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## Going Light on the Planet One Step at a Time: Skurka Completes 6,875-Mile Global Warming Trek

Grand Canyon, AZ - On November 3, 2007, Andrew Skurka became the first person to complete the 6,875-mile Great Western Loop, an ambitious journey that links the American West's great long-distance hiking trails and traverses 12 National Parks and over 75 wilderness areas. Skurka, 26, completed his expedition by walking an average of 33 miles per day for 208 straight days, covering a distance equivalent to 262 marathons or twice the distance between Boston and San Francisco. In addition to experiencing many of the most pristine and beautiful landscapes in America, Skurka surveyed the toll that global warming is taking on them. Skurka's accomplishment is landmark not only in the sheer athleticism and determination he displayed, but in the sobering discoveries he made along the way.

Skurka hiked through some of the most rugged and remote backcountry in the contiguous United States, braving extremes of weather, terrain, and wild animals, while making some disheartening observations on the trail. Skurka witnessed the impact of climate change first hand. "I was expecting to see shrinking glaciers in Glacier National Park, the North Cascades, and the Wind Rivers," said Skurka, "but I was unnerved by the number of other impacts I wasn't expecting: intense drought in the Southwest, a greatly reduced snowpack in the Sierras, a record-breaking heat wave in Washington, an abnormally long and intense wildfire season in Montana, and a devastating pine beetle infestation in Colorado. I would love to repeat the hike in the future, but I fear I'll find a vastly different landscape within just a decade or two."

Skurka's lead sponsor, GoLite, is a company committed to reducing its environmental footprint and to being as sustainable a company as possible. GoLite supported Skurka's hike because of its athletic focus, its efforts to increase people's interest in the outdoors, and its motive to raise awareness about the impacts of climate change on America's backcountry. "Because so few of us get the chance to visit remote areas, the damage that global warming is causing on America's crown jewels is 'out-of-sight, out-of-mind'," said GoLite Chief Executive Officer Kim Coupounas. "We are thrilled to have supported this incredible journey. Andy has served as a great ambassador for the brand and for the cause of preserving our Nation's precious wild places."

Throughout Skurka's hike, his average base pack weight (not including fuel, food and water) was a mere 7.5 lbs.

### Environmental Facts

- Ø Over the last 100 years the average air temperature in the West has warmed by about 2 degrees, which is twice as much as the 1-degree F increase in the average global temperature. The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change expects that temperatures will shoot up another 2 to 11 degrees F in the next 100 years; many models predict that the American West will experience even greater temperature increases, while also having less humidity and receiving less precipitation.

- Ø Wildfire seasons in the West are an average of 50 percent longer than they were 30 years ago and peak snowmelt dates are now as much as three weeks earlier than historical averages. These factors have contributed to a four-fold increase in western wildfires since 1987.
- Ø All glaciers in Glacier National Park are expected to have completely melted by 2030. Glaciers in the Cascades and northern Rockies – including those on Mt. Rainier, Mt. Hood, and in the Wind River Range – are similarly undergoing abnormal melt rates, making them either a tiny version of their past or a tragic memory.
- Ø Warmer winters and prolonged drought have played a significant role in the devastating proliferation of the mountain pine beetle, which has killed entire lodgepole pine forests in Colorado (and created a perilous wildfire scenario as a result) and which is now endangering the enduring icon of Yellowstone National Park – the grizzly bear – by attacking whitebark pines, a critical grizzly food source.
- Ø Less precipitation in the Colorado River watershed coupled with surging population growth and a “water-is-unlimited” mindset among watershed residents has resulted in Lake Mead and Lake Powell – the two largest reservoirs along the Colorado River and the critical sources of freshwater for cities like Los Angeles and Phoenix – being at their lowest levels since they were created, both around half empty.

For more information on Skurka’s trek, visit [www.GoLite.com](http://www.GoLite.com).

### **About GoLite**

GoLite is the world’s premier producer of lightweight clothing and equipment for active, outdoor sports. Inspired, designed, and tested in Boulder, Colorado, GoLite® products offer uncompromised head-to-toe performance, durability, and versatility at the lightest possible weight to maximize a person’s enjoyment and performance in the outdoors. Since 1998, GoLite has been pushing the envelope of theory, practice, & design innovation and has led a “lightweight revolution” that has changed an entire industry. GoLite is more than a name: it is philosophy, a lifestyle, and a commandment to do more with less. Environmental stewardship and social responsibility have been fundamental to GoLite’s mission and core values since its founding. GoLite is humbly committed to minimizing its environmental footprint – to GoLite on the Planet - through innovation, resourcefulness and partnership. GoLite Athlete Ambassadors regularly share “How to GoLite” techniques in outreach seminars around the world. For more information on GoLite® products, ambassadors, environmental or outreach efforts, visit [www.GoLite.com](http://www.GoLite.com) or call 888-5-GoLite toll-free within the U.S.