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MAGAZINE

Navigating Extreme Expeditions and Crafting the Ideal Teardrop

an interview with Bobby Hale



PLUS:

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- Regional Camping Spotlight: Leaf Peeping
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- Leave No Trace: Principle #5

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COOL Tears™ and tiny campers MAGAZINE

Vol. 11 No. 5 September/October 2023

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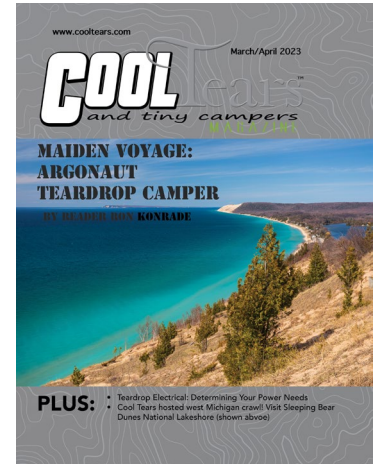
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Letter from the Editor:



Hello Tiny Camper Enthusiasts!

In this issue, you'll find a focus on the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics' fifth principle: "Minimize Campfire Impact." While the topic may seem straightforward, the real-world consequences of neglecting this principle are more complex.

Just this summer, large swaths of North America were socked in by wildfire smoke from ongoing wildfires in Canada. At times, parts of the US and Canada recorded the worst air quality in the world. It made New York City and other landscapes look like scenes straight out of an apocalyptic movie. I can't help but wonder how many of these disasters were man-made - initiated by a campfire or someone burning a brush pile at home but just not properly put out. It's disheartening to see how the negligence of a few can impact the natural world we all hold dear.

On a recent camping trip, we had just finished breakfast with friends and chatted with the neighboring campers at an adjacent site. They had shared some vegetables from their garden with us because it was more than they could eat. (Yes, it's that infamous "pass the zucchini" time of year). We went for a short walk to visit with another friend a few sites away, and when we returned, we were shocked to see that the neighbor's campsite was abandoned with a fire left burning in the fire pit. This was a fire, with flames visible from our site, not just smoldering coals.

It took me only a few minutes to douse the fire with water, stir the pit, and ensure it was cold to the touch, but the recklessness lingered in my mind. What if we hadn't been there? The consequences could have been disastrous, affecting the surrounding fauna and other innocent campers enjoying their time in nature.

In this issue, we delve deeper into how you can minimize your campfire impact, keeping our camping spots pristine for generations to come. We're all in this together, sharing the same love for teardrops, squaredrops, and tiny camping adventures. It's our collective responsibility to protect the spots that give us so much joy.

Enjoy the read, and as always, camp responsibly. ■

Happy travels and stay safe
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Lisa Adams
Editor
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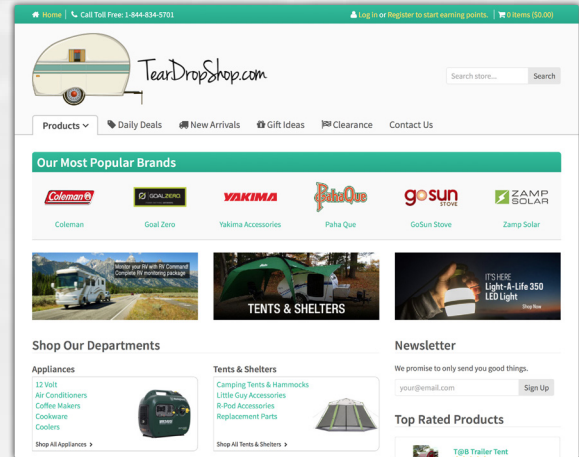
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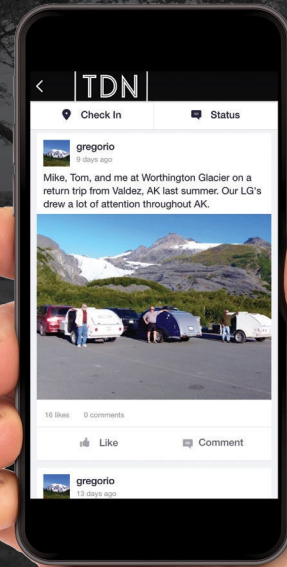
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KITCHEN ON WHEELS

TRAVEL DAY MEAL IDEAS

Hitting the open road in your teardrop or squaredrop camper is all about freedom, exploration, and of course, good eats. But let's be honest, when you're covering miles, itching to set up camp, or just grinding to get home, spending hours cooking isn't always on the itinerary; but we're also not fans of fast food. Fear not, foodies! We're going to dive into the art of "travel day foods" - meals that require little to no cooking, but are just a quick reheat away from being delicious. Whether you're at a scenic overlook, rest stop, or gas station - like our most recent trip, these meals will keep you belly full and your spirits high, all while ensuring you make the most of your journey.

While coming home from the Cool Tears Crawl last month, we stopped at a mid-Michigan gas station to fuel up the truck and our bodies. A few days prior, we had picked up some bagels from L'Chayim Delicatessen in Beulah, Michigan. I pulled out our good non-stick saute pan so I could toast the bagels. We already had a lot of fresh vegetables, so the plan was to make veggie and cheese filled toasted bagels. The sandwiches were delicious and relatively healthy, well, as healthy as a huge bagel can be!

In between bites, Lisa was working to get things cleaned up and put away so we could quickly get back on the road. She set the pan on the nearby light post base, which was cement, to cool; unhooked the propane from the stove, and slid the stove back into place under the countertop. A few minutes later, we were back on the road - so happy with our success in such a short stop on our travels home. Fifty miles later, Lisa realized that the good, non-stick saute pan was still cooling back on the light post base at the gas station! We didn't turn back, and we felt terrible for littering, leaving something for another soul to either pick up or clean up, and selfishly, for losing my good egg flipping pan.

