



WHERE THE WIND BLOWS

An adventurous documentary series uncovering the lifestyle and heart of Oregon kiteboarding.

Photos by Jen Jones



ROSHAM THROWDOWN 2012 - HOOD RIVER, OREGON

There I was, standing waist deep in the Columbia River, my toes were starting to feel like ice pops and my shoulders were cramping from holding my cameras above water for hours on end. I had been out there for five days in a row, firing frames off at kites hitting rails and praying that everyone stomped their tricks so I didn't get nailed in the head with a kite. It was exciting, a bit dangerous, challenging and rewarding, all at the same time.

I had been drifting in and out of Hood River for a couple of years and it was clear to me that I wasn't the only one who blew in with the warm winds of summer. The beach was packed with people from all over – Florida, France, Wisconsin, the UK. Some were on holiday for a week or two and others had their lives packed into various home-on-wheels situations.

There were a handful of women competing in the competition and it was obvious that these ladies were dedicated and passionate about making a statement on the water. Equally as impressive was how they acted off the water – not as sniping competitors, but as good friends, exchanging tips and cheering each other on between heats. The girl's camaraderie on the Hood River's otherwise intimidating sandspit was something I hadn't felt before and it inspired me to endure the freezing water.

Two years later, I'm still a seasonal Hood River inhabitant and well connected to the social and commercial pulse of this amazing community. When I first started photographing kiteboarding, I was working remotely for the corporate world, living out of my home office and only ducking into downtown to grab a brew and a bite every once in a while.

Since then, my creative work is no longer fattening the bottom lines of global corporations. Instead I've immersed myself and my work into a community where I can see the real differences of time well spent.

The Hood River experience is a lifestyle everyone in kiteboarding should get to know. This community thrives on "local-vores," a unique blend of action sports entrepreneurs who "keep their money where their heart is" by embracing the mantra of buying local. Restaurants take pride in serving customers menu items prepared with fresh local farm ingredients. The new Hood River Waterfront Park is lined with earth-friendly buildings, where rooftops are covered in solar panels and to-go boxes are made from recycled materials. Go green or go home is a trending theme amongst the locals and visitors, who can do most of their organic shopping for the week at a street market filled with the bounty of local farms.

Since the earlier days of the RoSham, I wanted to put together a documentary that explores the epic kiting locations of Oregon while weaving a lifestyle narrative through four diverse professional kiteboarders. Despite exotic winter adventures, Colleen Carroll, Lindsay McClure, Laura Maher and Sensi Graves all find their way back to the Gorge each summer. Hood River is where we met and so many aspects of the community, companies and culture around kiteboarding here has inspired our multi-dimensional story. I invite you to get to know these women and follow them through the Colombia Gorge and beyond. This is "Where The Wind Blows." - JEN JONES

» IT'S MORE THAN A STORY ABOUT KITEBOARDING, IT'S A LOOK INSIDE THE BENEFITS OF HEALTH AND SUSTAINABILITY IN OUR EVERYDAY LIVES. «

LINDSAY MCCLURE



Raised in the agriculturally prolific Hood River Valley, I was spoiled by good food from the start. When I was young, I didn't think much about what I ate or where the food came from but I was lucky enough to have neighbors that would drop off overflowing baskets of extra produce they'd grown in their gardens. I learned early to satisfy my sweet tooth by overindulging on cherries and wild blackberries straight from the bush.

Currently, my appetite for adventure is stronger than my appetite for locally grown food. I've adopted a lifestyle of travel as a teacher with the World Class Kiteboard Academy – a globetrotting high school for ambitious young kiteboarders. Among the many challenges we face, keeping our teenage athlete's energy levels turned up is a battle when traveling to remote locations.

Kiteboarding does a great job silencing the hunger pangs until everyone's grumpy and on the verge of a total breakdown. I wish I had a dollar for every time our school entered a speck on the map Central American village, nearly starving after a long kite session. Typically, the only eatery in town is a pair of plastic tables behind Abuela Maria's kitchen where the

>> HOOD RIVER'S UNAPOLOGETIC, CHARGE-OR-STAY-HOME MENTALITY TEACHES YOU TO EAT RIGHT AND KEEP UP. <<

verbal menu offers either al pastor (marinated pork) or carnitas tacos (shredded pork). As for drinks, it's a choice between cerveza (beer) or Coca Cola, so clearly not a lot of options for an athlete, vegetarian, and all around picky eater. I've endured many kite trips feeding my poor gut a steady diet of corn chips and avocados.

As an athlete, I'm always trying to figure out how I can kite longer, kite stronger, pop higher, stick the trick, and perform my best. It's often more complicated than simply finding the discipline to keep up with cross training and limit my junk food intake. Even with good intentions it's a struggle to eat well while on the road. I've found that attempting to order a nutritious meal at a southern Texas diner is kind of like telling a joke.

