

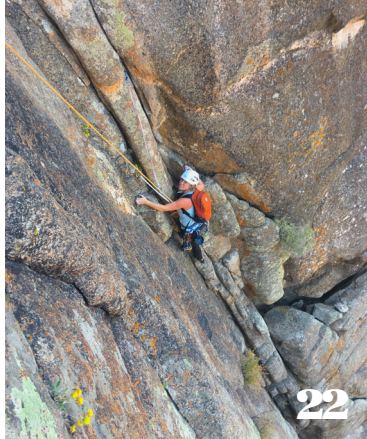


ADVENTURE PRO MAGAZINE

ADVENTUREPRO.US | ISSUE 14 | SPRING 2020

A HARD RESET **SAYING FAREWELL TO AN INTENSE SKI SEASON**
CANOEING LABYRINTH CANYON **THE HIGHS AND LOWS**
5 NAVIGATION APPS **YOU'RE LOST WITHOUT ONE!**
SILVERTON OR BUST **THE IRON HORSE BICYCLE CLASSIC**
FOR THE ADVENTURER IN ALL OF US

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ABOUT THE COVER

Mark Oppegard rappels into a canyon in Utah's North Wash area south of Hanksville.

PHOTO BY Terrance Siemon



Editor's Note: In the Winter 2020 issue the main photo on pages 24-25 in the story "Natives Outdoors: Rising in Winter" incorrectly credited Steven Recalma. The photo belongs to Isaiah Branch-Boyle. See more of Isaiah's work in this issue in "A Hard Reset" and on Instagram at @isaiahjboyle. We regret the error!

a **HARD** Reset

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ISAIAH BRANCH-BOYLE
STORY BY JOSH JESPERSEN

Powering down after a
mind-numbing season
of shredding Colorado's
most extreme slopes
beckons bikes, friendship,
fields of dandelions – and
more shredding!

Seasons change, and so do the courses of our lives. Sometimes we are so completely lost in all the chaos that it feels like there is no way to escape the fray. No way to dig ourselves out from under the pile of expectations we assign ourselves.

We can be buried so deep in the work that we create, all to chase a dream. Tasks and objectives and deadlines stack up,

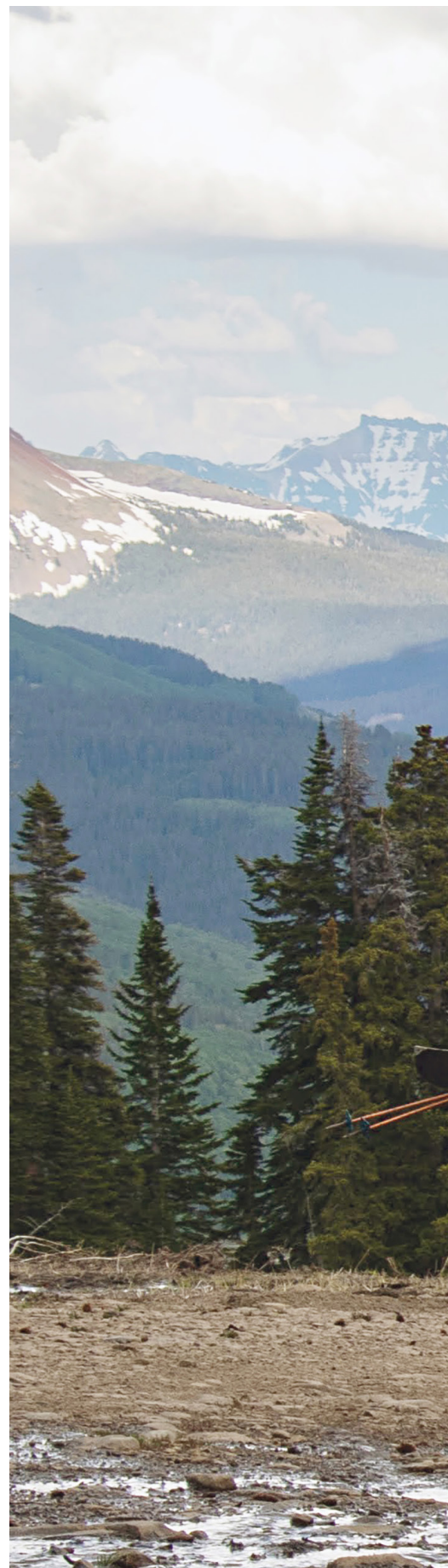
create a crushing weight that makes the end goal feel like a foggy distant shoreline in a sea of uncertainty. And we ask, will any of it be worth the grind? Will any of it be worth the countless days ending late into the night with the closing of the laptop minutes before passing out? Are the endless days of pushing our bodies to their limits worth it?