This memory was the catalyst for this article on eating well, even on travel days. These are some of our favorite ways to eat well on travel days, even if our stoppage time is short. Send me an email at Anne@cooltears.com if you'd like to share your ideas in an upcoming issue of Cool Tears.

Suggestions for travel days

- Do food prep at home or your last day at camp so you can quickly pull together meals and get out of the galley. Wash lettuce and keep it wrapped in a towel in your fridge or cooler. Wash, dice, chop, any cheeses or veggies that you might want on a sandwich before leaving.
- Take advantage of local ingredients like bread or farmstand veggies. These can be great additions to a quick sandwich.
- Wraps or tortillas are a favorite go-to travel day meal for us and they can be individualized to include what each person loves. We use hummus as a base layer and then pile on fresh or pre-roasted veggies, like sweet potatoes, sweet peppers, squash, brussels sprouts, and onions and add chopped olives for a bit of salty goodness. If hummus isn't your favorite, spread on your favorite whipped cream cheese.
- At home, we often vacuum seal and freeze leftovers after we're both tired of eating something for a few days. We freeze them flat and in individual portions, so they don't take up much space in the fridge or cooler. These are also a cinch to reheat in a pot of boiling water. The best part?! Virtually, no clean up! Just don't forget to put your pan back in the galley when it's cooled!

So there you have it, a mouth-watering guide to eating well on the road, even when time is of the essence. As for Lisa's "great pan caper," let's just say that we're adding "double-check the cooking gear" to our pre-departure checklist. Happy trails and even happier eating! ■



Easy veggie wraps and a frozen soup that we can reheat in a pan of boiling water without dirtying the pan!



The last bagel sandwich that non-stick pan cooked.

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Navigating Extreme Expeditions and Crafting the Ideal Teardrop

By **LISA ADAMS**

What do you get when you cross a seasoned adventurer with a penchant for woodworking and travel? Meet Bobby, an Australian explorer who has taken on challenges from the Arctic to climbing Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa and is now diving into a new adventure - building a teardrop trailer! In this interview, we'll cover how his passion for physical challenges is shaping this latest endeavor and what he's looking forward to once it's complete.

Adventure/Travel

Question: *What sparked your interest in adventure and extreme environments, especially considering your first big expedition was at age 15?*

Bobby: I think I just fell into it to be honest. When I first won the chance to go to the North Pole at 15, I had never climbed or hiked much, but that opportunity opened me up to how incredible the natural world really can be. I remember having to breathe on our tent zips to defrost them so we could get out of the tent, just thinking "Wow, the world is pretty wild"!

Question: *You've tackled some physically demanding experiences, like cycling non-stop from Adelaide to Melbourne and kayaking to Papua New Guinea. How did you prepare for such intense adventures?*

Bobby: I got asked this a lot when I was working as a guide. I would break down my preparations in a few different areas and then make sure I gave each one of them the appropriate time and thought. I think the perfect successful expedition comes down to 30% physical fitness, 30% having the right equipment, 30% your mental strength, and then about 10% luck. Sometimes no matter how prepared you are, you are just unlucky! The other 3 areas are absolutely within our control though, so ensuring you are as physically fit as possible, you have the correct equipment for what you are about to tackle, and you are mentally prepared for what you are about to put yourself through, really are key. I think that last one, the mental 30% is one of the most overlooked parts of

an expedition. Making sure you are prepared for when things don't go right is the most important preparation possible, I think.

Question: *What's the most challenging situation you've faced during your adventures, and how did you overcome it?*

Bobby: It's really hard to narrow down just one that is the "most challenging" as they all have their own different conditions. I have had clients break legs, have heart attacks,



put bones through their skin, and many other crazy injuries whilst working as a guide. I think they are the most challenging situations as you then not only have to look after yourself, but also someone who has much higher needs than you. That balance of keeping yourself safe, whilst giving everything possible to the rescue/evacuation is a really fine line to balance. In terms of how to overcome that, it really is just about taking a deep breath,

working out what parts of the situation are within your control and what are not. One of my favourite sayings is "You can't stop the rain, but you can put up a tent." So working out what you can do to improve the situation, and taking steps towards those things logically and calmly is the way to get through them.

Question: *You currently work in the travel industry. How does your personal passion for exploration influence your profession advice to clients?*

Bobby: I absolutely love what I do now. Although I have "hung up the boots" in terms of guiding trips, I now have the opportunity to help people choose and book the adventure that is right for them. I think my passion and influence helps clients realise that things they thought were out of their reach, are actually possible. I have a client that came to me once asking: "Is it possible for someone like me to climb Mt Kilimanjaro"?.... well, now 4 years later, he stood on top of Mt Everest this year. I think just giving clients belief in what they can achieve is probably the biggest thing I bring into my professional life now.

Teardrop Trailer Building

Question: *What motivated you to start building your teardrop?*

Bobby: I have always loved woodworking, to the point many think it's an obsession. When I started thinking about how we could still go on adventures but with slightly more comfort, the teardrop was a logical choice. My wife once said when packing "All we

need is somewhere to eat and somewhere to sleep?" and I think that is the perfect reason for wanting a teardrop. You get both of those



things, in comfort and style!

Question: You mentioned to me that you're already thinking about improvements for a second trailer. What inspired the design of the one you are building now? Can you share some of the unique features that you're incorporating into your teardrop?

