

Douglas Wagoner – A Green Earth kind of guy

Douglas Wagoner is the owner and principal adventure guide for [Green Earth Outdoors](#). GEO provides guided adventure vacations for families, wilderness trips for private groups and organization-based teams, and outdoor skills training all with an emphasis on sustainability. Douglas is a true outdoor professional: a Leave No Trace master educator, Wilderness First Responder, ACA canoe instructor, and Scout leader with thousands of miles of backpacking and canoeing adventures to his credit.

A busy guy, Douglas was kind enough to answer a few questions via email:

SN: Thinking about how you got to where you are today, was there a moment when you realized working in the outdoors was what you wanted to do?

DW: I've known since I was a kid that the outdoors was my place, it was just a process of getting there career-wise. As a child, our family went camping once a month and I explored on my own any chance I got. I was active in Scouting between age 11 and 18 and sometime in there I realized teaching and sharing the outdoors with others was where I wanted to be.

SN: Could you tell me a little about your career-progression? What did you do after Scouting?

DW: After high school, I served in the US Army and then attended college at the IU campus in New Albany. It was in college (1991) that I starting guiding people on trips here and there and it was also in college (1992) that I wrote a business plan for an adventure travel company. In 1997 I began leading trips and teaching outdoor rec classes at IU in Bloomington. From 1998 until 2001 I worked in outdoor retail. In 2002 I started serving as the Leave No Trace State Advocate for Indiana and have been teaching LNT Trainer Courses since that time.

SN: What's a place you haven't been, but would like to go?

DW: It's hard to single out one place in particular. I've been a lot of places, but many remain on my list to visit. If I had to name one, it would probably be Antarctica.

SN: What is your favorite memory from a trip?

DW: I love mountains and have had the opportunity to climb several. Climbing Kilimanjaro in Tanzania is my favorite thus far.

SN: What's one of the toughest trips you've taken?

DW: Gannett Peak in Wyoming is the state's highest mountain and is very remote. It has a long and strenuous approach hike taking at least two long days depending on how you approach it. And then the mountain itself covers a lot of difficult and tricky terrain. But the beauty along every step of the route is simply amazing.

SN: What's your favorite spot to hike within an hour of Louisville?

DW: I don't want to give away my secrets in this forum. I'd prefer to share them in person on a hike. But I



grew up near Harrison Crawford State Forest in Indiana and spent a lot of time there as a teenager and I still like to visit some of those special places off the beaten path discovered when I was younger.

SN: When you're not in the outdoors, what are some other activities you enjoy?

DW: Reading, collecting Boy Scout memorabilia and cooking.

SN: And what are a couple of recent reads you recommend?

DW: *The Last Season*-a story/mystery about NPS backcountry ranger Randy Morgenson who helped find missing persons in the Sierra, who then disappeared himself. *Wake Up and Smell The Planet*-a humorous yet serious take on greening your day.

SN: Why start an adventure travel company in Louisville, KY?

DW: Louisville is a great city with great people and there are a lot of people in all age groups who want to enjoy the outdoors, or maybe even expand their skills and experiences, but don't know where to start. That is where Green Earth Outdoors in a comfortable and patient manner give people the skills and resources to accomplish their goals. Whether it is small children, families, youth groups, corporate or private groups, and even seniors, our goal is to make each trip as accommodating as possible based on skill level and comfort level of each group. I feel Louisville residents are starting to see the true value that activities in the outdoors can have on one's health, personal development and growth, family life, and overall well-being. I want to help people get there.

SN: What would you say to a young person who says, "Man, I want a job like Douglas has"?

DW: Go for it. There are a lot of great outdoor programs in communities and colleges that you can get started and get great experiences and contacts in the outdoor world. Follow your passion, take advantage of opportunities, and once you have the skills and experiences under you belt, doors will open.

You'll often see Douglas and the GEO booth at events around town such as Forest Fest and the Mayor's Hikes. Be sure to stop by and say hi.

November 22nd, 2009 | Tags: adventure travel, douglas wagoner, green earth outdoors, louisville | Category: Interviews