

SGB WEEKLY

ISSUE 1403
JANUARY 20, 2014

THE WEEKLY DIGITAL MAGAZINE FOR THE SPORTING GOODS INDUSTRY



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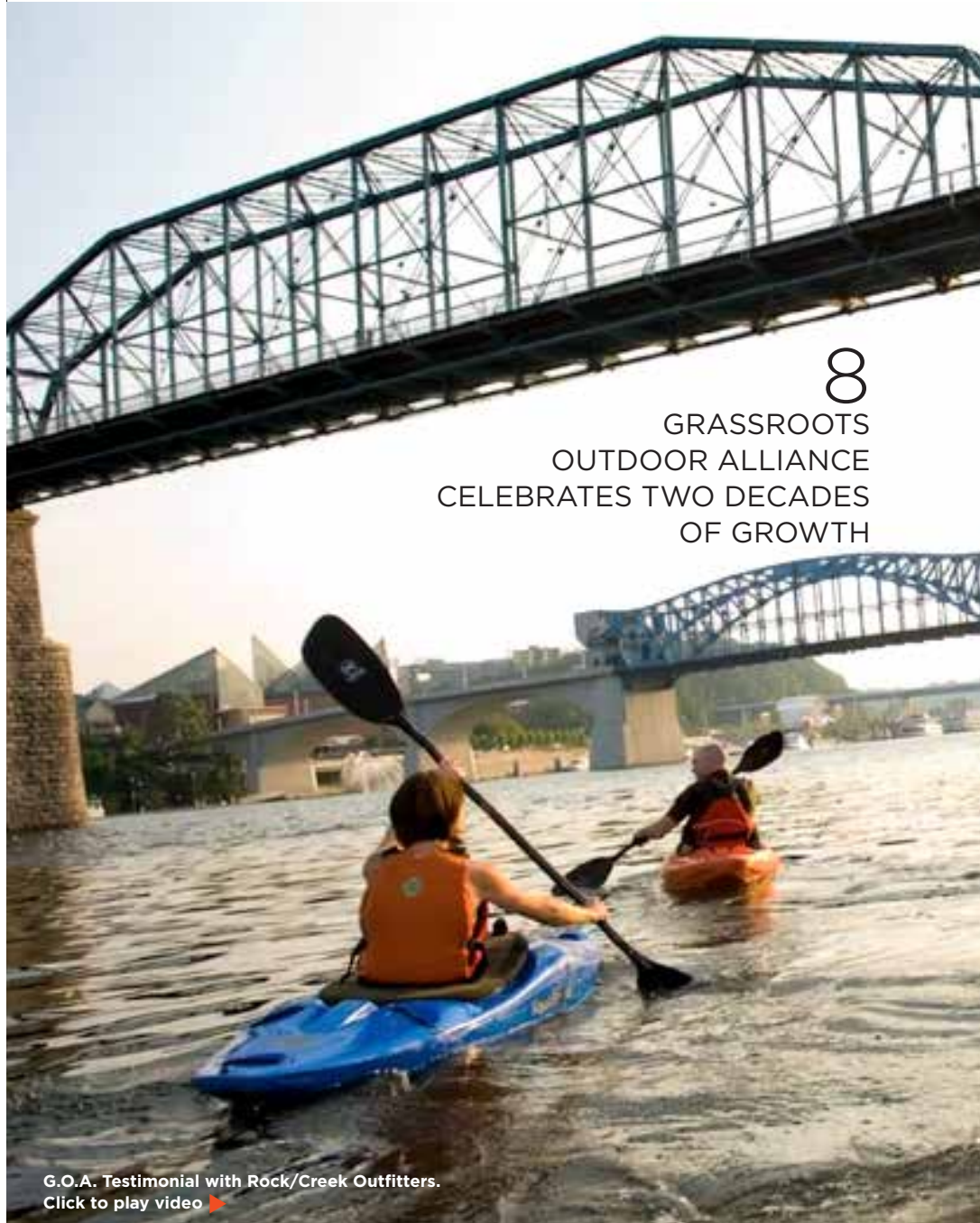
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OUTDOOR ALLIANCE
CELEBRATES TWO DECADES
OF GROWTH

G.O.A. Testimonial with Rock/Creek Outfitters.
[Click to play video](#)

COVER PHOTO: Exploring the thin divide between enough and too much, Lydia Zamorano gets contrariwise in a meadow near Squamish, British Columbia. Photo courtesy Ben Moon and G.O.A. Vendor Partner Patagonia.

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GRASSROOTS OUTDOOR ALLIANCE CELEBRATES TWO DECADES OF GROWTH



Grassroots Outdoor Alliance traces its origins to 1994 when a small group of outdoor specialty retailers united to help level the playing field with big-box retailers through joint buying power and shared knowledge. Twenty years later, Grassroots has grown into a buying group of 47 retailers with 96 stores that generate annual sales of \$225 million. To celebrate its 20th anniversary, *SGB* presents this special section highlighting each retail member.

By Charlie Lunan



Half-Moon Outfitters Golden Nugget SUP Race in Mt. Pleasant, SC. Photo courtesy Half-Moon Outfitters

The most amazing thing about Grassroots Outdoor Alliance may be that it's growing.

Since 2007 this unique buying group has added 14 new retailers, an impressive feat given the greatest recession in a generation beginning in 2008 coupled with growing competition from big-box stores, pure-play Internet retailers and even their own vendors.

Grassroots members range from some of the first outdoor specialty retailers to sell on the Internet, to single-location operators with no online presence. Chattanooga, TN-based Rock/Creek and New Orleans-based Massey's Outfitters earn more than 30 percent of their sales online. In Pinellas Park, FL, Bill Jackson's Shop for Adventure offers an inside pool for Scuba training, four classrooms and ski deck, but no online sales. Skinny Skis in Jackson, WY, is just beginning to establish SkinnySkis.com as an online dealer of Nordic gear.

What binds these retailers together is a commitment to growing their local outdoor community. In the profiles that follow you will get just a taste of the many things Grassroots retailers do to improve access to the outdoors - from offering free clinics and paid classes, to guiding local Boy Scout troops into the Boundary Waters of Minnesota, to sponsoring trail races and youth leagues, and championing local conservation projects.

"Grassroots helps us be better at making a living doing what we love, in a way that we believe in doing business," said Wes Allen, co-owner of Sunlight Sports in Cody, WY. "We have been fortunate enough to learn a lot about how to survive and thrive financially as a mom and pop in the current market environment with help from the other retailers and vendors. Our store gives two percent of sales back to our community as a rule, and our partnership with the Grassroots vendors has allowed us to expand our giving and increase its impact."

As members of a buying group, Grassroots retailers must also have solid credit histories. "We police our own members. If a member starts to falter, we act quickly," said Roanne Miller, who was hired as Grassroots executive director in 2010. "We've had to discontinue membership with five or six members over the years for payment problems. Several of these retailers ended up closing their businesses within 18 months."

Grassroots' value to retailers, however, far transcends its role as a buying group.

"This group has become more than business contacts," said John Williams, who owns Lafayette, LA-based Pack & Paddle with his wife Becky. "We love Grassroots for the camaraderie we experience with other retailers that face the same challenges as us. We learn so much at shows and meetings and just hanging out with this group, including product trends, gaining insight into how other retailers structure their efforts, marketing ideas and much more."

Importantly, Grassroots enables retail members to speak to vendors with a unified voice, noted Todd Frank, owner of The Trailhead, which operates two stores in Missoula, MT.

"As a single-store small retailer we felt as if our vendors were not hearing or reacting to our concerns about things like direct online sales, distribution choices, fair pricing and all the other challenges we faced in representing the brands and products," said Frank, who joined Grassroots in 2011. "The united voice also allows us to understand how other retailers are doing when faced with the same situations."

The formula seems to be working better than ever. Grassroots added five new retailers in 2013 and entered 2014 with 74 vendor partners. Here are their stories.

ALPINE SHOP, LTD., d/b/a
THE ALPINE SHOP

St. Louis, MO

Founded: 1973

Joined G.O.A.: 2004

Leadership: Holly Hollenbeck, Founder and Co-owner; Lisa Hollenbeck; Co-owner; Rich Huskey, GM

Number of Stores: 4; 1 E-commerce site - alpineshop.com

2013 Sales: \$5M to \$10M - up high, single-digits from 2012; alpineshop.com generated two percent of sales.

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: At its core, Alpine Shop is dedicated to "Generations Transformed through Discovery Outdoors." We're dedicated to both the people of our community and to the lands we use for recreation. To the aim of getting people outdoors, Alpine Shop enrolled, for the third year, more than 4,000 registrants for its educational, experiential, and entertainment programs in 2013. That figure includes more than 800 registrations from its most popular effort in the past year, the summer Trail Run Series. Hosted on four consecutive Thursday nights at one of St. Louis' most beautiful state parks in August, the series has quickly established itself as a summer event in just four years. Alpine Shop has also collected nearly 7,000 coats over the past five years during its annual One Warm Coat Drive to kick off its winter season. As an outdoor retailer, we are also dedicated to the wild places that we love to explore. Alpine Shop has worked to protect these environments by hosting two press conferences in the past year to help with conservation efforts surrounding the Ozark National Scenic Riverways, holding a position on the board of the Ozark Trail Association, hosting river cleanup trips and supporting trail building efforts.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: We hope the economy and employment continue to improve and weather patterns are favorable to our business. We hope political turmoil will subside and the average consumer will have less reason to fear an uncertain future. As for us, we understand that hope is not a strategy. We will be working to improve our e-commerce functionality and profitability; to make the second year of our new Illinois store one of growth and profitability; to bring online several new initiatives including a loyalty program, and improved targeted marketing.