Bobby: I have been hugely inspired by a number of peoples' builds all over the world. People like Reiner Gudd (Aus), Jay Poore (USA), Tony Latham (USA) and the team at Wander Tears have all had a part in inspiring the design, and how I went about getting it all built. Without passionate people like that in the community, I don't think I would have made the decision! In terms of unique features, for me the real heart of the camper is the kitchen. We spent a lot of time thinking about how we would use the trailer, what we would cook, how we would cook it, and then built a trailer around those concepts. We have a slide in bench extension that has a built-in wind break for our portable gas cooker, an underfloor water tank, fridge slide and loads of storage that has all been built with a very specific use case in mind. I think it's so easy for people to just

throw in a bench and call it done, but the kitchen is really what makes a teardrop great in my eyes.

Question: With your experience in extreme conditions, are you planning to make the teardrop more robust or equipped for adventure?



Bobby: It's funny, actually not! Everyone assumes that, but the teardrop for us is about heading to our favourite local hiking or climbing spots and relaxing for a long weekend. 95% of these areas are easily accessible by vehicle and then we hike in from there, so there wasn't really much need for anything offroad or robust. I certainly played with the idea of making something completely off-road capable, but decided that something light and easy to move around would be more

beneficial to the way we plan to use it. Sorry if that's a boring answer!



Question: *How long has the building process been so far and have you faced any unexpected challenges? If so, how did you overcome them?*

Bobby: Every stage had some curveball thrown at me. I accidentally made the trailer base about 25mm (1 inch) wider than my plan. I thought it was no issue as I would just adjust other things as I built. The issue was that it was then wider than the largest sheet of aluminium that I could source so I had to work out the joining of sheets. That was probably the most annoying challenge! It showed me that despite having an incredibly robust and well thought out design that was built around the accessible materials, if you don't stick to it

then your planning is useless!

Your Teardrop Lifestyle

Question: *You have a penchant for physically demanding experiences, so how does a teardrop trailer fit into that adventurous lifestyle?*

Bobby: The teardrop makes adventures so much easier. Instead of spending hours packing, unpacking, cleaning and drying tents etc, we can just hook up the trailer and go! It means so much more time for adventures and less time planning. Since it's so much easier, it makes us more likely to want to just pop away for the weekend as the effort involved is so much less.

Question: *Given your love for trekking and abseiling (rappelling), will the teardrop serve as a mobile base camp for those adventures?*

Bobby: Absolutely! The sink tap pulls out and doubles as a bush shower so we can clean up when we get back to camp covered in dirt from those adventures. It has plenty of storage for climbing gear and so it is the perfect little base camp unit!

Question: *Are there any particular destinations you're excited to visit once the teardrop is complete?*

Bobby: The Blue Mountains which are about 2 hours from Sydney are absolutely incredible and we can't wait to get the trailer out there for a week or two. It's about a 10 hour drive from where we are in Brisbane, Aus, so it gives us the chance to do the drive over a couple of days and really put the trailer



through its paces!

Question: *You and your wife love to travel, and between the two of you, you've been to many countries. Do you have any plans to ship the completed teardrop to another continent to do some exploring?*

Bobby: Great question! Since Glenna (wife) is from the US, we do spend a lot of time there. I did have a look into shipping it over and I think it would actually be more economical to take a month or two, build one there, explore as much as we like and then sell it again! Or, leave it at the family's house for the next time we want to head back. Who said you can't have a teardrop on each continent!

Question: *What's one travel or adventure experience you're yet to tackle but is on your bucket list?*

Bobby: There is a huge amount of South America that is yet to be explored by both my wife and I. I think it would be an amazing continent to explore in a teardrop so that would certainly be an adventure. I would love to take 6 months to hit the road down there and see where life takes us! Saying that, I think the biggest adventure is going to be starting a family at some stage in the future. I think all of these experiences would bring on a whole new light to do with children so I think that is probably one that I am most looking forward to at some point moving forward.

Personal

Question: *You've done fundraising through*

some of your adventures. Are there any causes you're particularly passionate about that you'd like to support in the future?

Bobby: Absolutely! Men's mental health is such an important cause for me. Growing up in regional Australia guys were always taught to be "tough" and "Manly" and it just leads to people not dealing with their emotions and not talking about issues they are facing. As a male between 30 and 40 in Australia statistics say that suicide is the most likely way for me to die, and yet it is so unbelievably preventable! So for any guys out there that are struggling, PLEASE reach out for help as the world is a better place with you in it!

Bonus Question!

Question: *Any tips or advice for someone looking to balance a lifestyle filled with both adventure and responsibilities, much like you have managed?*

Bobby: 3 things...

1. Don't be afraid. We all get told so much about what could go wrong and we see so much negativity in the media, but always remember that the world is an incredible place and people are inherently good. Don't be afraid to take risks, just make sure they are calculated and you know how to mitigate the dangers. Don't let fear stop you from achieving what is possible.
2. Value people. In the professional and personal world, the most important thing you can maintain and build is your personal network. If you build strong relationships, and put value and time into maintaining those relationships,

then you will have a network all over the world. This network will be vital if you want success in both adventure and profession. Having a strong relationship with your boss or company may allow you to successfully ask for that extra time off... having a great relationship with someone you met in another country may give you free accommodation when you want to travel there, all that's left then is an airfare! Relationships got you half the way...

3. Say yes. It might seem logical, but when an opportunity presents itself, just say yes. Worry about the how later! "Do you want to kayak to PNG? - YES" - At that stage I had never really been in a sea kayak... but I had time to work out how, and I wasn't afraid of the work it was going to take to get there. Say yes, take the opportunity and then work out the how later.

Editor's Note: I want to thank Bobby for his candor during our interview.

