunting tradition as the Grand Prairie region of Arkansas. To the people here, duck hunting is a way of life, not just a season. From the first rice crop grown in 1904 to the famed green timber, the book contains over 340 pages detailing the people, places and events that earned the region the title of "The Duck Hunting Capital of the World". Spectacular photography accompanies engaging content written to educate readers on how the Grand Prairie came to be and has sustained the reputation for world class mallard duck hunting. [publisher@arkansasgrandprairie.com](mailto:publisher@arkansasgrandprairie.com) [www.arkansasgrandprairie.com](http://www.arkansasgrandprairie.com)





OUTDOOR WRITERS  
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## OUTDOOR WRITERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

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### OUTDOORS UNLIMITED

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# Meet a member



**NAME:** Scott Severson

**RESIDENCE:** Wayzata, Minnesota

**OWAA MEMBER SINCE:** 2018

Scott Severson began his career in the outdoors at North American Hunter Magazine where he managed the product review section and eventually led the development of the magazine's website. He went on to run a Twin Cities content marketing agency (and still does). Missing

the outdoor industry, he founded Hunt-Tested.com in 2017. HuntTested.com is committed to providing the best in-depth content, resources, and reviews on the gear that hunters need to be successful in the field. HuntTested's editorial focus is big game gear, upland game gear, camping and general outdoor gear.

#### AREA(S) OF OUTDOOR COMMUNICATION:

I've always been the guy that loves to read about and research guns, bows, and hunting gear. I focus on writing web articles to share in-depth reviews with readers on gear that I've personally used in the field. I also like to interview industry professionals like gunsmiths, taxidermists, veterinarians and others to provide professional tips to readers.

#### WHAT DREW YOU TO THE FIELD?

I was lucky to grow up hunting and have always loved our sport and way of life. I started reading Fur Fish and Game about age 11 or 12. I loved my time with North American Hunter and that was my first professional outdoor industry experience.

#### WHAT ENTICED YOU TO JOIN OWAA?

Writing is a pretty solitary endeavor and I wanted to be able to connect with the broader community of outdoor writers for both the community aspects, ability to tap into different expertise and to be able to develop relationships for collaborations.

#### WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE OUTDOOR ACTIVITY?

I love it all. I'm an avid upland hunter and a recent convert from Chesapeake Bay retrievers to a Brittany spaniel. I also love to hunt big game, mainly whitetails and elk. I also enjoy camping and camp cooking with my family.

#### WHAT ARE YOU CURRENTLY WORKING ON?

I'm currently working on lining up the gear I'll be using on fall hunts and later writing about. I'm also currently writing a review of popular binocular harnesses, writing a whitetail gear article, building out my editorial calendar for the next three months, optimizing older content for SEO and researching an article about caring for your meat after the shot.