Photo courtesy Appalachian Outdoors

APPALACHIAN OUTDOORS, LLC, d/b/a APPALACHIAN OUTFITTERS
Peninsula, OH

Founded: 1988

Joined G.O.A.: 2009

Leadership: Mike and Karen Leffler, Co-owners

Number of Stores: One, 10,500-square-foot retail showroom

2013 Sales: \$1M to \$5M, up mid, single-digits

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: We continue to focus on the community, provide premier customer service, and invest in continuous staff training. We work very closely with area animal shelters, hold coat drives for our area's homeless ministry and shelter, and we are deeply involved in our local scouting community, including chartering a co-ed venture crew within our store. We strive to provide the best equipment and apparel available and never apologize for price. To justify the price of our products, we provide the very best consumer experience in our region. Our goal is to carry the best lifestyle and technical products in the industry and to merchandise them in an open, boutique-like atmosphere. We also refuse to compromise when selecting staff, insisting on great customer service, upbeat attitudes, and a strong work ethic.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: It's becoming harder to find staff with the work ethic we insist upon. We are planning numerous facility improvements in 2014 including resurfacing 24,000 square feet of dedicated parking space, changing our climbing gym fall surface to a solid padded carpet rather than ground rubber, and replacing the carpet in our retail space.

APPALACHIAN SKI & OUTDOORS

State College, PA

Founded: 1974

Joined G.O.A.: 2005

Leadership: Geoff Brugler, Principal, Buyer Hardgoods & Softgoods; Jen Arndt, Buyer Softgoods; George Schettler, Store Manager

Number of Stores: Moved to current location in 2001 and doubled retail showroom to 12,000 square feet in 2011; E-commerce - AppOutdoors.com.

2013 Sales: n/a, flat with 2012, including sales via AppOutdoors.com

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: As part of its mission to get people outside and active and increase their appreciation of the natural environment, we are the primary sponsor of the Tussey Mountain Alpine Racing Team and the Banff Film Festival and a co-sponsor of the Rothrock Challenge 30K Trail Race and the Penn State Outing Club to name just a few. We partner with Patagonia to award a grant to a local conservancy that purchases land with stream frontage. Through Free University we offer a series of in-store clinics and each fall we bring in reps from many of our brands as well as local clubs, outfitters, Tussey Mountain and like-minded businesses to help host a Fall Outdoor Expo.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: We will be a more aggressive going into next winter after leaving some business on the table this past winter. We will be into more of a growth mode anyway. The challenge will be structuring orders intelligently. The manufacturers are getting tougher saying they don't want to make big amendments on orders. But the reps are also feeling some of same pressures as retailers. They see their businesses decreasing due to manufacturers growing direct-to-consumer sales and so they are more willing to help us structure preseason orders in a way that covers us in a really good year but does not create a liability in a soft year. That's an interesting new dynamic.

BACKCOUNTRY ESSENTIALS

Bellingham, WA

Founded: 2006

Joined G.O.A.: 2013

Leadership: Chris and Erica Gerston, Co-founders;
Dan Carlson, Manager

Number of Stores: 1 - expanded from 1,800 to 3,100 square feet of showroom space in 2010. Added shopping cart at BackcountryEssentials.net in November, 2013.

2013 Sales: Under \$1M, up low single-digits

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: Backcountry Essentials and Grassroots share many of the same goals, promoting recreation as a form of mental health within our communities, and conservation of our natural and recreational resources. We have proudly helped sponsor events to benefit local environmental, conservation, education, and recreational groups such as Conservation Northwest, Whatcom Land Trust, the Northwest Weather and Avalanche Center, and ASAP (Alpine Safety Awareness Program). We have worked with business marketing students from Western Washington University as they applied theoretical principles to real situations. We have helped youth groups by donating and discounting equipment for their programs. Other events we have enjoyed sponsoring range from bouldering competitions, to movies about bear ecology, to seminars and classes on avalanche safety. BCE also offers a variety of workshops and seminars.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: Hopes for 2014 include a plan to expand our ski department beyond our core of backcountry brands into the alpine world as well as the new shopping cart we recently added to our website. Both of these ventures will be very exciting for us and include a lot of planning which is one of our favorite aspects of our business. And of course, we just joined Grassroots, so I'm



Employee Josh Atkins
Photo courtesy Backcountry Essentials

looking forward to learning a lot more from the other 46 businesses.

Fears include the usual about the economy and the weather. Also, the outdoor industry seems to be struggling with its identity. Is it about profit at any cost and competing for the bottom dollar? Or are we climbers, skiers, hikers, boaters, family campers, etc., who are lucky enough to make a living doing what we love to do?

One of our hopes in joining Grassroots is to join their collective voice in persuading the industry to stay out of sales outlets that don't care about small Mom and Pop shops, and encourage vendors to remember that the outdoor industry and their brands were pioneered by specialty shops long before online sales, box stores, and direct sales.



BACKCOUNTRY NORTH

Traverse City, MI

Founded: 1978; business acquired in 2000

Joined G.O.A.: 2011

Leadership: Tracy Mayer, Owner & Buyer; Sandy Graham, Owner & General Manager; Susan Graham, Owner & Office Manager acquired the business in 2000.

Number of Stores: Tripled square footage in 2010 by opening its Birmingham, MI store and expanding one of two Traverse City, MI locations to 10,000 square feet to accommodate its selection of apparel, camping, climbing, footwear, hiking, paddlesports and other gear.

2013 Sales: n/a

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: Backcountry North has endeared itself with local outdoor enthusiasts by providing a venue to share their exploits. It hosts slide shows for local adventurers and uses the winning photograph from its annual photo contest on the cover of its catalog. Its mid-December Ladies' Night with wine and chocolate, and Men's Night with pints have become a highlight on the holiday calendar for many local outdoor enthusiasts. In February, Sandy Graham leads "The Dunes of Doom," a nocturnal snowshoeing trek through the Sleeping Bear Dune timed to coincide with a full moon.

BILL JACKSON, INC., d/b/a BILL JACKSON'S SHOP FOR ADVENTURE

Pinellas Park, FL

Founded: 1946

Joined G.O.A.: 2007

Leadership: Bill Jackson, Founder; Darry Jackson and Doug Jackson, Co-owners

Number of Stores: 1 - Originally an army surplus store, Bill Jackson's occupies 38,000 square feet at its current, five-acre location. The building includes an indoor pool for scuba diving and paddling instruction, an indoor shooting range, four classrooms, and a ski deck.

2013 Sales: \$5M to \$10M, up mid, double-digits thanks to surging gun and ammo sales, which led to record sales in November.

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: We do a lot of stuff to get people outdoors like kayak and SUP trips. We teach scuba diving in our indoor swimming pool, let people try our skis on our snow



Employee
Brent Long



Employee Bruce Evensen instructing his weekly fly tying class.
Photos courtesy Bill Jackson, Inc.

deck, let people test pistols in our indoor pistol range and do fly casting on the lake in the nearby park. We take paddlers on an annual tour of holiday lights. When we hosted our annual inline skate (from Darry Jackson's house) in mid-December, 74 people showed up. We work with Tampa Bay Watch to clean up Tampa Bay and rebuild oyster beds and fisheries. This has established our store as an important venue for the outdoor community. The four local ski clubs hold one-to-two meetings a year and draw several hundred people. Three local kayaks clubs meet here monthly. Fish and game officials ask to use our classrooms when they need to reach out to the local outdoor community. When the BP Oil spill occurred, the U.S. government brought in speakers to talk with local hotels and restaurants.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: We hope to add 1,500 square feet of show room for SUPs and other merchandise we currently sell.

BLACK CREEK OUTFITTERS

Jacksonville, FL

Founded: 1983

Joined G.O.A.: 1999

Leadership: Joe Butler, III, Owner; Amanda Godwin, Buyer & Manager; Matt Hite, Marketing & Instruction

Number of Stores: 1, 14,000-square-foot location

2013 Sales: \$1M to \$5M, up four percent

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: The difference at Black Creek is our knowledgeable staff. Our staff includes people who are doers and users of the products we sell. We can advise you on what you need based on when and where you are going, what you are going to do, and the answers to a number of other questions which will help us frame the right recommendations for you. When we don't know the answer to a question or issue, we have a network of outdoor industry sources, friends and other customers' knowledge and experiences to fall back on.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: The Outdoor industry is maturing and just like that old product life cycle chart you study in marketing, a lot of vendors are having a tough time maintaining their status as a cash cow. Many are on the decline within specialty as they have "outgrown" the specialty distribution. We are looking for vendors that are trying to maintain the value of their brand as they grow. We are looking for partners who value our strengths as a high service channel. We are their Apple stores.



Photo courtesy Black Creek Outfitters



Photos courtesy Buffalo Peak Outfitters

BUFFALO PEAK OUTFITTERS

Jackson, MS

Founded: 1986

Joined G.O.A.: 1998

Leadership: Bob McCain, Founder & President; Dave Edmonson, Buyer; Elizabeth Montambault, Buyer

Number of Stores: 1, Closed second, 3,200-square-foot store in Oxford, MS in 2013 after 9 years.

2013 Sales: \$1M to \$5M, up low, single-digits.

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: BPO has sponsored trail runs to help fund local trail maintenance, partnered with Horny Toad to host after-hours fundraisers for our community's animal rescue shelter and hosted Backpacker Magazine's Get Out More Tour. It has used Facebook to promote Twitter chats with our

brands, and local civic organizations and projects, such as the local chapter of the Sierra Club and the beautification of a highway overpass. It has also contributed at the national level by raising money for The Conservation Alliance through a program established by Grassroots.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: The biggest fear for 2014 is over distribution of outdoor specialty products. We have more competition locally, online, and direct-to-consumer by our vendors than ever before. Our challenge is to continue to differentiate us from all the other retailers doing outdoor. This is truly what makes us outdoor specialty - the fact that we work very hard to provide a unique shopping experience for our customers, from product selection, to atmosphere, to service, and to events.