Talking about mental health shouldn't be taboo, especially among men. The stigma that surrounds it often deters individuals from seeking the support they need. Many organizations offer resources specifically for men, focusing on issues that are often less talked about in mainstream mental health discourse. If you're struggling, there are places you can go and people you can talk to who specialize in men's mental health, Bobby pointed out.

He encapsulates the spirit of modern-day adventure, proving you don't have to choose

between a life of thrills and one of responsibility. From fundraising for causes close to his heart to building a teardrop perfect for weekend getaways, Bobby shows us that when you embrace every opportunity, you don't just explore the world - you also find your place in it.

Here is a list of some organizations dedicated to men's mental health:

<https://us.movember.com/mens-health/mental-health>

<https://www.faceitfoundation.org/>

<https://mantherapy.org>

<https://www.manup.how>

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>

<https://themancave.life/>

<https://www.topblokes.org.au/> - geared towards boys/men aged 10 - 24 ■



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Harvest Hosts is a membership program that provides access to a network of wineries, farms, breweries, museums and other unique attractions that invite RVers to visit and stay overnight. Harvest Hosts now allows clamshell and teardrop trailers, but you may NOT use your outdoor cooking facility. Click the logo below to get 15% off the regular yearly price. We've stayed at breweries, wineries, farms, and art studios in our local area as well as across the country.



October - November 2023 Teardrop, Squaredrop, and DIY Camper Gatherings



By **COOL TEARS STAFF**

As a dedicated team at Cool Tears, we strive to keep you informed about upcoming events and gatherings. However, we recognize that we can't be everywhere at once. That's where you come in! We rely on the contributions of our community to help us discover new stories, uncover exciting events, and submit articles that will captivate and inspire the broader teardrop camping community.

Attending gatherings with like-minded individuals opens up a world of possibilities. These meet-ups provide an invaluable opportunity to connect with fellow teardrop or squaredrop camper owners, exchange tips and tricks, and share the joy of camping in our specialized campers. It's a chance to learn from one another and explore the diverse ways of maximizing the potential of your tiny camper.

So, whether you're a seasoned camper or just starting your journey, consider joining one or more of these upcoming events and gatherings. These opportunities to connect with fellow enthusiasts can enhance your camping experience, ignite your sense of adventure, and create memories that will last a lifetime. Together, let's celebrate the joy of teardrop and squaredrop camping and build a vibrant community who share a passion for the great outdoors!

Check out these upcoming tiny camper events, and if you attend one, let us help you share your experience with our readers!

September 28 - October 2

NuCamp, 3rd Annual New England Rally, Country Aire Campground, Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts

October 5 - 8

Buckeye Chapter, Fall Gathering, Mosquito Lake State Park, Cortland, Ohio

Land of Lincoln Tearjerkers, Geneseo Campground, Geneseo, Illinois

Old Dominion Chapter, First Landing Fun of

the Beach, First Landing State Park, Virginia Beach, Virginia

October 6 - 8

Norcal Chapter, Oktoberfest, Indian Grinding Rock State Historic Park, Pine Grove, California

October 12 - 15

Badger State Chapter, Fall Gathering, Wyalusing State Park, Bagley, Wisconsin

Bluegrass Chapter, Fall Gathering, Cave Creek Campgrounds, Falls of Rough, Kentucky

Heartland Tearjerkers, Halloween Gathering, Pomme de Terre State Park, Pittsburg, Missouri

October 12 - 16

Off Grid Trailers, Moonlanding II: A Total Eclipse of the Van, Ramah, New Mexico

October 13 - 15

Southern Ontario, Arrowhead Provincial Park, Huntsville, Ontario, Canada

October 15 - 19

Rustic Trail Teardrops, G6 Spooktacular, Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds, Hiawassee, Georgia

October 19 - 22

Liberty Bell Chapter, "Fall in the Valley," Poe Valley State Park, Penn Township, Pennsylvania

Southwest Teardrop & Vintage Trailer, 1st Annual Fall Wi-Camp-A-Lotta: Up, Up & Away: Birds and Balloons, Lake Wister State Park, Wister, Oklahoma

October 26 - 29

DIY Teardrop Campers Community, 3rd Annual "Camping on a Porch," Edgar Evins State Park, Silver Point, Tennessee

October 27 - 29

Chesapeake Bay Chapter, Smallwood State Park, Maryland

Sooner State Chapter, "Spooks in the Campground," Mountain Shade Campground, Mountain Park, Oklahoma

Southwest Teardrop & Vintage Trailer, Halloween 2023, Tyler State Park, Lindale, Texas

November 2 - 5

Bluegrass Chapter, "Fall V2.0," Corbin/Laurel Lake KOA Journey, Corbin, Kentucky

Creative TearDrop and Vintage Campers, Gathering of the Times, Pine Mountain RV Resort, Pine Mountain, Georgia

November 9 - 12

Chesapeake Bay, Kiptopeke State Park, Virginia

Southwest Teardrop & Vintage Trailer, Veterans Day Campout, Petit Jean State Park, Adona, Arkansas

November 30 - December 4

A Tiny Christmas Campout, Big Lagoon State Park Campground, Pensacola, Florida ■

Did you know that Cool Tears has a teardrop for rent? There are still dates available for the fall season. [Click here to go directly to our rental link.](#)

Note: We are located in southwest Michigan.



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tim Elinski, Founder of Pin Drop Travel Trailers, Takes Top Honors at Moonshot's 2023 AZ Pioneer Pitch Tour

Miami, Arizona, September 6, 2023 – Pin Drop Travel Trailers today announced that its founder, Tim Elinski, has clinched first place in the 2023 AZ Pioneer Pitch Tour organized by Moonshot. The prestigious state-wide competition, recognized for spotlighting top-notch innovation and entrepreneurship, awarded Elinski the honor following a riveting presentation of Pin Drop's unique travel trailers. The pitch emphasized the company's design sophistication, quality, and commitment to sustainable recreation.

