

BackpackingLight.com

NEWS RELEASE

BackpackingLight.com Breaks From Mold as the Anti-Establishment Authority in Lightweight Backcountry Travel

Backpacking Experts Unload the Heavy Gear and Marketing B.S. to Enlighten Outdoor Enthusiasts with Meticulous, Frank, Wilderness-Tested Reviews of Niche Outdoor Gear for Ultralight Hikers

Bozeman, MT – July 17, 2003 – After only two years of publishing, BackpackingLight.com emerges as an industry leader for commentary and advice on lightweight backcountry travel. BackpackingLight.com delivers a unique combination of scientific rationale and highly opinionated expert advice. Founded by renowned fastpacker and biomedical science entrepreneur Dr. Ryan Jordan, the BackpackingLight.com editorial team is not only technical in their approach to the sport, most hold engineering degrees. The online journal is currently a resource for 70 percent of lightweight and ultra light backpackers in the US with international readership spanning the globe to more than 200 major outdoor equipment manufacturers and several hundred thousand consumers. In fact, BackpackingLight.com and Dr. Jordan were recently featured in the New York Times (*On the Trail, With the Clothes on Your Back and Little More*, July 13, 2003).

From the vantage point of advertising-free, anti-establishment editorial content, BackpackingLight.com's product reviews and technique articles have not only spurred the growth of the lightweight backpacking industry but have influenced equipment design and outdoor journalism since the initial launch in July 2001. "BackpackingLight.com has definitely influenced [our company's] product design. We are avid readers of the magazine and have benefited from many insightful product suggestions and ideas published there," says Demetrios Coupounas, Co-Founder and President of GoLite, the worldwide market leader in lightweight backpacking gear. "Jordan and company's in-depth analysis of GoLite products provides us with key information that definitely influences our design process.

BackpackingLight.com's ability to reach a diverse group of users and solicit their feedback has helped us to better understand our customers' wants and needs. They are unquestionably one of our most important liaisons of communications between the consumer and manufacturer."

The new BackpackingLight.com website includes an online store featuring hand-picked, exclusive, top-quality lightweight backpacking gear from the industry's hottest cottage manufacturers. "Lightweight backpackers are a savvy lot," says Alan Dixon, BackpackingLight.com's co-founder and Product Review

Editor (another engineer, of course). "Much of our readership demands a level of performance that is not found in the mainstream marketplace, so we try to hook them up with gear made by garage designers and techniques being practiced by the relatively unknown ultralight elite that includes long-distance hikers, ultra-marathoners, fastpackers, adventure racers, and alpinists. Our role is not just to report industry trends, but to drive them, realizing that when those garage designs finally find their home in a product catalog of a major manufacturer, we've done our job."

Editors Jordan and Dixon don't ignore the bulk of backpackers carrying heavy packs.

BackpackingLight.com's hallmark publication, 'Lightweight Backpacking 101,' has earned a cult following as a de facto standard of lightweight evangelism for everybody from the Boy Scouts to the U.S. Military. In addition, BackpackingLight.com has caught the attention of the leading manufacturers in the outdoor industry. In addition to GoLite, Dixon counts Arc'Teryx, Cloudveil, Marmot, Big Agnes, Outdoor Research, Western Mountaineering, Ibex, Feathered Friends, Mountain Safety Research, Integral Designs, Wild Things, Montane, Rab Carrington, and a host of other companies as members of BackpackingLight.com's rigorous product testing and review program.

In addition to frank and sometimes-too-honest reviews of lightweight backpacking gear, BackpackingLight.COM offers insightful and informative editorial commentary, features, and technical articles. Expect to find irreverent diatribes and colorful backpacking philosophies borne from random thoughts incubated by too many nights spent in sub-freezing conditions. In addition to holding manufacturers accountable for marketing hype and performance claims, BackpackingLight.com challenges their readers with openings like, "Never, ever, blame your gear – or the manufacturer's marketing strategy – for your discomfort." Jordan comments, "We are 100% committed to empowering beginning and advanced backpackers alike with the skills, knowledge, and common sense required not only to make solid purchasing decisions, but also to enjoy the backcountry with less of a burden."

In response to the editorial board's refusal to accept advertising of any kind, BackpackingLight.com is a subscription-based magazine, a strategic move designed to further distance the unique, unbiased editorial from marketing hype and advertiser influence and to put readers in the driver's seat when it comes to making purchasing decisions. It is the only major Internet backpacking site that is free of advertising, affiliate marketing, or sponsored content. Member benefits include coop-style gear buying discounts, insider commentary on the outdoor equipment industry, and exclusive content.

BackpackingLight.com is now booking appointments to meet with Outdoor trade media, major retailers, and manufacturers at the Outdoor Retailer Summer Market (Salt Lake City, August 14-17). Interview commentary and trade show news will be released in daily dispatches on its website, with insider commentary available to its paying subscribers.