Canfield's new owner Scott Marble delivers a check for \$1,056.00 to the Greater Omaha Area Trail Runners (GOATZ) after hosting a fundraiser for the group. Photo courtesy CSG Outdoors, Inc.

CSG OUTDOORS, INC. d/b/a CANFIELD'S SPORTING GOODS

Omaha, NE

Founded: 1946

Joined G.O.A.: 2013

Leadership: Scott Marble, Owner & President; Denise Marble, VP; Jordon Foster, Buyer.

After 68 years of being owned by the Canfield family, Canfield's was purchased in late 2013 by Scott Marble, a former employee who had gone on to make a career in the outdoor industry. Rick Canfield, son of Founder Leroy Canfield, sought out Marble when he decided to retire. He wanted a family man who understood the outdoor business and felt he had that in his former employee.

Number of Stores: 1 - Canfield's moved to its current 48,000-square-foot location in 1994. The company markets itself as 'Your Rugged Outdoor Headquarters' to reflect the breadth of its departments, which include camping, Boy and Girl Scouts, clothing, footwear, surplus, hunting and fishing, and shooting sports.

2013 Sales: \$1M to 5M, up low, single-digits.

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: Canfields remains the only locally owned and operated outdoor business in Omaha despite 10 years of the intense competition in the area. We are a grassroots retailer because Omaha, NE is our town and we involve ourselves in the community in ways others do not. Whether it is working with the local Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops to help them raise money for their various activities or raising money and applying for grants for local trail and wildlife area improvement projects, Canfield's is about being an active community member right here at home. We are not just a retailer; we are a community member and seeing ourselves as such and allowing that to be our motivating factor drives what we do.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: In the latter half of 2014 we will begin to completely remodel our store and transform its appearance and shopping experience for our customers.

CHAMPAIGN SURPLUS

Champaign, IL

Founded: 1947

Joined G.O.A.: 2003

Leadership: Dan and Shira Epstein, Co-owners. The Epstein's took over the business from Shira's parents, Ira and Lynn Wachtel in 2010.

Number of Stores: 1, Moved to its current 12,000-square-foot showroom in 1983.

E-commerce - ChampaignSurplus.com

2013 Sales: n/a

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: We are a third generation, family-owned store, with long-standing roots in our community. Each year we host the Telluride Mountain Film Festival in Champaign and 100 percent of the proceeds benefit a local organization. This past year we helped support sending local children who had a parent deployed overseas on active military duty to summer camp. We also host several speaking events in our store each year, and volunteered to help with the new Homer Lake Natural Playscape, whose goal is to get kids outside. We work to get grants secured for worthy local organizations. We support many local initiatives that come to us with requests each month. We also give five cents to support local environmental organizations every time a customer makes a purchase and does not use a bag. It's our way of supporting a green initiative in our store at the same time we support a local organization. Overall these efforts not only reflect our personal beliefs, but also hopefully show our gratitude to our local community that has supported us since 1947.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: We hope for another successful year in business filled with outdoor adventures.



Photo courtesy Champaign Surplus



Diamond Brand employee Chris Stanfield

DIAMOND BRAND OUTDOORS d/b/a DIAMOND BRAND AND FRUGAL BACKPACKER

Fletcher, NC

Founded: 1964

Joined G.O.A.: n/a

Leadership: William Gay, Owner & CEO; John Delaloye, Owner & CFO; Terry Atwood, President of Retail

Number of Stores: 2 - Diamond Brand full-price store and Frugal Backpacker, which specializes in vendor samples and closeouts, operate from separate, but adjacent stores in Arden, NC, just south of Asheville, NC.

2013 Sales: n/a

What makes Us Grassroots Retailer: Diamond Brand, which is also a Berry Amendment-compliant OEM of backpacks, tents, tarps, bags and other sewn products, has long been a significant supporter of local YMCAs and hiking and conservation clubs in Western North Carolina. The company's bi-annual Diva Nights, which were launched in 2007, now draw anywhere from 200 to 400 women as well as vendor partners to its Diamond Brand store for a fashion show, live music, and night of fundraising for women's causes. Recent events have helped raise money for Girls on the Run and breast cancer awareness. Its annual Paddlesports Demo Day on nearby Lake Julian has also helped establish the retailer as the local paddlesports expert. "Some people just attend to get out on the water with their kids and other people use it to decide what boat to buy," said Sarah Merrell, marketing manager for Diamond Brand, which sells whitewater and flatwater boats as well as stand-up paddleboards. "It helps showcase the paddlesports staff and how they can find boats that fits that person. With Diva Nights and Paddlesports Demo Day it really comes down to providing customers with a unique experience."

Hopes and Fears for 2014: We are relocating the Diamond Brand store from its original location to a shopping center in South Asheville that is much closer to the Blue Ridge Parkway and the Mountain-to-Sea Trail. We will also have great neighbors right next door to partner with such as Fresh Market and Liberty Bicycles. In addition, we will be opening a new 3,000-square-foot store, which we are describing as an adventure boutique in the new Aloft Hotel off Biltmore Avenue in an up-and-coming section of downtown Asheville. Many young professionals come through the hotel, so it will provide us with more exposure to a great new clientele. We are so excited about these new stores.



Photo courtesy Eagle Eye Outfitters



Photo courtesy Mountain High Outfitters

EAGLE EYE OUTFITTERS

Dothan, AL

Founded: 1999

Joined G.O.A.: 2012

Leadership: Mark Anderson, Owner & CEO; Susan Anderson, Owner & CFO

Number of Stores: 1 - EEO began renovation on a 38,000-square-foot cinema in October.

It expects to relocate in spring, 2014.

2013 Sales: \$1M to \$5M, up low, single-digits.

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: Founded in 1999 as a small family clothing store with a few outdoor-specific apparel lines, Eagle Eye quickly discovered that it had an exclusive niche in Dothan in the outdoor industry. After listening to customers, the Andersons began to pursue the major outdoor brands that no other store in the Wiregrass area had carried before. As a leader in the outdoor industry and in the retail community of South Alabama, Eagle Eye uses its outdoor retail as a platform to encourage outdoor pursuits, environmental stewardship and fulfillment of its community mission statement. "Unashamedly a Christian company" that "exists to glorify god by serving our staff, our customers, and our community," Eagle Eye provides each of its employees 40 hours of paid time off each year to serve in the community through monthly service projects coordinated by the company. Every June, the store shuts down for four days so the staff can volunteer at the Anderson's summer camp, WIRED, which brings together 1,000 kids ages 10 to 21 for a week of construction, projects, sports camps, bible study and social ministries.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: We have a positive outlook for 2014. Eagle Eye will be moving our current operation in spring 2014 into a new location, which will more than double our store's square footage. It will be an exciting time for us. We have also applied for a Columbia Belay grant for 2014 for a local conservation project that we are partnering with. The project will create a 392-acre nature preserve within the city limits of Dothan in an area that was once a wastewater treatment plant. The Columbia Belay grant program is only available to Grassroots members. If awarded, the grant will allow our business to help cover the cost of constructing trailheads, changing stations, bike wash stations, and information kiosks.

EXTREME CONSCIOUSNESS II, LLC., d/b/a MOUNTAIN HIGH OUTFITTERS

Birmingham, AL

Founded: 1999

Joined G.O.A.: 2010

Leadership: Christopher Groom, Founder & CEO; Jennifer Groom, CFO; Brandy Linton, Merchandising & Operations.

Number of Stores: 7 including 4 serving Birmingham, AL; 1 in Atlanta; 1 Huntsville, AL; and 1 in Franklin, TN; E-commerce HighMountainOutfitters.com

2013 Sales: More than \$10M, up high, single-digits from 2012. HighMountainOutfitters.com generates 3 percent of sales.

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: We had our inaugural year of the South Eastern Trail Series with seven races and we were part of the first stand-up paddle board race in Nashville, TN. A big initiative is contributing to the rivers including the Chattahoochee in Georgia, the Cumberland in Tennessee and Black Warrior in Alabama. These initiatives, along with various school and community partnerships, have been a big part of how we are involved within the community. I am also on the board of the Mountain Brook Chamber of Commerce.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: We plan to continue to grow and open two new stores. Our only fear is what the government may do to small and medium-sized businesses. We are optimistic about the retail landscape and our product selection is stronger than ever with tighter distribution.



GREAT OUTDOOR PROVISION CO.
Raleigh, NC

Founded: 1972

Joined G.O.A.: Founding member 1994

Leadership: Tom Valone, Founder & CEO; Chuck Millsaps, Co-owner, President & Minister of Culture; Molly Cherry, Co-owner and VP Retail Support; Bill Mauney, Co-owner and VP Retail Management; and Travis Zarins, Co-owner & VP Merchandise.

Number of Stores: 7 located in neighborhood shopping centers from Charlotte to Wilmington, NC with a total square footage of more than 65,000 square feet.

2013 Sales: More than \$10 million, up low, single-digits from 2012 with no e-commerce sales.

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: Our friendly and knowledgeable staff is the key to this connection. Through their work with our customers we maintain a longstanding tradition of enlightened outdoor retail that champions conservation initiatives to improve access to wilderness areas for future generations. Like other Grassroots members, this practice keeps us relevant as a retailer who sells the very best product while helping to build trails, connect youth to nature, and lend a helping hand to neighbors. Events such as Scout Week, Mountains-To-Sea Trail Month, Land Trust Day, Coat Swap and Habitat Day have allowed us to donate hundreds of thousands of dollars to humanitarian and environmental causes. We are especially proud of the role we played in endurance runner Diane Van Deren's record setting completion of the North Carolina Mountains-To-Sea Trail in 2012. We partnered with The North Face to promote her expedition, provide her support on the trail and raised over \$40,000 for Friends of the Mountains-To-Sea Trail.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: Outdoor retailers have a unique opportunity to care for customers in meaningful ways as we help to keep folks grounded in an ever changing world. Providing the ideal gear paired with the expert advice on its use will always produce significant outdoor experiences that make a difference in the lives of others. We look forward to continuing to play a role in that customer's experience.