The AZ Pioneer Pitch Tour, which canvassed 10 cities across Arizona, initially discovered Elinski's potential during its Globe/Miami stop in March. Subsequently selected for the statewide competition in July, Elinski refined his pitch to secure the win, further establishing Pin Drop Travel Trailers as a leader in reimagining the travel and outdoor industry.

Fueled by a mission for environmental sustainability and user-centered design, Pin Drop's solar-powered, self-contained travel trailers have garnered a passionate following among travel and outdoor aficionados nationwide.

"Moonshot's Pioneer Pitch Tour serves as a critical platform for rising entrepreneurs in rural and underserved Arizona areas," said Elinski. "Winning this award is not only a personal accomplishment but also a testament to our team's dedication to delivering the best travel trailers on the market. It reinforces our commitment to making a positive economic impact on our home base, the historic town of Miami, Arizona."

About Moonshot's Pioneer Pitch Tour:

The Moonshot Pioneer Pitch Tour is a leading competition engineered to identify and promote entrepreneurs in rural and underserved regions of Arizona. The tour provides a forum for entrepreneurs to present their visions, gain priceless mentorship, and network with

experienced investors. For more details, visit www.moonshotaz.com.

About Pin Drop Travel Trailers:

Founded by Tim Elinski, Pin Drop Travel Trailers is revolutionizing the outdoor travel landscape. The company's trailers blend 1930s teardrop design with modern amenities and exceptional craftsmanship. Pin Drop Travel Trailers offer a unique, eco-friendly travel experience. For more details, visit www.pindroptraveltrailers.com.





Capture the Great Outdoors: Enter the 2024 Cool Tears and Tiny Campers Calendar Contest

By **ANNE COX**

Ready to make our fourth annual calendar contest a hit? We need your stunning photos of teardrops, squaredrops, and other tiny campers to grace the pages of our 2023 Cool Tears and Tiny Campers calendar.

We're scouting for show-stopping photos that capture the essence of tiny campers set against awe-inspiring landscapes. We've featured winners from a host of countries, including the US, Canada, Australia, the UK, Spain, and Norway. Snag one of the top 13 spots, and not only will your photo be published, but you'll also score a free calendar. Are you a Patreon patron? You'll get a complimentary calendar, too, just like last year. Plus, your entries might make it into the Cool Tears and Tiny Campers Magazine or get featured on our social media channels.

Contest Timing: Send in your snapshots by October 14, 2023.

The Nitty Gritty Rules:

- Where to shoot: Outdoors, where the magic happens!
- Quality Matters: High-resolution digital images only, folks.
- Size: A minimum of 1MB; the bigger, the better. Most smartphones fit the bill.
- Filters: Feel free to tweak or filter your pics before sending.
- What Not to Submit: No negatives, printed photos, or links to online galleries.
- Orientation: Landscape mode, please. If you're using a phone, flip it sideways.
- Info to Include: Your name, the shot's location, whether the camper is DIY or store-bought, and the photo title (if you've got one).

By sending us your photos, you're giving Cool Tears the green light to use them across our media platforms via a royalty-free perpetual license. Don't worry; we'll give you photo creds. Also, make sure you've got the okay from everyone visible or any private property captured in your snaps. We'll take care of blurring out license plates.

Submit to: Anne@cooltears.com

Key Dates:

Submission Deadline: October 14, 2023

Winner Notification: October 23, 2023

Calendar Orders: Site goes live October 28, 2023

Shipping Starts: Mid-November

Ready, set, shoot! ■

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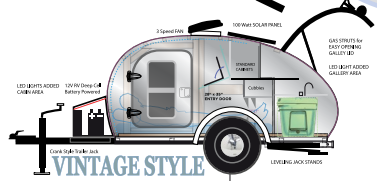
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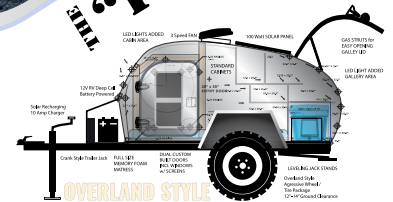
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KORI ★★★★★

"Nathan at second wind trailers was a dream to work with! From the second I inquired about getting a freedom trailer made by him, he was very informative and friendly. He kept me in the loop every step of the way by sending pictures and videos of the build. It was such a cool experience seeing it being built from the ground up"



CHECK OUT MORE ON OUR WEBSITE:

SCAN THIS TO SEE MORE

www.SecondWindTrailers.com



During our Cool Tears Crawl, we had a breakfast potluck on day 4. Anne was busy making crepes and Lisa was preparing to bake blueberry and chocolate chip muffins/bread in the Omnia Stovetop Oven.

In our next issue, we'll have an article highlighting the first Cool Tears Crawl/Campout.