This is how I felt when emerging from winter last year. And now, as I recall my treatment for the mental and physical exhaustion I endured, I feel a warm breeze brush over me warming my skin. I smell a field of dandelions in full bloom, and I realize that the answer to my uneasy anticipation lies in the moments of epiphany captured in the midst of epic adventures.

You see, the winter of 2018-2019 was an absolutely historic event for the mountains of Colorado. Myself, Ricke Schuler, Isaiah Branch-Boyle and Michael "Ack" Ackerman had been completely immersed in a torrent of perpetual storms and prodigious avalanches. Ack had been working all season as a mountain guide around Red Mountain Pass in the midst of Mother Nature's fury and the rest of us had been relentlessly chasing snow around the state for my project "Journey Lines." This is a project culminating in a large format story-based guidebook covering Colorado and all its amazing ranges. It has a focus on showing Coloradans how incredible our own backyard is and I hope it can build



Entering the "Devil's Chair" on Lone Cone.



The author and Michael Ackerman
take in the last views as they
pedal south over Groundhog Peak.





The SAG vehicle isn't always luxury.



Maggie, the Rottweiler, leads up the shoulder of Lone Cone.



Ricke Shuler slicing up a steep line on Lone Cone.

more advocates for public land and climate through appreciation.

For all of us, the intensity of the season had snowballed into a mind-numbing normality. We all needed to ease up, take a break and power down for a reset. So we loaded up my 1989 Land Cruiser with fat bikes, splitboards, skis, glamping gear and a Rottweiler and headed to the San Miguel Mountains and its farthest west massifs. We were ready to say farewell to the intense ski season.

Our goal was to bike-split-ski-pack from near Groundhog Reservoir to the summit of Lone Cone, then to Middle Peak, and finish with Groundhog Peak. We were intent on shredding aesthetic lines off each high point.

A contemporary bunch of winter refugees looking for respite, we set off. And since we had my rig to accommodate our furry companion, why not load it up with beer and food to help us ease out of complacency? Our Journey Lines' crew had developed such a high acceptance of objective hazard, but we knew that was a dangerous trend that needed to be reeled in. We fully realized it when Schuler quipped to Ackerman while booting up the crux of a steep line, "we must be scaring you." Ack replied, frankly, "no I'm not scared, but you are scaring me." It was clear we all needed to detox and decompress from the season spent tip-toeing around carnivorous snow slopes. We

needed to slow down, take in the greening grass and springtime pleasures, while allowing pedaling through broad meadows to be our muse.

We traveled at the whims of our well-conditioned bodies. Each day's recipe for a well-concocted cathartic experience started with a dawn awakening, followed by a slow breakfast. Then we'd start off on foot, heading out from camp through musty undergrowth catching its first breaths of air in months. Day by day the seasonal blanket of snow was losing its grip.

Emerging from tree-line each day we'd enter a craggy alpine dreamscape. We would move up the technical ribbons of snow and ice, eventually reaching our summit, only to ride and ski back down them. These motions felt second nature, even monotone at times, due to how we spent our winter. But each summit was highlighted by the truly unique views offered in this remote part of southwest Colorado.

The meditation would commence, however, when we broke camp and began rolling to the next layover. Pedaling uphill on dirt roads through old-growth aspen groves and then embracing gravity downhill past boggy marshes was the extra spice of life we all needed. It took this magic ingredient for us all to come out of laxity and feel invigorated again. Every bit of the trip was pure and full of laughter. Creating our own breeze with our own two legs was the cure.



Stay the course.

As we drove away from this western pocket of the San Juan Mountains through ranch land, I watched the mountains grow more distant in the rear-view mirror. A slight rain started to clean my filthy windshield. With that drizzle a rainbow presented across the distance, sprouting from rolling hills lined with rickety fencing.

In that moment, I knew once again that I was exactly where I should be. My path felt solid and I knew that all the sacrifices I was making and the commitment I was giving to living my dream would pay off. I take it all in and tell myself, stay the course. 🌈

JOSH JESPERSEN is a splitboard mountaineer and veteran based in Colorado focused on getting more people outside. He holds the record for climbing and riding all 54 of our states 14ers, accomplishing this feat in only 138 days. His project Journey Lines will debut in the fall/winter of 2020 as a coffee table ready adventure/backcountry story-form guidebook for Colorado.



GO ROGUE, ENJOY THE FRONTIER...

TEST DRIVE YOUR POSSIBILITIES

970.259.3940

20704 Hwy 160 West, Durango, CO • nissanofdurango.com