Great Outdoor Provision Company completed the Mountain-to-Sea Trail Endurance Run with the record. Standing atop Jockey's Ridge, Jockey's Ridge State Park from left to right, Joe Miller, author & MST trail running guide, Sarah Millsaps, MST trail running guide, Russ Burke, MST trail running guide, Joel Fleming, support crew chief, Diane Van Deren, The North Face Athlete, Christian Johnston, trail running guide, Kate Dixon, executive director of the Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail, Chuck Millsaps, president, Great Outdoor Provision Co. Photos courtesy Great Outdoor Provision Co.



Beezer Molten,
owner, Half Moon
Outfitters

HALF-MOON OUTFITTERS

North Charleston, SC

Founded: 1993

Joined G.O.A.: 2002

Leadership: Beezer Molten, Owner & President;
Don Longenecker, Hard Goods Buyer; Sara B. Parker,
Soft Goods Buyer

Number of Stores: 8 (5 in South Carolina, 3 in Georgia);
E-commerce -HalfMoonOutfitters.com.

2013 Sales: More than \$10M, up low, single-digits from
2012; HalfMoonOutfitters.com accounts for 5-to-6 percent
of sales.

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: Like All
Grassroots Retailers, we want to be the best corporate
citizens that we can be for our communities. If you look
at our events page you will see that commitment. Our
recent 5k raised approximately \$70,000 for the local
children's hospital and we do major events almost every
month. We sponsor the Banff Mountain Film Festival in
six markets, numerous trail runs and paddleboard races,
and of course our "Rock under the Rock" series which
just featured Brett Dennen. Every event that we do is for
a non-profit.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: We hope to add a store in
2014, while significantly renovating an existing store
and preparing yet another for a big upgrade and move
in early 2015. As we do this, we hope to continue to push
the envelope on green construction and the use of solar.
Our fears involve the disruptive and unpredictable
nature of on-line discounting and the possible reality
that there is too much supply of similar goods. There is
profound strength in speaking out against showrooming
and the destructive online practices that are threaten-
ing our industry and the notion of service that we have
built our careers and businesses on. Great opportunities
to strengthen the notion of service could come out of
this new dynamic with the introduction of things like
Localgear.com.



IDAHO MOUNTAIN TOURING

Boise, ID

Founded: 1984

Joined G.O.A.: 2008

Leadership: Chris Haunold, Owner; Bill Davis, Store Manager; Sarah Thompson, Head Buyer & Assistant Store Manager; Sophap Chanspaourant, Manager Meridian Cycles store

Number of Stores: 1; opened Meridian Bike, a 6,500-square-foot bike store in nearby Meridian, ID in July, 2013; E-commerce - IdahoMountainTouring.com.

2013 Sales: n/a; IdahoMountainTouring.com generated 3.7 percent of sales

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: Idaho Mountain Touring has outlasted more than a dozen outdoor gear shops in Idaho's Treasure Valley by not only selling the best cycling, climbing, backpacking and backcountry ski gear, but also renting and servicing it. Appropriately, the Trek and Giant dealer linked its brand to Boise's past by relocating its flagship store and administrative offices to a beautifully restored 20,000-square-foot building that once used to bottle Pepsi and Acme beer. Owner Chris Haunold prides himself not only on the company's impending 30th anniversary, but the low attrition of his staff, which now includes three sons.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: Keeping up with how fast things change, staying relevant and competitive, keeping my employees engaged and progressing with the company so they can continue to experience growth both personally and financially.

KING HOLDINGS, d/b/a QUEST OUTDOORS

Louisville, KY

Founded: 1983

Joined G.O.A.: 2013

Leadership: Ryan King, Owner & Buyer; David Trowbridge, CFO

Number of Stores: Operates 2 Quest Outdoors locations in Louisville, KY.

Launched E-commerce - QuestOutdoors.com - in November 2013.

2013 Sales: n/a

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: We want our store to be not just a local outfitter, but also an organization that helps preserve and facilitates the things that make people love Louisville and the state of Kentucky. Whether it's holding free classes for scout troops, sponsoring the Mayor's Healthy Hometown events, offering free paddling demonstrations, donating to disaster relief at home and abroad, sponsoring and putting on local races, helping conservation organizations like the KWA and The Access Fund, sponsoring music events like Forecastle and WFPK's Winter Wednesdays, helping local schools and charities with silent auctions and even hosting campouts with our staff and customers, we love to be part of our city and your lives.

Hopes and Fears for 2013: We plan to reopen The Quest Outdoors Trails End Outlet Shop in mid-January 2014 and add a shopping cart to our new website in the near future.



Mountain Mike testing gear even when he's sweeping. Photo courtesy Massey's Outfitters

MASSEY'S OUTFITTERS

New Orleans, LA

Founded: 1972

Joined G.O.A.: 2003

Leadership: Mike Massey, President; Bobby Johnson, VP; Gerry Fullington, GM

Number of Stores: 5 locations in Louisiana and 3 websites - MaseysOutfitters.com; theflipflop.com; and 800-SKI-SHOP.com

2013 Sales: More than \$10M, up in the mid, single-digits from 2012; E-commerce contributes approximately 30 percent of sales.

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: We are a third-generation retailer, soon to be fourth and we feel that contributing to the community is at the core of our business ethos. Massey's is a huge supporter of community events in the Greater New Orleans and Baton Rouge areas. We have both our own adventure race series and a recently launched 10K. We also sponsor tons of kayak fishing rodeos and teach classes to potential kayak fishermen. Locally, we are a key backer of the Lafitte Corridor, a Rails-to-Trails initiative connecting multiple neighborhoods in a neglected urban corridor. Lastly, Massey's is a big supporter of a New Orleans-based local organization called Stay Local.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: We hope to see more local business and less, price-driven web selling. We are steering our ship toward more unique, curated products and brands and blending in gear from other industries to make shopping a Massey's location truly unique. Our biggest fear is the continued commoditization of the outdoor channel to the detriment of our staff, our reps, our industry friends, and ultimately our customers.



Photos courtesy Midwest Mountaineering, Inc.



Midwest Mountaineering employees having fun



MIDWEST MOUNTAINEERING, INC.

Minneapolis, MN

Founded: 1970

Joined G.O.A.: 2006

Leadership: Rod Johnson, Owner & Founder; Michael White, Sales Floor Operations & Buying Manager; Sharon Johnson, CFO

Number of Stores: 1 - Expanded retail showroom to 14,000 square feet in 1996.

2013 Sales: \$5M to \$10M, up low, double-digits from 2012; No online sales.

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: The number one thing we do is get people excited and knowledgeable about getting outdoors. The Internet can't do that and the big box stores have a difficult time doing that. To get people excited and knowledgeable we have a whole list of things we do, including our biannual Outdoor Expos and hosting more than 150 clinics a year for our customers. It's also key that the sales staff we hire have a lot of outdoor experience. We give 10 percent of profits to wilderness and environmental causes. We also sponsor a Venturing Crew, which is a co-ed youth development program of the Boy Scouts of America that serves older kids in the 14- to 20-year-old age group. We take a very active role in that, including leading a 50-mile backpacking trip to the Grand Tetons, winter camping trips to the Boundary Waters and kayaking on the Kinnickinnic River.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: We hope to repeat many of our events. They are very successful and when you have a good thing going, you have to work hard to keep it going. I think outdoors will continue to grow, but it will be slow growth for brick & mortar stores because of the Internet. I don't see brick & mortar outdoor retail growing a lot. The Internet is great. I buy a lot on the Internet. It's tough competition for outdoor retailers and even big boxes but it cannot offer the excitement and knowledge of what to do in a local area.



Photo courtesy Mountain Chalet

MOUNTAIN CHALET

Colorado Springs, CO

Founded: 1968

Joined G.O.A.: 2010

Leadership: Dan & Marilyn Foster, Owners; Matt Chmielarczyk, Sales Manager; Tabitha Carroll, Office Manager

Number of Stores: 1; E-commerce - mtchalet.com

2013 Sales: \$1M to \$5M, down 9 percent from 2012 with less than 1 percent generated from mtchalet.com.

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: For 45 years Mountain Chalet has been involved with environmental causes in the Pikes Peak region. We sponsor the Banff Film Festival and help host other events each year as fund-raisers for Rocky Mountain Field Institute, Trails and Open Space Coalition, Concrete Couch, Friends of Red Rock Canyon Open Space and other favorite local non-profits.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: We're hoping Mother Nature cooperates. After three dry years with forest fires by summer and balmy winters we appreciate the important role that "good weather" plays in the success of our shop.

NAT'S OUTDOOR SPORTS

Bowling Green, KY

Founded: 1971

Joined G.O.A.: 2002

Leadership: Lisa Martens, Owner & Buyer - daughter of deceased founder, Nathaniel Howard Love, III

Number of Stores: This long-time Trek dealer relocated to its current 10,000-square-foot location in 1993, where it continues to sell bicycles and outdoor gear; E-commerce - NatsOutdoor.com.

2013 Sales: n/a

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: With its holiday bike and coat drives and more than 40 years in business, Nat's has become a local institution in Bowling Green, where more than 21,000 students attend Western Kentucky University.



Casual Adventure



NEW GENERATION, INC., d/b/a
CASUAL ADVENTURE
Arlington, VA

Founded: 1955

Joined G.O.A.: 2005

Leadership: Neil Stern, Owner & President; Dave Haggerty, VP; Eric Stern, Manager

Number of Stores: Operated as The Surplus Center until 1985; E-commerce - CasualAdventure.com.