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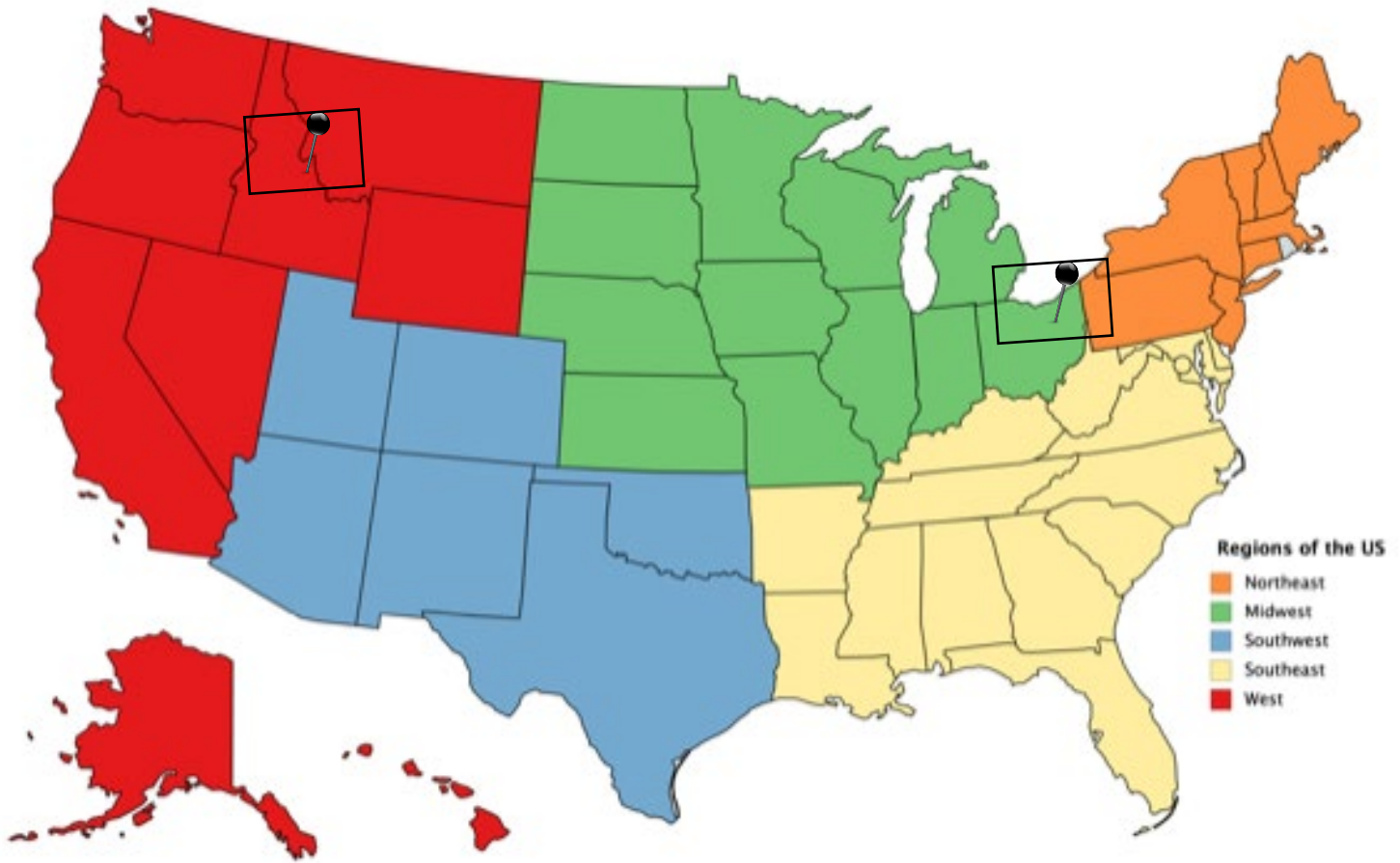
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Regional Camping Spotlight: Scenic Autumn Drives

By **COOL TEARS STAFF**

Ready for a journey that combines vibrant autumn colors with the rustic charm of teardrop camping? This season, pack up and hit the road to experience the grandeur of fall foliage in two distinct, yet equally mesmerizing, regions of the US. First up, we've got the Salmon River Scenic Byway in Idaho—a ribbon of road that meanders alongside the "River of No Return," flanked by hills and mountains adorned in a kaleidoscope of fall colors. Imagine setting up your teardrop camper along the riverbanks, stepping out into the crisp air, and soaking in views of gold and crimson leaves reflecting off the water.

But don't stop there! For those based in the Midwest or looking for an eastern adventure, the Ohio and Erie Canalway America's Byway offers another lens through which to view the season's splendor. (Lisa grew up in northeast Ohio, so some of this area was her playground before moving to Michigan.) As you traverse the historic route, you'll find charming communities, old towpaths, and vibrant forests showcasing their autumnal palette. The laid-back pace is ideal for teardrop campers, giving you the flexibility to pull over at scenic spots for that picture-perfect snapshot or even spend the night beneath a canopy of stars and leaves.

Whether you're captivated by the rugged beauty of Idaho or drawn to the rich history of Ohio, these routes offer the perfect backdrop for teardrop and squaredrop enthusiasts to immerse themselves in the magic of fall. So, which byway will you take to celebrate the season?

Idaho's Salmon River Scenic Byway

So you're gearing up for a road trip with your tiny camper and looking for the ultimate outdoor experience? Look no further than Idaho's Salmon River Scenic Byway—a 161-mile stretch of natural wonder that you won't want to miss.

Starting from the Montana state line at the Lost Trail Pass and traveling down to Challis via U.S. 93, then traveling southwest towards Stanley, this route follows the Salmon River, also called the “River of No Return.” It’s a one-stop shop for adventure, history, and some of the most eye-popping scenery of the majestic Sawtooth Mountains you’ll ever encounter.

Picture this: You're cruising along the road, surrounded by the awe-inspiring Salmon- Challis National Forests. Out of nowhere, you spot a moose or perhaps an elk. The animal kingdom is just as much a part of this byway as the winding asphalt beneath your wheels. And don't forget the views. Large stands of aspen trees paint the landscape in a vivid palette of burnt yellows, especially during the fall.

