

# On the Road Again

## "A Guide for the Traveling Nature Photographer"

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Are you ready to shoot? Nature photographers need to be prepared and flexible. You never know what the weather might bring or when an opportunity might arise. Whether the trip is only as far as my backyard or several states away, I'm ready to go and shoot at a moment's notice. My camera gear is clean and ready and my clothes can be packed quickly and easily. Over the last seven years, I have created and refined a "modular" packing system. It enables me to pack quickly without having to worry about forgetting anything.

1. Camera Equipment packed in a LowePro ProTrekker AW Backpack
2. Laptop and Accessories packed in a LowePro Stealth AW Backpack
3. Pelican Case for ProTrekker when traveling by air
4. Waist or Belt Pack (replaces camera vest)
5. Duffel Bag
  - Camera Repair & Cleaning Kit
  - Chargers & Power Strip Pouch
  - Pack-It Cubes & Folders for clothes
  - Toiletry Organizer Travel Case

### **LowePro ProTrekker AW Backpack**

My camera gear has resided in a LowePro ProTrekker since the backpack was introduced several years ago.

- Nikon 600 f/4 AF-S or 400 f/2.8 AF-S
- 2 - Nikon D1Hs
- 80-400 VR AF
- 24-85 f/3.5-4.5G AF-S
- Tokina 17 AF
- SB-28DX flash & SC-17 cable
- Better Beamer flash extender
- Wimberley flash arm
- Digital Camera Battery & cable
- Small flashlight
- Gloves
- Hat
- D1 Generation (Moose Press)
- Photoflex 12" Litedisc (white/gold)
- Extra body cap & lens cap
- 2-4 packs of "HotHands" hand warmer packs

- Clear plastic garbage bag (serves as a rain hood for long lens and camera body)

All lenses are fitted with an 81a/A2 warming filter. I use Really Right Stuff quick release plates. The 600 & 400 lenses have the short profile Wimberley Adapter Plates attached.

### **LowePro Stealth AW Backpack**

As a digital photographer, my computer is a vital part of my equipment. It goes wherever I go. The LowePro Stealth Backpack holds my Dell Inspiron 5000 laptop along with power cords, mouse, telephone cord, binoculars, MP3 player + headset and inflatable neck pillow (great for long flights!). For software, I use DigitalPro image management (see review in Vol. 1, Issue 3), Adobe PhotoShop, PhotoRescue (see review in Vol. 2, Issue 1), Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and Outlook. These programs provide the tools I need to edit, label, file and submit images. I have the ability to create a slide presentation or write an article on the road if necessary. Internet connections are available just about everywhere so I can stay in touch via e-mail as well as submit images.

### **Pelican Case for ProTrekker**

I've flown from Mississippi to Alaska, Maine, California, Ohio and Michigan since September 11, 2001. My ProTrekker, safely stowed away inside the wheeled Pelican 1620 Case, has arrived safe and sound every time. Why would I opt to check my valuable camera equipment? Two reasons - airline restrictions and weight. The new airline restrictions limit the size and number of carry-on items. The less obvious reason is weight. I'm a 5'2", 50 year old woman who at times, struggled to lift the 40 pound ProTrekker into the over-head compartment. It was getting harder and harder for me to trot from gate to gate carrying the ProTrekker and 10 pound laptop case. At 20 pounds, the LowePro Stealth Backpack makes the trip much more enjoyable.

### **Waist or Belt Pack**

When I began shooting with the Nikon D1 two years ago, I gladly tossed my camera vest aside and donned a waist pack. Depending upon the length and nature of the shoot, I use either the smaller LowePro Orion Mini Belt Pack or the larger Kinesis Reporter's Waist Pack.

- TC-14e converter
- TC-20e converter
- DigitalPro CompactFlash Card Wallet with Lexar CF Cards
- 28-70 AF-S or Tokina 17mm lens (if needed)
- Ultra Brush
- Allen wrench for Really Right Stuff QR plates

- Micro-fiber lens cloth
- Moose filter
- Split ND filter
- Petzl Zipka headlamp for low-light conditions
- DigitalPro's Battery Case (slips over the belt of the waist pack)
- Lip moisturizer
- Purell Hand Sanitizer
- Mints
- Note Pad
- Pen
- Leatherman All-purpose tool
- Pack of Kleenex
- Business cards
- Money
- Folding, compact brush

Note: When I travel by air, I transfer the D1H (1), 80-400VR and 28-70 AF-S to the Stealth Backpack. The converters, Leatherman tool, battery case and filters are moved to the ProTrekker. This provides me more than enough room for a billfold, itinerary and plane tickets.

### **Camera Repair & Cleaning Kit**

My cleaning and repair kit is the key to keeping my camera equipment in top working condition. By cleaning my gear at the end of each day, I know that everything will be ready to go the next morning. I've found the soft-sided Eagle Creek Pack-It® Padded Quarter Cube to be an ideal case for stowing my tools and cleaning supplies.