2013 Sales: \$1M to \$5M, up low, single-digits. CasualAdventure.com accounts for 4 percent of sales.

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: We always protect and promote the experience of the outdoor enthusiast. We constantly fundraise and collect products for a variety of conservation organizations including; Potomac Overlook, a park and nature center; The Arlington Outdoor Lab, which brings local students into an interactive outdoor element; Arlingtonians for a Clean Environment, which promotes cleaner/greener living and work environments; The Shenandoah National Park Trust; The Boy and Girl Scouts of America; Arlington Street People Assistance Network, local schools; a homeless shelter; and other local organizations. We have a long-standing relationship with the community, since we established our locally-owned and operated roots almost 60 years ago.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: We are excited about the upcoming launch of our new website, which will offer an interactive community element in addition to e-commerce. We will continue to grow with manufacturers that support small businesses financially and environmentally. Fears include constant competition both from online and big box stores.

NEXT ADVENTURE
Portland, OR

Founded: 1997

Joined G.O.A.: 2013

Leadership: Deek Heykamp, Co-owner; Bryan Knudsen, Co-owner; Mike Turner, General Manager
Number of Stores: 2 – Next Adventure and Next Adventure Paddle Sports Center; E-commerce - NextAdventure.net.

2013 Sales: \$1M to \$5M, up low, double-digits from 2012. NextAdventure.net accounted for 6 percent of sales.

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: We just hosted our 7th annual Great Sock Giveaway. Every year during a Saturday in December, Next Adventure and WigWam Socks partner to donate hundreds of socks to local charities and shelters in need. Customers receive 20 percent off their sock purchase for the day. This discount includes any sock brand in stock. For every pair sold that day, Next Adventure is able to donate a pair of WigWam Socks to a local charity and everybody wins! The customers get a great deal on socks, people in need get new, warm socks for the winter and Next Adventure and WigWam get tons of exposure. It's also a great day to bring in the kids. You see, Deek and Bryan lost a bet to the staff way back when, and the result is Deek and Bryan dressing up like Santa and his Elf every year. Over the years, more staff have jumped on board with their own costumes. Now you'll also find a toy soldier, gingerbread man, a human present, a walking Christmas tree and a Rudolph slinging socks and dancing in the streets! Good times.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: Summer 2014 will be our first season operating the recently acquired Scappoose Bay Paddling Center, our new on-water rental/demo center. Our hope is to grow sales 50 percent at that location in 2014. A nice challenge. We don't operate on fear.

OUTDOOR SOURCE
Columbus, OH

Founded: 2003

Joined G.O.A.: 2012

Leadership: Andy Graham, Owner & Buyer

Number of Stores: 2 – Expanded second store to a new 4,000-square-foot location in 2013; E-commerce - TheOutdoorSource.com

2013 Sales: \$2.5M, up mid, single-digits from 2012 with less than 1 percent coming from TheOutdoorSource.com.

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: To celebrate its 10th anniversary in 2013, Outdoor Source hosted a series of free talks by visiting authors and its customers. It leads monthly kayak outings at a local reservoir during the summer and sponsors a SUP group on Meetup.com that has grown to more than 400. It's new location partnered with the city's most active outdoor club to provide demo boats, paddles, PFDs and other gear during some of the club's weekly paddling clinics at a state park. It partnered with a local microbrewery to hold its second annual "Gear and Beer" trunk show, during which it presented its favorite new fall apparel and raffled off merchandise to kick off the fall season.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: We are faced with two REIs coming into town this year. We knew they were doing Cincinnati, Cleveland and Columbus, but two in Columbus was a surprise. It's been helpful talking to some of the other Grassroots Retailers who had a store open in their market, but no one has been through two openings in one year.



Pack & Paddle owners John and Becky Williams

PACK & PADDLE

Lafayette, LA

Founded: 1974

Joined G.O.A.: 2010

Leadership: John & Becky Williams, Owners; John Heubi, Store Manager; Amy Liuzza, Buyer

Number of Stores: 1 – Still operates from original location, which is now 7,000 square feet.

2013 Sales: \$1M to \$5M, up low, double-digits from 2012. No online sales.

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: Our shop hosts Scout Night informational seminars for the Boy and Girl Scouts. Our Fryday event at the shop brings local artisans together for an afternoon of fun along with live music, beer and food trucks. We host a fundraising paddle trip for the Atchafalaya Basinkeeper program twice a year; this puts our customers into the Basin with the Basinkeeper to see the problems they battle first hand. We also hosted five films in 2013 that had an environmental or adventure theme. Our instructional series covers basic backpacking, ultra-light backpacking, kayak fishing and more. We also hosted approximately 35 trips in 2013. These events are a huge part of building interest in the activities that we sell because they allow our community to better understand the recreational opportunities that exist in our area. In addition, these events help people new to these activities learn tips that can make their experiences better when they go.



John Williams on Scout Night
Photos courtesy Pack & Paddle

Hopes and Fears for 2014: Our goals are to continue to grow deeper roots within our community. Our byline is “Inspiring Horizons”. As an outdoor retailer in a non-traditional area, our challenge is to continue to introduce the outdoor lifestyle to our community and then to support that community in developing their passion for the outdoors. This is done through a wide range of trips, events, guest speakers, films and activities throughout the year. We feel that if we follow this path, the sales we need to thrive will take care of themselves.



Staffer, Galen Lambert, climbing the rock wall during the 40th Anniversary Party in June 2013. Photos courtesy Pack Rat Outdoor Center

PACK RAT OUTDOOR CENTER

Fayetteville, AR

Founded: 1973

Joined G.O.A.: 2008

Leadership: Scott & Carolyn Crook, Owners; Chally Sims & Rick Spicer are both managers and working toward ownership.

Number of Stores: 1 – relocated to its current 11,000-square-foot location in 2002, which includes a pond used for paddlesports demos and classes. No online sales.

2013 Sales: \$1M to \$5M, up high, single-digits over 2012.

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: We incorporated “Pint Night” that fellow Grassroots retailer River Sports has been doing in our community activities. In 2013 we had eight Pint Nights during which we raised at least \$300 for eight separate non-profits. We have secured grants to send kids on a river trip. These kids have never been in a canoe, let alone on a moving river, and it was a great experience for them. We have raised funds for the purchase of land for recreation on a local river as well as here in our town. Cleanup and trail maintenance have also been a focus for us.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: Our biggest concern for 2014 and beyond is that the consumer is so focused on the lowest price that they do not recognize that the local retailer is the one who collects the sales tax that is used to pay for the infrastructure that everyone is using. Direct sales by vendors will also be an issue, as they become a competitor. We cannot stock every SKU and so lose there. This is causing us to re-examine who we want to spend our money with and how we will compete in the future and the GOA group is a good resource for brainstorming ideas and seeing what has and has not worked.



Owners, Scott and Carolyn Crook and Manager, Chally Sims at the 40th Anniversary Party in June 2013.



Photo courtesy Peace Surplus, Inc.



Photo courtesy Playmakers, Inc.



Photo courtesy Peak Sports, Inc.

PEACE SURPLUS, INC.

Flagstaff, AZ

Founded: 1973

Joined G.O.A.: 2013

Leadership: Steve Chatinsky, President, Co-Founder & Owner

Number of Stores: 1 - also rents Camping gear, Alpine and Nordic skis

2013 Sales: \$1M to \$5M, up 7 percent for 2012. No online sales.

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: Despite our name and heritage as an army surplus store, Peace Surplus has evolved into a full-service outdoor store that carries backpacking, camping, fly fishing, hiking and ski gear. We sponsor a variety of different events and programs in Flagstaff and Northern Arizona such as Flagstaff Bike to Work Week, Flagstaff Route 66 Days, DEW Downtown Ski & Snowboard Event and others to keep our name in the forefront of the community. Our fly tying class meets at the store the second Monday of every month and features free pizza and soda. With GOA's help we can partner with other great organizations. We are proud to be a part of this organization.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: Our hope is to grow our business even bigger. Our fear is with REI coming into Flagstaff we might not be able to. This could be our first year in 10 years with no growth, but we are preparing for this with GOA's help.

PEAK SPORTS, INC.

Corvallis, OR

Founded: 1971

Joined G.O.A.: 2007

Leadership: Jeff Katz, Founder & Owner; Deb McCarty, Buyer & Advertising Manager; Larry Desaulniers, General Manager

Number of Stores: 1 - Operating from same 13,000-square-foot store since its inception.

2013 Sales: \$1M to \$5M, flat with 2012. No online sales.

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: We support a long list of events and non-profits including Run for The Hills, Willamette River Keeper, Audubon Society/Corvallis, Chintimini Wildlife Center, Greenbelt Land Trust and the Oregon Natural Desert Association. The initiatives and organizations we partner with send a message to our community and our customers that these issues are important for all of us who are interested in preserving the outdoors and an environment in which we can all continue to enjoy the activities we all love.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: No near-future expansion or improvement plans as we just finished major improvements to our bike store space. Concerns include erratic category sales changes, an uncertain economy, and key staff turnover.

PLAYMAKERS, INC.

Okemos, MI

Founded: 1981

Joined G.O.A.: 2011

Leadership: Co-owners Brian W. Jones, John Benedict, and Tom Keenoy

Number of Stores: 1 - 10,000-square-foot location opened in 2002. The partners also own two New Balance stores, which are not affiliated with GOA. E-commerce - Playmakers.com.

2013 Sales: \$5M to \$10M, up low, single-digits from 2012 with less than 1 percent coming from Playmakers.com

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: Playmakers has become the running and fitness authority in its community by offering a series of training classes that are accessible to all. For \$65, women can enroll in its three-month Women's Couch to 5K program, which includes twice-a-week training and entry fees for a 5K race. More experienced runners can enroll in Team Playmakers Any Distance, Any Pace program each January to train for a marathon, half marathon or 10K race in May. For \$100, new members have access to formal training every Saturday morning and up to two informal sessions during the week. There is also a training program for a local triathlon. In 2011, the partners established the Playmakers Fitness Foundation to raise money from local corporations and civic organizations and to expand its community fitness mission to include youth, adults, seniors and physical education teachers. In 2013, the Foundation affected 10,000 people, including 150 residents of a local youth home who received shoes, coaching and entry fees for a local event.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: The digital world that we live in is changing things very quickly. We are committed to our traditional "Brick & Mortar" business model; however, we understand that the consumer has a lot of options and we must bring value to them not only in our store but also through making our community a better place to work, live and be active. We must be relevant to each of our consumers and work with more focus and strategy than ever before. That being said, our business is still growing and we plan to continue to grow.