When it comes to pit stops, this route has got you covered. The Sacajawea Interpretive, Cultural and Educational Center is a must-visit for a deep dive into the region's history. Looking for some spookiness? Ghost towns of Custer, Bayhorse, and Bonanza await at the Land of Yankee Fork State Park. And for nature lovers, Redfish Lake is the crown jewel, offering activities from hiking to fishing. Got a tiny camper? You can park near Goldbug Hot Springs, and after a 2-mile hike, enjoy a relaxing soak surrounded by Idaho's scenic beauty.

You'll want to explore at least a week to take it all in—yes, it's that good. With an endless list of superlatives, this scenic byway offers a captivating blend of wilderness, history, and the type of serenity you can only find deep in nature's grasp.

Other Special Attractions

There are several other historic byways that are linked that can add to your trip, such as: Ponderosa Pine Scenic Byway, Sawtooth Scenic Byway, Sacajawea Historic Byway, and Peaks to Craters Scenic Byway



Salmon River north of Carmen, Idaho

Camping

The Salmon River Campground is a first-come, first-serve campground near Stanley and it is a great jumping off point for exploring the hot springs in the area. The Salmon-Challis National Forest offers dispersed camping, up to 300 feet from an open road, at no charge

Primary activities in the area: Fly fishing the Salmon River, rafting, climbing (with and without aid), wildlife viewing: bighorn sheep, elk, mule deer, mountain goats, black bears, and moose all call the area home.



Pro Tip: The river offers unmatched habitat for several native fish including wild steelhead, Chinook salmon, and rainbow trout.



Goldbug Hot Springs, Idaho

Ohio and Erie Canalway America's Byway

"Is that a 19th-century lock?" "Did we just pass a canal boat replica?" Driving down the Ohio and Erie Canalway America's Byway, such questions are as likely to pop up as the scenic vistas that greet you at every turn. This incredible byway offers 110 miles of history, culture, and natural beauty, taking you from Cleveland to New Philadelphia, Ohio. The Ohio & Erie Canalway celebrates the significance of the canal and its legacy to the region and the country.

The byway promises an immersive experience, tracing the Ohio and Erie Canal's history, which once served as a vital commercial artery from the mid 1820's to the mid 1910's. As you navigate the road, the vibrant Towpath Trail runs parallel and currently spans 90 miles, (although 101 are planned,) inviting explorers to hike or bike their way through the scenery. More than 2.5 million people explore parts of the Towpath Trail each year.

Other Special Attractions

Hale Farm & Village: A living history museum where you can experience life as it was in the 19th-century Western Reserve. The authenticity here is awe-inspiring, from the 32 historic structures, craft and trade demonstrations, farm animals, and costumed interpreters.

Brandywine Falls: Hike to the 63-foot falls located about a mile west of the Towpath Trail in the village of Peninsula.

Cuyahoga Valley National Park: Spanning over 33,000 acres, the park is a natural oasis amid urban landscapes. Activities include hiking, bird-watching, and taking in the powerful spectacle of the Brandywine and Blue Hen Falls. Lisa highly recommends spending a large portion of your time exploring the Cuyahoga Valley National Park, as this was her playground during her late teens to late 20's. She explored the entire area on foot or bicycle on the Towpath Trail, often riding from where she lived in Akron to Peninsula to meet friends for dinner at the Winking Lizard Tavern in Peninsula, before riding home, with a belly full of chicken wings and a beer from somewhere around the world.



Towpath Trail, Cuyahoga National Park, Ohio

Canal Fulton: This historic town offers horse drawn canal boat rides that allow you to relive the bygone era when canals were the superhighways of their day.

Expect to see a kaleidoscope of colors in the fall with hues of maroon, burnt orange, and mustard yellow as the foliage transforms. If you've always heard that Ohio is flat and boring to drive through, then you've never been to this part of the state. The rolling hills and river valleys are a pleasant surprise to many that think Ohio is just filled with flat cornfields.

Plan to spend at least 3 -4 days exploring the area because amidst the historical locks, beautiful parks, and quaint towns, you'll encounter charming shops, farmers' markets, and delightful eateries that offer farm-to-table experiences, others in your group may want to visit the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland or the Pro Football Hall of Fame, in Canton. Whether you're an outdoor enthusiast, history buff, or someone just looking for a weekend escape, the Ohio and Erie Canalway America's Byway is an adventure waiting to happen.

So, gear up for a road trip that not only promises unparalleled scenery but also a journey back in time, offering a glimpse of America's industrial infancy.



Lock remnant, Ohio & Erie Canal, Ohio

Primary activities in the area: Hiking, biking, fishing, bird watching, visiting the historic villages, hiking to the numerous waterfalls, and seeing the operational locks!

Camping

Camping within the Scenic Canalway corridor is limited, but these campgrounds are all within 10 miles of the main byway.

Silver Springs Campground, just east of Peninsula

KOA Streetsboro - 10 miles east of Peninsula

Nimisila Reservoir Metro Park - just south of Akron

Bear Creek Resort Ranch - a Canton KOA

Pro Tip: It should be noted that if you're able, biking a large portion of the Towpath Trail will give you the best views of the area. There are now many places to camp along the length of the Towpath Trail, which were not available years ago when Lisa explored the area. No need to take your bike, there are plenty of rentals along the Towpath. ■





Above photo submitted by Sonja Davis and bottom photo by Ralph Botticelli



Leave No Trace - Minimize Campfire Impacts: The Art of the Ethical Flame

By LISA ADAMS

The cozy glow of a campfire often encapsulates the quintessential camping experience, but it does come at a cost. According to the National Interagency Fire Center, there were 61,429 human-caused wildfires in the US in 2022, as opposed to just 7467 caused by lightning. Humans cause an average of 87% of all wildfires each year, most of which are preventable. As teardrop and squaredrop camper enthusiasts, responsible fire management is a must. This guide dives into the fifth principle of Leave No Trace—minimize campfire impacts—offering tips and recommendations for both newbies and seasoned tiny-camper travelers.



