

Where Do All the COAGS Graduates Go?

Editor's Note: The Colorado Outdoor Adventure Guide School (COAGS), of Cripple Creek Colorado, is a unique learning environment which includes indoor classroom instruction and outdoor, hands-on activities that provide the students with the groundwork needed to attain success in the outdoor-recreation industry. Although most of the students aspire to become employed in the outdoors, *COAGS welcomes any outdoors enthusiast who wants to become more comfortable in the wilds* to participate in any or all of the courses.

Any Place They Want To – Opportunities Abound!

The Colorado Outdoor Adventure Guide School **welcomes any individual wanting a career in the outdoor-recreation industry**. COAGS has been in operation for the past 13 years, and has had several thousand students graduate from its courses. Throughout the years, students have found opportunities across the United States with some even venturing into Canada and Costa Rica. Most COAGS students enroll for the hunting side of the industry; however, students find opportunities in all aspects of the outdoors. The COAGS website, www.guideschool.com, has a list of careers found in the outdoor industry, including hunting guides, videographers and park rangers to working on guest ranches. However, most of the students who contact in the hunting industry. Too, out-States contact COAGS searching job postings stated, "We're cur-part-time and seasonal hunting specialize in guiding high-end game in Alaska, New Mexico, work with horses or mules, but planes." Another job said, 10 through September 15, for moose, black bear, dall sheep, and possible brown bear on the Kenai Peninsula. Fly into Anchorage, horseback, packing, wall tents and spike camps." Other possibilities are: fly fishing in Alaska, working in the Bob Marshall Wilderness in Montana or the Jim Bridger Wilderness in Idaho; and, whitetail outfitters in Pike County, Illinois, Hondo and Carrizo Springs, Texas, and west-central Alabama. The COAGS family has worked all over, and graduates look to their alma mater for other graduates to fill positions.



Guides and Outfits Owners Themselves

Many of the COAGS graduates become guides, and several own outfits themselves. Some graduates have even become members of the COAGS staff. The May 2005 COAGS Basic, Pro Guide and Advanced Horsemen classes are an excellent example of determined graduates finding careers in outdoor industry. Joe Wilson started Adobe Ranch Outfitters, LLC, www.adoberanchoutfitters.com; Jeremy Williams is with 5 J Outfitters, www.5joutfitters.com; and, Tony "Chewy" Tabaka began Professional Guide Service. These three started up or bought existing outfitting businesses in Arizona, Texas and Minnesota. Miles Bate instituted his own predator-control business in Texas. Mark Stone from West Virginia found a new career as an instructor at COAGS, and Willie Webb, the COAGS cook and instructor, is starting a writing career and manages a small private farm in Mississippi during the off-season. Diane Rudy is the cook for an outfitter in Colorado, and Cheryl Martel found herself in Arizona guiding hot-air balloon rides. Tito Bertalacchi guides in south Texas,

Richard "Bubba" Dickie has gone to Wooden Rifle Outfitters in Wyoming, Tony Doucette works for Golden Eagle Outfitters, and Jace Rigby has found employment guiding deer hunts in Texas and turkey hunts in Alabama. Nolan Mick is a part-time fly fishing guide during the summer. Another 2005 graduate, Kevin Johnson, spent the fall guiding for big game and the Pack String Ranch in the Flat Tops northern Colorado, spent the spring in Key West, Florida, driving a parasail boat and headed back to Colorado in the summer of 2006 to work for a guest ranch until hunting season began. Also, Melanie Regan, 2004 graduate, uses her horsemanship skills acquired at COAGS to land a job at a YMCA camp in Missouri.

Today, COAGS has a course just on **white-tailed deer** – the Whitetail Professional Guide and Management School. In the first year, students from the Whitetail program went all over the United States: Jeremy Barner is worked for Vinegaroon Wildlife outside of Del Rio, Texas; Casey Cambre went to guide at a very up-scale operation in south Texas; and, Charles Hogan and John "Buck" Sparks both worked at the La Bandera Ranch outside of Carrizo Springs, Texas. Gary Luck moved his family to South Dakota to guide for an outfitter, and Ken Roberts landed a job at Pushmataha Plantation in western Alabama. Other whitetail graduates now guide for outfitters in Illinois, Iowa, Colorado, South Carolina, Texas, and Nebraska. Lauren Fegan, a 2006 graduate, found work in Wyoming at several different operations leading family daypack trips.

TV Appearances

Many of COAGS students have also had the opportunity to make television appearances: Sheldon Pedranzan was the featured guide on an episode for the "Northern American Hunter" show; Randall Reagan guided a store manager from the Cabela's Buda, Texas, store on "Cabela's Outfitter Journal TV"; and, Chris Vaughn guided Mark Kayser on "Black-powder Hunting & Guns TV". Other graduates have been on "Bushnell Outdoors", and "The Choice and Better Built Outdoors" with Brock Ray. Graduates have also guided well-known outdoor writers and celebrities, including Joe Byers, Jim Zumbo, Dave Maas and Babe Win-kleman. Men and women from all walks of life the last 13 years have used COAGS to open doors and broaden their horizons to careers in the outdoor-recreation industry. Whether sportsmen want to gain new skills or obtain confidence in their own abilities, the Colorado Outdoor Adventure Guide School has prepared students to follow their dreams and make life-changing decisions.

If you have dreamed of making a living outdoors, then go to the Colorado Outdoor Adventure Guide School's website, www.guideschool.com, or call, **1-800-714-4864**. Remember, attending a COAGS course is not just an investment in your future, but also an investment in yourself.