Ed McAlister, President and Laura Jones, General Manager, River Sports Outfitters

RIVER SPORTS OUTFITTERS

Knoxville, TN

Founded: 1984

Joined G.O.A.: 2002

Leadership: Ed McAlister, President; Laura Jones, General Manager

Number of Stores: 2 – Opened the 9,000-square-foot store in Knoxville, TN in 1984 and The Climbing Center in 1998. E-commerce – RiversportsOutfitters.com.

2013 Sales: \$1M to \$5M, up low, single-digits.

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: River Sports takes pride in the community activities and events it has and continues to promote, and is a leader in the community for its outdoor initiatives. Each week multiple activities are offered to the community geared around the outdoors and offer engaging programs for all ages and levels; from SUP races to trail runs, to pint nights for charity, to kids camping, River Sports is giving back to the community. In 2013 we changed the feel of the store by serving micro brews while you shop and giving consumers a place to plan their trips or next adventures with maps from local and national parks. Starting in January 2014 the University of Tennessee Non Credit Department has partnered with River Sports to lead and teach urban outdoor activities. In addition, a partnership with Ijams Nature Center will expand the outdoor offerings for kids and adults through family campouts and adventure camps.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: As all of us give back to the community, we must continue to realize our business is a long-term partnership within the community. Sincere, long-term engagement and partnerships will continue to play a significant role in longevity of brick & mortar. We have chosen a profession that we are passionate about and yes there are ups and down. It is our jobs to learn how to stay relevant to younger consumers and provide a service that cannot be obtained anywhere else.



Photo courtesy Rock/Creek Outfitters

ROCK/CREEK OUTFITTERS

Chattanooga, TN

Founded: 1978

Joined G.O.A.: 2002

Leadership: Dawson Wheeler, President; Marvin Webb, Vice President

Number of Stores: 5 - including the 3,800-square-foot Rock/Creek at The Block, which opened in Chattanooga, TN in October 2013. E-commerce - RockCreek.com

2013 Sales: More than \$10M, up mid, single-digits from 2012 with 41.5 percent coming from RockCreek.com.

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: We're advocates for the outdoors and the sport of trail running. Our wildly popular Salomon Rock/Creek Trail Series featured over 3,500 runners this year across nine separate events. This series of trail races generates money for our non-profit, Wild Trails, money from which is used for trail building and maintenance in our area. The Rock/Creek StumpJump 50k alone raised approximately \$39,000 for trail work. We're also deeply involved in our local community; our co-owner chairs the Mayor's "Chattanooga Forward" committee for sports & recreation, and is on the board for the RiverRocks Chattanooga outdoor festival. We routinely use our brick & mortar locations to host slide shows and other informative events intended to promote the outdoors and/or benefit outdoor charities.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: Amazon continues to be a major competitive threat in two ways. First, in terms of being a direct competitor - they are clearly interested in disrupting the industry based on price. Second, we are at risk of losing business when vendors change policies without adequate warning. Essentially we're concerned with any risks we can't control. If a vendor changes a policy, we stand to lose our ability to sell through, and the policy changes are coming frequently and in real-time.

Often a policy change comes months after orders have been placed and marketing plans have been committed. Changing plans can be expensive and time consuming. It's concerning to us that vendors have so much control over the market, but many of those same vendors are our competitors by selling direct. There may be cases where any shared marketing data and analytics may be used to compete with us. Distribution is a huge factor in our ability to grow sales. We have no real control over that part of the business other than expressing our opinion and potentially cancelling orders. We intend to continue to innovate and meet customers where they choose to shop. We hope that meeting customers where they want to shop will lead to continued sales growth. We're always looking for sales growth through legitimate increases in the user base as well. We would like to see our industry focused on healthy operating margins and center itself ethically around service and knowledgeable staff rather than growth at any cost.



Photo courtesy Quest Outdoors

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Matt Chorney employee at Skinny Skis

SKINNY SKIS

Jackson, WY

Founded: 1974

Joined G.O.A.: 2002

Leadership: Jeff Crabtree & Phil Leeds, Co-owners

Number of Stores: 2 – Skinny Skis, Jackson, WY and Moosely Mountaineering which is has been in operation during the summer in Grand Teton National Park since 1985. E-commerce – SkinnySkis.com

2013 Sales: \$1M to \$5M, up low, single-digits. SkinnySki.com, which focuses on Nordic ski gear, generated less than 10 percent thanks to relationships developed through the Jackson Hole Ski and Snowboard Club.

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: In addition to providing competitive programming with vendor partners, we also work very closely at establishing community events and fundraisers. We've been fortunate to work with at least one or two vendor partners in environmental and youth programs in the Jackson Hole area. We were one of five Grassroots Retailers selected to pitch local non-profits for the live fundraiser during The Outsiders Ball at Outdoor Retailer Summer Market in 2013 and used the more than \$5,000 we raised to help the GTNP Foundation Youth Trail Crew. We hire, train and employ 20 kids, ages 17 to 19 every summer. We work closely with them fundraising and obtaining Vasque footwear for a foundation to equip kids. We also work with Patagonia extensively every year with some of their environmental initiatives locally. Being involved in community work is part of our ethos, including youth, environmental programs, and athletic programs revolving around Nordic skiing.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: Mother Nature and weather, which drives so much of our business and the online presence of largely non-specialty businesses that have been able to finagle their way into working with outdoor vendors, specifically Amazon, encroaching into the specialty world. Those two areas are tantamount. I'm not opposed to online with specialty, but now you have Amazon and all these department stores with apparel - Dick's Sporting Goods, The Sports Authority – that have entered the market and 20 years ago were not participating with specialty. Nordic being off 20 to 30 percent is also a concern, but hopefully we can flush through a lot of closeouts.



Photo courtesy Summit Canyon Mountaineering

SUMMIT CANYON MOUNTAINEERING

Glenwood Springs, CO

Founded: 1978

Joined G.O.A.: 2008

Leadership: Carl & Kathy Moak, Owners

Number of Stores: 2 - including the newest store in Grand Junction, CO. No online sales but advertises "Better than Internet" ordering policy and will order any item from its suppliers and match the price of any other authorized dealer.

2013 Sales: n/a

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: Summit Canyon is a core paddlesports and backcountry shop that specializes in fitting paddlers, climbers, backcountry skiers and snowboarders with the latest gear. It is among a few dozen shops Black Diamond Equipment chose to distribute its new line of apparel in Fall 2013. In addition to hosting adventure films and brand athletes, it holds two separate boat demo days in the summer and partners with vendors to award prizes to local trail maintenance volunteers.

SUNLIGHT SPORTS

Cody, WY

Founded: 1971

Joined G.O.A.: 2011

Leadership: Joe Crag, Co-founder, Owner & Chief Merchandising Manager, Melissa Allen, Co-owner & President; Wes Allen, Co-owner

Number of Stores: Operates from one 8,000-square-foot location;
E-commerce – SunLightSports.com

2013 Sales: \$1M to \$5M, up high, single-digits from 2012. SunLightSports.com generated 2 percent of sales.

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: We believe that independent, physical, successful outdoor retailers make our communities better. Our involvement with Grassroots has really given us a leg up in our community involvement - which drives a lot of our brand building and customer engagement. We've been able to inject real wattage into our speaker series. Folks like Backpacker's Get Out More tour and several high-level authors have done presentations in our town because of our membership. That wouldn't happen before. As far as community giving - that's been at a whole different level with Grassroots. We give two percent of our

sales to youth-based outdoor nonprofits in our county, but our partnership with Grassroots vendor partners like Patagonia, Columbia and others have really increased that amount. We've been able to help those companies identify worthwhile causes locally, and the vendors have stepped up through Grassroots initiatives. Those connections, along with what we have learned from some of the other retailers, have allowed us to focus and resonate with our customers in a much more engaging way. People notice. We have an outlet outdoor store in town - but our customers will come in and pay retail because they identify with what Sunlight Sports and Grassroots are doing.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: We hope that more vendors take the long view and understand that rampant discounting is going to turn all of outdoor into a commodity business - quickly. We hope that independents will think carefully about who they buy from and put their foot down with vendors that act counter to specialty's interests. We fear that big online retailers are going to get brands so "over a barrel" that those brands are going to lose control of their brand equity. We fear that independents will keep doing business the same way that we have for years and will be gone before 2020.



SUNRISE MOUNTAINEERING, INC.,
d/b/a SUNRISE MOUNTAIN SPORTS
Livermore, CA

Founded: 1975

Joined G.O.A.: 2002

Leadership: Kim Grandfield, Co-owner,
President & Founder; Rob Grandfield,
Co-owner, Vice President

Number of Stores: Operates from current
5,000 square feet location since 1997.
E-commerce - SunriseMountainSports.com.

2013 Sales: \$1M to \$5M, up high, single-
digits from 2012. E-commerce - Sunrise-
MountainSports.com generated approxi-
mately 10 percent of sales.