Why Minimize Campfire Impacts?

When it comes to wildfires, the statistics are staggering for the US. Teardrop campers with outdoor kitchen galleys are not exempt from these risks and the risk goes up exponentially if the preferred method of cooking is over a campfire. Careless wood collection can wreak havoc on local ecosystems.

Determining the Need for a Fire

A few months ago, I picked up a few friends from a nearby state park and we were going out to dinner. The temperatures that week were over 90°F each day and mid 70's°F at night, which is very warm for Michigan. We had no desire to sit at the campsite longer than needed. Sitting in an air conditioned restaurant was the first reprieve for them from the heat. Just before arriving at their campsite, there was a group of older teen boys sitting around the campfire. They looked miserable sweltering near the fire, with their pink, sunburned bodies, sitting at the picnic table that was pulled near the firepit.

Before striking that match, consider whether a fire is necessary. Factor in the fire triangle: heat (outside temperature), fuel (dry debris in the immediate area), oxygen (windy). If it's a hot day, there are plenty of dry, dead leaves, plants, or trees in the area, or it's

windy, these conditions could quickly escalate a small campfire into a wildfire.

Responsible Campfire Tips

Choose the Right Spot

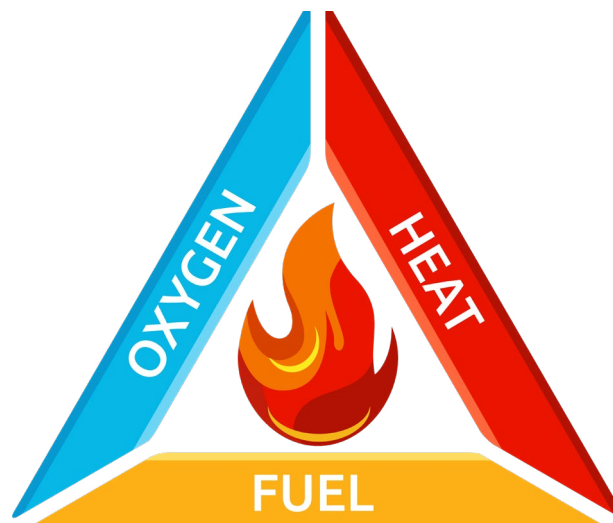
Ensure you're in a designated campfire area, and that there is ample room between the area, your teardrop, and any awnings or tents that are deployed. If you have a portable fire pit, that's a bonus for minimizing ground impact.

Keep It Small, Keep It Safe

A small fire is not only easier to control but also reduces the demand on local wood supplies. Aim for pieces no larger than the diameter of an adult wrist that can be easily broken by hand. Importantly, never leave the fire unattended, keep wood and other fuel sources away from it, and have sufficient water on hand for emergencies.

Current Fire Threat Information

Stay updated on the current fire threats by checking reliable sources like the National Interagency Fire Center (<https://www.nifc.gov/fire-information/nfn>) or your local forestry department's website.





Use Existing Fire Rings and Wood Gathering Ethics

Always use existing fire rings when possible to minimize the land scarring. When gathering wood, keep in mind that standing trees, dead or alive, serve as habitats. Opt for dead and down wood as it burns quickly and leaves less impact.

Source Local Firewood: Here's Why

Bringing your own firewood could introduce invasive species to a new area. Stick to local wood, sourced within a 50-mile radius of your campsite. Note that some state parks or campgrounds may require that you purchase wood either in the campground or within a smaller radius. This protects the ecosystem and supports local businesses.

Collect over a wide area away from your camp and use dry driftwood when near rivers or seashores, if allowed

If there is no existing fire ring, there are a few other options to consider.

Portable Fire Pit

- There are two main options for a portable fire pit, one being a propane



fire pit and the other a wood based fire. Propane fire pits are sometimes allowed even in areas that have fire bans, since they are easier to control. Fire pits, similar to Solo Stoves, are a good option if there is no existing fire pit to use.

Elevated, Pan Fire

- Another alternative is to use a fire pan, which is a metal tray. You can build a fire in this tray, which elevates it from the ground, reducing the impact on the soil. This



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method works well for both wood fires and charcoal. Ideally, the metal tray should have at least three inch high sides.

Extinguish Thoroughly and Clean Up

Burn all wood to white ash, then thoroughly soak it with water until the ashes are cool to the touch. In backcountry areas, scatter the ashes away from camp, or pack them out in river corridors. Scatter unused wood and replace any displaced soil to keep the area natural-looking. Lastly, never burn plastic or foil-lined wrappers; pack them out. If using an existing fire pit that has non-burnable materials in the pit when you arrive, please remove and dispose of the material.

Additional Safety Guidelines

Keep young people adequately supervised around fires and stoves. Follow all safety labels for stoves and use approved containers for fuel storage.

Conclusion

The allure of a campfire can be enjoyed responsibly. By adhering to Leave No Trace's fifth principle, teardrop camper enthusiasts can experience the warmth and charm of a campfire while ensuring the preservation of natural spaces for future generations.

Here are some videos to watch on campfire etiquette:

[PNW Camping with Some Rain & New Gear - Where's Wiseman](#)

[Boondocking with a New Ford Bronco & Cooking A Pizza Under Our Fire Pit - Where's Wiseman](#)



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