The more I travel, the more I appreciate where I'm from. In Hood River, my friends and neighbors push me to do my best. The high concentration of top level athletes



ABOVE: Lindsay smiles her way through an S-bend to blind on the east side of the Gorge.

living in the Hood River Valley is no secret, yet the intersection between athletic performance and easy access to good fuel is often overlooked. I can't speak for the masses, but I value my hometown, not only because it's a gigantic playground, but because I'm a healthier version of myself when I'm here. - LINDSAY MCCLURE

SENSI GRAVES



I got my start in the kiteboarding industry as an instructor in North Carolina back in 2012. I was fully engrossed in the kiter lifestyle, everything was kiting, it was my drive and my purpose. Whether I was working or playing, I was living my entire life in a bikini. It became apparent that the suits I bought off the shelf couldn't keep up with me. Among other things, in many ways they were severely lacking in functionality so I started Sensi Graves Bikinis, a business where I pursue my dream of creating a stylish, functional bikini for the active woman.

Shortly after launching my company, I moved to Hood River, Oregon. Hood River has been a great incubator for entrepreneurship. The community is alive with self-starters and forward thinkers who are connected to our planet and conscious of their actions. This has inspired me to source locally, produce domestically and promote the lifestyle that I love so much.

I started Sensi Bikinis because I saw a need in the marketplace. Yet today it is more than that. It's an opportunity to promote healthy living, a platform to spread an active lifestyle and a community to empower and engage women. Kiteboarding and bikinis go hand in hand and those two pieces in my life continually challenge me, allow me to grow and lead me to various places around the globe. I couldn't be more thankful.

I often get asked how kiteboarding and entrepreneurship are similar. They're both challenging, roller-coaster rides that teach, inspire and humble. Kiteboarding leads me to exotic locales and enlivens my spirit of adventure. So does owning my own business. I learn something new everyday and am inspired to grow, travel and learn. Entrepreneurship is an adventure in itself. If there's one thing I've learned, don't be afraid to follow the wind, you never know where it might take you! - SENSI GRAVES

ABOVE & BELOW: Part LF team rider, part bikini mogul, Sensi charges full steam ahead on and off the water.



VINCENT BERGERON

>> AS KITEBOARDERS WE FOLLOW THE WIND. SOMETIMES THIS TAKES US TO UNEXPECTED PLACES. <<

COLLEEN CARROLL



I didn't seek the nomadic lifestyle of professional wanderer/adventurer/athlete. I merely bumped into it by getting a peek at a shining opportunity and grabbing it by the horns. I couldn't be where I'm at today without the help of friends, family, and beautiful strangers. I've been given advice, invaluable contacts, a place to stay, and even a job when I've been in need. And so much of this blessed life I lead was budded and nourished from the dynamic community in Hood River, Oregon.

This tiny town nestled in the Cascade peaks poised along the rising bank of the Columbia River is so much more than another small Oregon town. It is a community bustling with recreationists, artists, activists, professionals, and entrepreneurs. It is one of the major kiteboarding meccas in the United States and a place I have held near and dear since I was a child. Shortly after graduating college with a degree in hand but no clear direction in life, it is the place I chose to call home to help me find my focus.

Since coming to Hood River, I've met amazingly creative, conscientious, driven, and generous people. People who continuously push me to reach my goals and inspire me to create new ones like the women of the "Where the Wind Blows" project. Having this network of athletic successful women is one of the driving forces that keeps me moving forward and always striving. But not only do they motivate me, they

>> HAVING THIS NETWORK OF ATHLETIC SUCCESSFUL WOMEN IS ONE OF THE DRIVING FORCES THAT KEEPS ME MOVING FORWARD AND ALWAYS STRIVING. <<

have helped me create a sense of home in Hood River. A place where I am part of a community even when I am only passing through, something that might be taken for granted by those rooted in a 9 to 5er, yet for me, a homebody at heart but homeless nomad in reality I haven't found anywhere else. - COLLEEN CARROLL

TOP RIGHT: Taking a break from a whirlwind life of Triple-S podiums, German car commercials and North Team product shoots, Colleen grabs her banana board for a fun session with friends at the Sandbar in Hood River. RIGHT: Sensi and Colleen waiting for the results of Huckfest 2014 in Rufus, Oregon. NEXT PAGE: Mountain biking, snow sports and copious amounts of yoga allows Laura to ride new school, old school, or a little of both with this big air Indy grab.



LAURA MAHER



>> HOW THE HELL HAVE I STAYED IN THE GAME SO LONG? <<

I like many of the first kiteboarders, I came to the sport from windsurfing. In 2000 I was traveling in Baja, Mexico with friends that had already begun the process of learning to kiteboard. They told me to ditch my windsurfing "barge" because kiting was where it was at, and although I took their advice, at the time I had no idea what a game changer that was going to be for me.