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer:

We operate an on-water paddling facil-
ity at Lake Del Valle, part of the East Bay
Regional Parks system. With easy ac-
cess, affordable rates, and 125+ kayaks
and stand-up paddleboards, we're able
to spread our love for paddlesports and
grow participation in our community.
Through the spring/summer/fall we reach
thousands of people who represent many
different demographics as well as skill lev-
els. Some are new to the sport; others are
veterans. We host social paddles, weekly
demo events, guided nature trips, numer-
ous instructional events and SUP board
races. Our strategy is three parts: Offer
excellent service and provide opportuni-
ties for customers to experience the activi-
ties we love; choose a product assortment
which emphasizes that service and those
opportunities; and stay as competitive
as possible on prices to make people feel
even better about shopping locally.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: Despite the
constant assault on the specialty retail
model from local big box stores and on-
line retailers, we remain positive. In the
end, all we can do is adapt and survive.



Photo courtesy The Base Camp

THE BASE CAMP

Billings, MT

Founded: 1975

Joined G.O.A.: 1998

Leadership: Scott Brown, Founder & Owner; Dianne Morgan, General Manager; Tim Lynch, Manager

Number of Stores: 2 -10,500-square-foot store in Helena, MT and opened a 12,000-square-foot store in Billings, MT in 1990.

2013 Sales: \$5M, flat with 2012. No online sales.

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: In Helena, MT we have worked with the U.S. Forest Service and the local Nordic ski club to build trails and groom trails through the winter season. We sponsor an annual trail race to help fund the Prickly Pear Land Trust and partnered with Patagonia, The North Face and Columbia Sportswear to put on fund raising events for local environmental causes. We offer cross country ski classes in the winter and maintain a calendar of avalanche safety and skate classes offered by the local ski patrol and local Nordic clubs as well as conditions at local Nordic ski trails.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: In 2014 The Base Camp will continue to provide the very best in cus-
tomer service, merchandise and neat, organized, convenient-to-shop stores. We are very proud of
the tenure, knowledge and quality of our staff. They are the key to our continued success.



Photo courtesy The Mountaineer



Photo courtesy The Outside World Outfitters, Inc.

THE MOUNTAINEER

Keene Valley, NY

Founded: 1975

Joined G.O.A.: 2012

Leadership: Vinny McClelland, Owner; Mike "Kaz," Manager; Chuck Bruha, Buyer, Footwear & Accessories; Holly Blanchard, Internet Sales & Social Media Manager

Number of Stores: 1 location; E-commerce – Mountaineer.com

2013 Sales: \$1M to \$5M, up mid, single-digits from 2012. Mountaineer.com generated 5 percent of sales.

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: What makes us grassroots is interaction, cooperation and group purchasing power with like-minded outdoor retailers. The Mountaineer takes its role in the community seriously and strives to make a difference through volunteerism and annual benefit events such as the Adirondack International Mountaineering Festival and the Adirondack Backcountry Ski Festival. We are proud to support local schools, athletics, churches, fire departments and others throughout the year. In addition to providing financial support to worthy local and regional causes, we take great pride in volunteering for community organizations such as the Keene Valley Fire Departments, the Adirondack Community Trust, New York Ski Educational Foundation, and local athletic teams. Our 18th annual Adirondack International Mountainfest, which takes place January 18-20, 2014, is an annual celebration of ice climbing and mountaineering featuring guest athletes who entertain with tales of climbing adventures, instructional clinics taught by visiting climbers and local guides, demo gear, and a chance to gather with the climbing community for an exciting winter weekend.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: Our fear is competition from the Internet, especially Amazon.

THE OUTSIDE WORLD OUTFITTERS, INC.

Dawsonville, GA

Founded: 2002

Joined G.O.A.: 2011

Leadership: Eva and Brent Troncalli, Principals & Buyers

Number of Stores: 2 – opened a 7,000-square-foot second store approximately 50 miles away in Columbus, GA in 2010; E-commerce - TheOutsideWorldOutfitters.com.

2013 Sales: \$1M to 5M, up mid, single-digits from 2012; TheOutsideWorldOutfitters.com generated 2 percent of sales.

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: Like most G.O.A. members we feel we are part of a community. We operate an indoor pool that uses a wave machine to simulate whitewater paddling conditions. It's an excellent device for teaching beginner and intermediate technique, testing new boats, or for having fun without all the preparation needed for a "river trip." We built it in 2004 and believe it's the only simulated indoor wave anywhere in the world. It is used for flat water more than white water and we've sold a lot of SUPs recently because people used the indoor wave pool to try them. The Wave can only accommodate about three paddlers at one time so we also offer classes through local recreation departments. We also provide our certified instructors for whitewater kayaking and paddleboarding classes taught primarily at our county parks. Columbus State University lets us use their indoor pool to teach classes free of charge in exchange for our offering classes to their students at no cost. We also have a Scout Explorer Post based at our store and sell a large number of survival bracelets they make so they don't have to do fund raisers.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: We expect to have our redesigned website finished this month which we hope will compete better against Amazon. The site will be paddle-sports' focused and will feature companies that don't sell direct-to-consumer. We will also have a much larger community calendar. We bought a projector to offer outdoor movie nights and will sponsor a film festival featuring both professional and homegrown videos for an in-house contest. Our biggest concern is growth of manufacturer-owned websites competing against us. With Amazon, at least we can try to offer better selection and service, where as the manufacturer can double their margin. The North Face just opened an outlet store down the street.



Oro Valley Grand Opening – Summit Hut Co-Owners Dana and Jeremy Davis cut the “ribbon” (actually climbing rope) during Grand Opening Ceremonies for the new Oro Valley location. Photo courtesy The Summit Hut.

THE SUMMIT HUT, LTD.

Tucson, AZ

Founded: 1969

Joined G.O.A.: Founding Member, 1994

Leadership: Dana Davis, President & Co-owner; Jeremy Davis, Secretary, Treasurer & Co-owner

Number of Stores: 1 - Moved into a 10,000-square-foot location on the Northwest side of Tucson in 2013; E-commerce – SummitHut.com.

2013 Sales: \$5M to \$10M, up mid, single-digits. SummitHut.com contributed 25 percent of sales.

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: As an independent business, the Summit Hut actively supports local, state and regional outdoor recreation related causes and events to the best of our ability. We feel it is our obligation, as an outdoor retailer, to do our part in maintaining the very land that allows our business to exist. Beyond simply selling clothing and equipment made of renewable and recycled resources and making donations to local preservation organizations, Summit Hut is determined to take action to ensure that people are aware and educated about the world we live in. Every year we donate approximately \$5000 in cash and products to groups that support the environment and sustainable outdoor recreation. We recently implemented a community service program where employees can volunteer with various community groups such as the Sky Island Alliance, the Tucson Audubon Society and numerous others. We have donated 100 days of labor to the outdoors, which we all love so much.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: The Summit Hut is always working and looking ahead to refine itself. After moving a store in 2013, we looked to improve our web presence for our vendors, and ourselves as well as look to freshen up our Speedway store as we move into 2014-2015. The consumer demands to be entertained and feel connected and we look to answer that call. The Summit Hut does fear that our industry is changing in that we must now compete with our vendors, and hope that we all do not lose sight of what we are trying to accomplish. We must all co-exist and without one, there is not the other.



Photo courtesy of Sunlight Sports

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Photos courtesy The Trail Head

THE TRAIL HEAD

Missoula, MT

Founded: 1974

Joined G.O.A.: 2011

Leadership: Todd Frank, Owner

Number of Stores: 2 operated in Missoula, MT including its 1,500-square-foot Trail Head T9 that opened at Southgate Mall in 2009.

2013 Sales: \$1M to \$5M, up mid, single-digits from 2012.

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: The original business model was to sell and service the expanding backpacking and camping market that came out of the environmental movement of the early 1970's. While the brands have come and gone, our commitment to having the best quality products is what motivates us every day. We watched many brands grow, only to leave us in the wake and just a few short years later end up on the shelves of Wal-mart and Costco. We hope people continue to see value in what we do because we like to see our customers face-to-face. The Trail Head supports many local non-profit and grassroots-based organizations, including the Clark Fork Coalition, Camp Make-A-Dream, Trout Conservancy of Montana, Missoula Downtown Association, Hellgate Hunters and Anglers, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Five Valleys, Land Trust, to name a few. Our staff is dedicated to creating a trusting retail market and we are here every day.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: Our biggest fear for 2014 is the continued aggressive push by almost all vendors into the direct online sales arena. Many vendors have pulled back from doing business with big online players like Amazon, Backcountry.com and others only to replace that online business with a direct component of their own. I believe in brands having a strong Web presence, and I think it can tell a brand story better than any retailer - but when the manufactures begin to aggressively discount products online in key selling seasons, they are cutting our throat while simultaneously devaluing their own brand in the eyes of the consumer. When they tell us that discounting 25 to 40 percent on Black Friday through Cyber Monday is a reality of the marketplace, I believe they have ceased to be a partner in my business and become a full on competitor. Online business can enhance the relationship with local retailers by telling a story, selling always at full price for the entire season, and charging shipping - that is the behavior of a partner, not a competitor.



TRAILBLAZER CENTRAL, LLC.

Branford, CT

Founded: 1995

Joined G.O.A.: 2006

Leadership: Chris Howe, Founder; Todd Raskin, Partner & Merchandise Manager; Judith Verillo, Operations Manager
Number of Stores: Trailblazer (3), Denali (3); E-commerce - ShopTrailblazer.com and Shop-Denali.com.

2013 Sales: More than \$10M, up 7.5 percent from 2012. Online stores generated 7.5 percent of sales.

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: In the last three years, we have made a concerted effort to evolve our business to be a better partner with our customers both on the floor and in the towns our stores are located. Three years ago we did not host events. Now we have our own obstacle race series (Run the Gauntlet), we host the Banff Film Festival in four locations, we run a day hike series, and have set up a 501c3 organization, the Denali Foundation, to focus on getting youth connected and engaged in the outdoors. We also offer a wide variety of guest speakers, in store events, pint nights and more. A full-time staff member who runs our social media and events coordinates all this. We have also hired a full-time trainer to ensure that our staff is trained on product, customer service and operation. If it were not for Grassroots, and our peers' desire to share, we would never have made this pivotal shift, which has profoundly changed our business. Grassroots retailers freely communicate with each other their successes, failures, opinions and concerns. This open communication between peers has allowed us to re-address our commitment to our local community and how to service them.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: Our biggest hopes relate to our continued growth within our existing markets through a better connection between our customers, our staff and our brand. Our biggest fears concern the ever-changing retail landscape and the constantly increasing competition offered by the Internet, our vendors and big box stores. Luckily, with a network of 47 Grassroots specialty retailers at our disposal, we are able to educate ourselves and learn how to best succeed in this new paradigm.