- Lens Clens™ – Optical cleaning solution
- Lens Cleaning Tissues
- Cotton Swabs/Q-tips
- Large Blower Bulb
- Lens Pen
- Assortment of hex wrenches & jewelers screwdrivers
- White eraser or contact cleaner
- Camel hair art brush
- Small pair of needle nose pliers
- Super Glue
- Spare parts – screws, rubber eye cup, terminal/sync covers
- Lint-free diamond cloth

### **Chargers & Power Strip Pouch**

If you ever wondered what to do with that oblong accessory pouch that came with your ProTrekker, it's just the right size for holding electrical accessories. I

pack a surge protector power strip along with the chargers and cables for the Nikon D1H battery, re-chargeable batteries, cell phone and Digital Camera Battery and plenty of extra Lithium batteries for the flash.

### **High Sierra 36" Wheeled Duffel Bag**

The High Sierra duffel bag has served me well over the last two years. I place my Gitzo 1548 tripod, Wimberley head, Chargers/Power Strip Pouch, hiking boots and hip waders on top of a clean towel in the bottom compartment. This is really convenient if you need to get to your tripod and head quickly without having to dump all of your clothes out first. The towel can be used to cover up your camera bag in the car. The top compartment is great for clothing and toiletry kit. Although there are zippered pockets on either end of the bag, I leave these empty and utilize the extra space inside the top compartment provided when these end pockets are not used. The duffel bag has endured several flights over the last two years, including three trips to Alaska. Everything still looks good and functions like it did when I bought it. Don't forget to pack a large plastic bag for your dirty or wet boots! Use the laundry bags provided in the hotel closets for your dirty clothes.

### **Eagle Creek Pack-It® Cubes & Folders**

Some folks say I'm a Type A, obsessive-compulsive personality. Perhaps this is why I love Eagle Creek's Pack-It® system so much. It allows me to organize all my clothes into individual packs. I roll up all of my t-shirts and place them in a mesh, zip-up Cube. For slacks and jeans, I utilize their Pack-It Folder. For socks and underwear I use another Cube. Jacket/s and rain pants are placed around the Wimberley head and Gitzo tripod to provide extra protection.

When traveling by air, I pack a Half Cube with a jacket and change of clothes and toss it into the Stealth backpack. This makes things a lot easier if you are pulled aside for a random check at the airport.

### **Toiletry Organizer Travel Case**

My Travelon Cosmetic Organizer Travel Case is always packed with my usual toiletries so I don't worry about forgetting anything. My case consists of such essentials as toothpaste, toothbrush, deodorant, shampoo, conditioner, sunscreen, Vaseline, Anti-acid, Imodium, Tylenol, Neosporin, Rhuli Gel, insect repellent, band-aids, antihistamine, hair brush and Vaseline Intensive Care Advanced Healing lotion (blue label – does not contain ingredients that will harm camera equipment). Be sure to include a small sewing kit and nail clippers. If your cosmetic/toiletry case does not have a waterproof compartment, it's a good idea to place liquid items in a plastic bag. If they leak, they won't ruin anything.

### **When Traveling by Car**

I keep The Sac® and Groofwin window mount in my car at all times for those

quick, spur of the moment photo trips. Items such as maps, bird and mammal reference books are also kept in the car. When shooting with other photographers, we take a pair of Motorola Talkabout 2-way radios along.

### **Where to Next?**

Alaska? Florida? Smoky Mountain National Park? Wherever nature photography might take me next, I'm packed and ready to go.

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### **Links**

Digital Camera Battery - <http://www.digitalcamerabattery.com>  
Eagle Creek Pack-It® - <http://www.eaglecreek.com>  
High Sierra - <http://www.highsierrasport.com/home.html>  
Jewelers Supplies - <http://www.fdjtool.com/tools.html>  
Kinesis Reporter's Waist Pack - <http://www.kinesisgear.com/a.html#a633>  
Large Blower Bulb & Groofwin - <http://www.rue.com>  
Leatherman - <http://www.leatherman.com>  
Lens Clens - <http://www.lensclens.com>  
Lens Pen - <http://www.tssphoto.com/sp/lenspen/pen1.html>  
Lexus Digital Media (compact flash cards) - <http://www.digitalfilm.com>  
LowePro - <http://www.lovepro.com>  
Lucid Images Wildlife Photography - <http://www.wildlifephotonet.net>  
Lucid Images Web Site Design - <http://www.lucidimages.net>  
Moose Press, Moose Filter & DigitalPro - <http://www.moose395.net>  
Nikon - <http://www.nikonusa.com>  
Pelican 1620 Case - <http://www.casesbypelican.com>  
Petzl Zipka headlamp - <http://www.petzl.com>  
Really Right Stuff - <http://www.reallyrightstuff.com>  
The Sac® - <http://www.imagesunique.com>  
Tokina - <http://www.thkphoto.com>  
Travelon - <http://www.travelonbags.com/home.htm>  
Ultra Brush - [http://www.pecaproducts.com/ultra\\_brush.htm](http://www.pecaproducts.com/ultra_brush.htm)  
Wimberley Adapter Plates - <http://www.moose395.net/justout.html#adapter>

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