I returned to my home in Minnesota, land of 10,000 frozen lakes, and with a set of 2-line kites I learned to stay upwind on snow. After that first year of riding I earned a spot on the Slingshot team and decided to throw my hat into the ring of competition. My first contest was the Waddell Kite Clash in Santa Cruz, California. Men were on 6m kites with brands like Slingshot pulling out unbranded prototypes small enough for their riders to use. It wasn't for the weak of heart. Although I got my ass handed to me, the intensity and fledgling status of the sport created a camaraderie amongst those first professional kites that I will never forget.

Later that summer I entered my second competition; it was the Gorge Games in Hood River, Oregon. My first trick which was captured on NBC TV was a toeside 540 down loop transition that unintentionally boosted me over a rock jetty. I started in the Columbia River and landed in the glacial waters of Hood River and by the grace of good karma and a seat harness, my ego and my butt were the only bruises I sustained.

The sense of adventure that kiting brings to my life hooked me from my first moments and continues to this day. I keep it fresh by continually working on new air tricks, hitting features, and riding waves. On a broader level, kiting has played a steady role in my life mostly because I've kept a balance between being a competitor, Slingshot brand ambassador and my work as the AWSI Executive Director. I have a day job as a hairstylist in Hood River but I am super grateful for the relationships that I have formed in kiting on a pro and organizational level, and the personal friendships that ensure kiting is always giving back to me. - LAURA MAHER

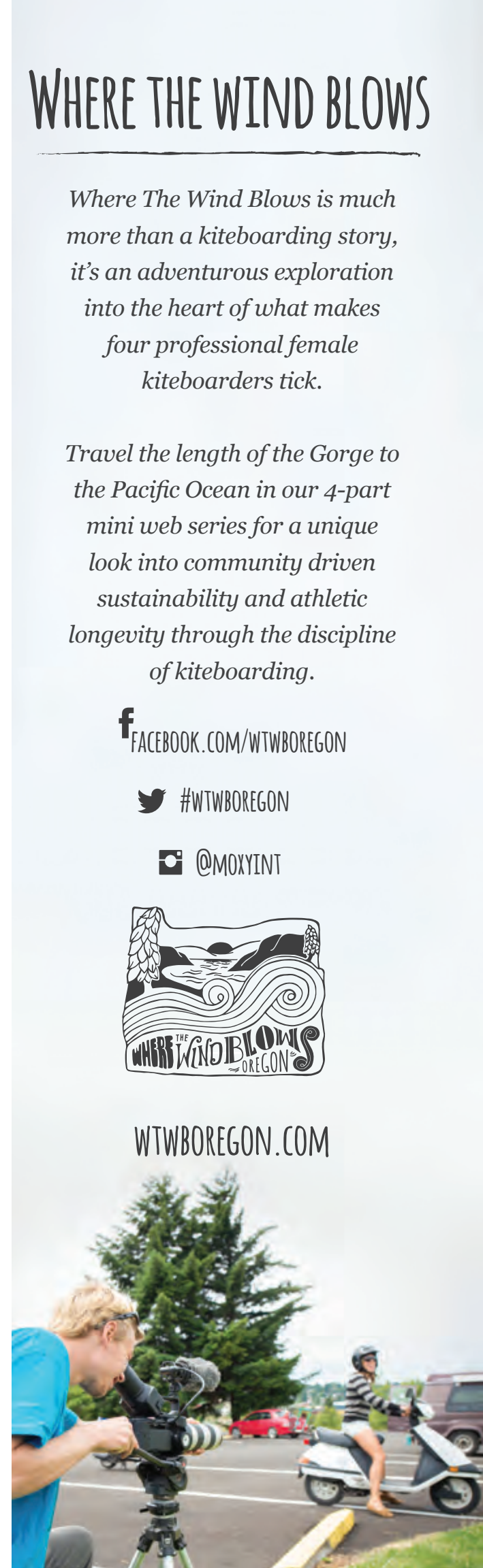




>> MAGICAL POSSIBILITIES EXIST WITHIN THIS GROUP OF INSPIRED, TALENTED, AND PASSIONATE FRIENDS ON OUR QUEST TO SHARE A SLICE OF OREGON LIVING. <<
- LINDSAY MCCLURE



TOP LEFT: Colleen and Jen Jones are all smiles during production. TOP RIGHT: If kiteboarding doesn't work out, Colleen has a job waiting for her at Solstice Pizza. MIDDLE: Filmmaker Wiley Watson captures the sound of Lindsay McClure's board hitting the water. BOTTOM LEFT: Lindsay and Sensi harvest peas at Wildwood Farm in Hood River. BOTTOM RIGHT: Snake! No wait... That's just the excitement after completing a long day of shooting!



WHERE THE WIND BLOWS

Where The Wind Blows is much more than a kiteboarding story, it's an adventurous exploration into the heart of what makes four professional female kiteboarders tick.

Travel the length of the Gorge to the Pacific Ocean in our 4-part mini web series for a unique look into community driven sustainability and athletic longevity through the discipline of kiteboarding.

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>> THE CULTURE AND SUSTAINABILITY WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY IS THRIVING AND HAS A POSITIVE IMPACT IN OUR LIVES. << - LAURA MAHER