TRAVEL COUNTRY

Altamonte Spring, FL

Founded: 1981

Joined G.O.A.: 1998

Leadership: Mike Plante, Buyer & Principle; Tina Clark, Retail Sales Manager; Ian Ogilvie, Web Sales Manager
Number of Stores: 5 – Located in Central Florida - Orlando, Altamonte Springs, Sanford, Winter Park, and Maitland. E-commerce – TravelCountry.com.

2013 Sales: \$5M to \$10M, up low, single-digits. E-Commerce generated 25 percent of sales.

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: Our commitment to community, experience, conservation, excellent service, selection and financial stability are what make us a Grassroots retailer. Outdoor enthusiasts all over central Florida rely on Travel Country for expert advice, gear and clothing for their outdoor adventures. The Travel Country staff lives for outdoor adventure. Among our team you'll find avid hikers, paddlers, skiers, surfers, mountain bikers and more. If it happens in the outdoors, someone on our staff eats, drinks and sleeps it. We have some of the top outdoor athletes in the country right here in our Altamonte Springs store and on our adventure race team.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: Our hope is that customers will gravitate back to retail in a local movement on the brick & mortar side of the business. The Web has taken the personal experience away, and it is affecting what most of us can give back to community.

UTE MOUNTAINEER

Aspen, CO

Founded: 1977

Joined G.O.A.: mid-1990s

Leadership: Bob Wade, Founder & Owner; Ruth Wade, Owner; Maile Wade, Owner; Paul Perley, General Manager

Number of Stores: In addition to their Aspen store, Ute Mountaineer operates two cross country ski centers during the winter, including the Snowmass Cross Country Center, which opened in 2003.

2013 Sales: \$5M to \$10M, up 6.7 percent from 2012.

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: We offer terms, packages, and host a variety of local races and events. At the beginning of the season we host a Demo Week where customers can come in and get a free day of AT or Telemark rentals. We sponsor an ongoing Aspen Cup Nordic Series; a Cross Country Ski Extravaganza; discounted lessons early in the season; avalanche classes and other local races and events.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: Our fear is no snow and a return to a bad economy. We hope to improve our social network and create more reasons to visit brick & mortar.



Photo courtesy Ute Mountaineer



Photos courtesy Wild Iris Mountain Sports

WILD IRIS MOUNTAIN SPORTS

Lander, WY

Founded: 1990

Joined G.O.A.: 2011

Leadership: Jennifer Barrett, Managing Partner & Soft-goods Buyer; Emily Tilden, General Manager & Footwear Buyer

Number of Stores: 1 store that expanded from 3,200 to 7,000 square feet in March 2013. E-commerce – WildIrisClimbing.com.

2013 Sales: \$1M to \$5M, up high, single-digits from 2012. Wildirisclimbing.com generates less than 1 percent of revenue.

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: We work diligently to connect with our community. We have a refuse-a-bag program where we give customers five cents back every time they refuse a bag, to donate to one of seven local nonprofit organizations. The list is chosen, expanded, and adapted as customers and staff makes suggestions. Through vendor partnerships we are able to host the Wild and Scenic Film Festival along with the Wyoming Outdoor Council. We do big fundraising pushes in coordination with holiday/customer appreciation events. Our Ladies & Guys Nights are steered toward raising money for the Lander Pet Connection and we round up at our Holiday Open



Wild Iris Mountain Sports staff

Back Row Left to Right: Emily Tilden, Kyle Phillips, LeAnn Woodhouse, Evan Reimondo, Tom Casey, Kate Herden, Jeremy Rowan, Zach Calhoun, Joan Brandenberger.

Front Row Left to Right: Rob Phares, Levi Perdum, Lee Brown, Jennifer Barrett.

House to raise money for the local food bank. We are a climbing shop at heart and work with the International Climbers Festival to help raise funds for programs that get kids out climbing. We also work with the Lander Community Foundation to help put on the annual Lander Half Marathon. The funds raised from this event are dispersed to multiple local nonprofits. All of these opportunities allow us to connect to our community in different ways.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: We will have been in our new location for a full year March 2014. I hope we will continue to grow, refine, and be productive members of our community.



Wild River Outfitters touring director giving a staff clinic on Hobie Mirage kayaks this past December. From left to right - Michael Brewington, touring director; Kelly Mayorga, warranty administrator; Kurt Fleming, fishing room assistant manager; Rob Gagne, inventory administrator.

WILD RIVER OUTFITTERS, INC.

Virginia Beach, VA

Founded: 1976

Joined G.O.A.: 2001

Leadership: David Gracie, President

Number of Stores: 1 location that expanded to 9,000 square feet in 1989.

2013 Sales: \$1M to 5M, up low, single-digits from 2012.

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: Grassroots gives us the opportunity to take advantage of grant opportunities offered by G.O.A. vendor partners such as Patagonia and Columbia that would otherwise be inaccessible to a small single store. Because of these opportunities we have helped local non-profit organizations like Lynnhaven River NOW and the Virginia Aquarium and Marine Science Center with outreach and community efforts that help protect and maintain our local waterways. Partnering with these local organizations exposes us to a much larger audience than would otherwise be possible. Since paddlesports is such a large part of our business, furthering efforts related to waterway conservation is a win-win and this would not be possible without the help of brands who offer G.O.A. such great opportunities to make a difference in our communities.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: Our goal for the 2014 season is to expand our community exposure through a robust schedule of events, and continue to provide an exceptional level of service to our existing customer base. Long-term plans include an expansion, but not in 2014. We are in an area that relies heavily on military and government spending and we rely on those customers for the majority of our business. Our biggest fear for 2014 is continued political uncertainty. We were hit hard in 2013 with “sequester” and “shutdown” fallout and we can only hope our political climate is trending to a less volatile state.

Photos courtesy Wild River Outfitters, Inc.





Outside Hilton Head

WINDSURFING HILTON HEAD, INC.,
d/b/a OUTSIDE HILTON HEAD AND
OUTSIDE PALMETTO BLUFF
Hilton Head Island, SC

Founded: 1979

Leadership: Mike Overton, Owner & President
Number of Stores: Operates Outside Hilton Head on Hilton Head Island and operates Outside Palmetto Bluff, which opened in 2008 with an 800-square-foot retail showroom, in Bluffton, SC.

2013 Sales: \$1M to \$5M, up low, single-digits from 2012.

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: We've developed a strong initiative, led by our staff, to bring sustainability to the Lowcountry. It's called the Green Team and they've done water cleanups, and launched a recycling program at our waterfront locations. The team was awarded a grant from the Beaufort County Public Works to conduct four kayak-based cleanups of waterways in Northern and Southern areas of the county. The first was conducted in March, 2013 on the Broad Creek and more than 300 pounds of trash was collected. Our Wooden Nickel initiative enables customers who use their personal shopping bags to donate the nickel in savings that creates for Outside Hilton Head to one of several local non-profits by depositing a wooden nickel in collection boxes after they pay for their purchase.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: We will begin a major retail expansion and renovation at our Hilton Head location in 2014 that will expand our retail showroom from 2,000 to approximately 2,500 square feet and add an additional 1,100 square feet of administrative space.



Photo courtesy Wilson's Eastside Sports

WILSON'S EASTSIDE SPORTS

Bishop, CA

Founded: 1977

Joined G.O.A.: 2002

Leadership: Chris Iversen, Owner & Buyer; Todd Vogel, Owner

Number of Stores: One location operating from its original site with 6,200 square feet.

2013 Sales: n/a; and no online sales.

What makes Us a Grassroots Retailer: We enjoy partnering with local non-profit groups. We offer support by donations and direct participation in events as both sponsors and hands-on participants. One example is our work with Friends of the Inyo, a group that works to protect and preserve our local wild lands. We donate regularly to this group, as a business sponsor, and also help organize and implement a variety of public lands' projects, each of which is designed to get area locals and visitors out on their public lands. These projects are a chance for participants to give back in the form of stewardship work; i.e., trail work, invasive plant removal, or helping local land managers maintain public infrastructure such as painting picnic tables. We helped on several such projects this year, and also applied on Friends of the Inyo's behalf for a generous grant from Grassroots Vendor Partner Columbia Sportswear, which in part seeks to help connect youth with public lands.

Hopes and Fears for 2014: We plan to continue to enjoy running one of the few true specialty outdoors stores left in California.

Grassroots Outdoor Alliance unites independent outdoor retailers as a strong voice to protect and promote the experience of outdoor enthusiasts across the United States. We enable access to best business practices for our retail members, to the best equipment and apparel brands for the public, and to the backcountry for all.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT
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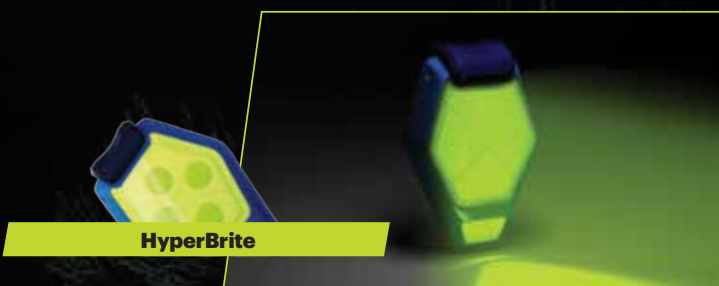
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