Other Manufacturer opinions about BackpackingLight.com:

"Backpackinglight.com is our best source of impartial news, views and reviews for the worldwide community of enlightened mountain sports enthusiasts. Jordan and Dixon's mountain hiking experience, engineering backgrounds, and rigorous product testing program has allowed us to gather product information that we have been unable to gain elsewhere, allowing us to refine and improve the designs of our ultra light hiking and mountaineering apparel." – Jake Doxat, CEO, Montane, Northumberland, UK

"Ryan Jordan and his staff at Backpacking Light have been instrumental in recommending refinements for our specialized cold weather hand and footwear. They have extensive knowledge of the outdoor industry and product engineering, and RBH Designs will continue to consult with them for future product development of our high-performance outdoor apparel. Actually, Ryan Jordan may be the only product tester we know that prays for 70 mile an hour winds, thirty-below-zero temperatures, and white-out conditions." – Nancy B. Hannigan, RBH Designs

What readers say about BackpackingLight.com

"The feature article, 'Westerner's Weekend on the Appalachian Trail' was one of the funniest stories of AT hiking I've ever read. If you liked Bill Bryson's 'A Walk in the Woods,' you'll love Jordan's take on the AT. It's pee-your-pants-funny with a cast of characters well-suited for visual comedy." - TT

"BackpackingLight.com is quirky and unconventional but absolutely brilliant. It's a refreshing place to visit. The Editors are always responsive to technical questions and fortunately, quite honest about gear recommendations. Frankly, the way they test (abuse?) their gear for review seems to be a recipe for disaster that would send manufacturers scampering. But there is a reason why the likes of Cloudveil, Marmot, Arc'Teryx, and GoLite provide them with gear to test: the reviews are just plain honest. Great job. You're subscription fees are way too cheap." - PE

"Fortunately, and refreshingly, Backpacking Light carefully considers the foundation on which gear is designed, challenges (and often dispels) marketing claims, and invokes a rational basis for equipment testing, analysis, and design critique. Kudos to you guys, for creating a forum in which other publishers are too scared to challenge the status quo of their advertising partners." - GT

"Alan Dixon is a gear junkie's godsend. His technique and review articles are outstanding. They are detailed, but not so much so that he provides a bunch of meaningless information. Alan brings a lot to Backpacking Light as its Product Review Editor and is willing to suffer a little pain and punishment to push gear to its limits." - WO

Biographies of BackpackingLight.com Co-Founders

Bio: Ryan Jordan

Dr. Ryan Jordan holds engineering degrees that have launched him to the forefront of backcountry science, with research and design experience spanning the specialties of backcountry health and hygiene, water treatment technologies, backpack load distribution, and condensation management in shelters and apparel. Most recently, he was a Senior Research Engineer with Montana State University's renown Center for Biofilm Engineering before launching Cytergy, a scientific e-learning company that delivers advanced training to healthcare professionals and life science organizations.

An Eagle Scout, Jordan was the former director of Scouting USA's oldest high adventure program at Camp Parsons on Washington's Olympic Peninsula, where he was well known among Chief Seattle Council parents for turning their 13-17 year old boys into wobbling, arthritic young men after a week of hiking and alpine climbing in the Olympic Mountains. Later, as the Program Director for Camp Parsons in 1992, Jordan was responsible for designing and delivering what was one of the first ultralight backpacking instructional and leadership programs in the country to more than 300 adult Scout leaders during an 8-week training tenure.

Dr. Jordan's recent ultralight accomplishments focus on multi-day ultra-marathon length hikes in the Yellowstone wilderness while carrying less than five pounds of equipment, and single-push alpine ice climbs. He has crossed the Olympic Mountains in a single push with a three-pound day pack, and has circumnavigated Mount Rainier in three days with a ten pound pack.

Dr. Jordan regularly lectures on the topic of lightweight backpacking and is well-known for his comprehensive training seminars, clinics, and field courses for outdoor leadership program staff and youth instructors. He lives in Bozeman, Montana with his wife Stephanie and his son Chase, and calls every wilderness area within a half-day's drive "home," including three National Parks (Yellowstone, Glacier, and Grand Teton) and several major mountain ranges (including the Tetons, Beartooths, Absorokas, Spanish Peaks...)

Bio: Alan Dixon

Mr. Alan Dixon is a former aerospace engineer, professional photographer, and special effects engineer for the movie industry (he actually worked on a Star Wars film). Mr. Dixon resides in Washington DC where he is a senior engineer for a government public health agency.

Mr. Dixon grew up on the west coast and carried his first backpack into the Yosemite backcountry at age four. He's been hiking, backpacking and climbing all over the country ever since. Single push alpine climbing and ultralight fastpacking with a sub-5lb pack are his current raves. In addition to his expertise in the areas of lightweight backpacking for couples, groups and families, he manages to run BackpackingLight.com's premier product review program. "Products are reviewed in a several-month-long ordeal of laboratory and field testing," Alan says, "where they are swallowed, chewed, and spit out with a comprehensive analysis of their performance."

Mr. Dixon's engineering background allows BackpackingLight.com to perform product testing and analysis to an extent that is not found in other publications. The ability to bring things like textile engineering, seam load testing, backpack frame deflection analysis, and shelter wind load analysis adds authenticity to a rigorous field testing process that can span months. As a result, Mr. Dixon has taken BackpackingLIGHT.com to new heights, and is one reason for its appeal to some of the outdoor industry's biggest manufacturers – and its consumers.

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