

***For Immediate Release***



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## **Mountain Travel Sobek Announces Partnership with Doug McConnell of *Bay Area Backroads***

EMERYVILLE, CA—April 5, 2007—Mountain Travel Sobek, the widely acknowledged leader in providing adventure trips to scores of worldwide destinations, announced today a partnership with Doug McConnell, popular host of San Francisco's KRON TV *Bay Area Backroads*, and *Going Places!*, walking tours for women, to offer adventure travel group trips for both men and women, designed by Doug McConnell and operated by Mountain Travel Sobek.

The new partnership called "Doug McConnell's OpenRoad Adventures with Mountain Travel Sobek" will launch four McConnell-branded trips this summer, focused on adventures in the western United States, including Alaska, Hawaii, Utah/Arizona, and California. 2008 will open with an expanded offering of US and international trips, including New Mexico, the Pacific Northwest, Wyoming, and New Zealand.

"I'm excited to offer these extraordinary journeys to some of my favorite places," stated McConnell. "I've spent my life exploring these remarkable regions, both personally and professionally, and am looking forward to sharing my experiences with all those who choose to travel with us." McConnell will join one to two trips per year; in 2007 he will be joining the Hawaii departure, and in 2008 the New Zealand trip. "In particular, I'm pleased to note that trips will get up close and personal with the environment of each area. Experts will provide briefings on significant localized ventures in protection and conservation of the natural treasures we will be exploring. A percentage of each tour will be donated to these efforts."

Destinations were selected based on Mountain Travel Sobek's and *Going Places!*' years of experience and McConnell's extensive knowledge of the areas garnered while hosting and producing *Bay Area Backroads* and other travel and adventure series for television. Promotion of the trips, which are intended to lend an insider's edge to each of the destinations, will begin April 14 on Nissan's *Bay Area Backroads*, airing every Saturday and Sunday at 6:00 p.m. on KRON Television in San Francisco.

Kevin Callaghan, Mountain Travel Sobek CEO, states "We are delighted to enter into this partnership with Doug. This is a fantastic opportunity for the promotion of our style of adventure travel to a new and broader audience, and for encouraging and enabling our audiences to explore the world around them. Doug and Karen Collins, *Going Places!* president, have partnered on a number of projects over the years and we couldn't be more pleased to be working together with them."

The program is also being developed with the intention of a building a community of travelers in the Bay Area and beyond, marked by special appearances by McConnell throughout the year.

### *About Mountain Travel Sobek*

The pioneer in adventure travel, Mountain Travel Sobek has been in operation since 1969 and has a world-renown reputation for its high quality, innovative adventures to destinations the world over. MTS was the first company to lead Americans trekking in Nepal, climbing Kilimanjaro, small boat sailing in the Galápagos, and also made first descents of more than 65 rivers around the world. Throughout the years, MTS has delighted in sharing with thousands of travelers its love of the outdoors and passion for natural places and unique cultures. For more information, visit [www.mtsobek.com](http://www.mtsobek.com) or call **1-888-MTSOBEK (687-6235)**.

### *About Doug McConnell*

Doug McConnell has worked full-time in television since 1982. He has created, produced, and hosted many series, special programs, and news projects for local, national, and international distribution. He has received many regional and national broadcast awards and community service honors.

Since 1993, McConnell has been the host and senior editor of *Bay Area Backroads*. Now known as *Nissan's Bay Area Backroads*, the show explores paths less traveled in northern California and beyond. Currently in its twenty-second season, *Backroads* is the longest-running local television series in California history. McConnell's best-selling "Bay Area Backroads" travel card deck is available in bookstores throughout northern California. In the next few weeks, McConnell will also launch a new travel website, [www.OpenRoad.TV](http://www.OpenRoad.TV): The Traveler's Video Guide to the American West.

### *About Going Places! and Karen Collins*

Founded in 1997, Going Places! has offered high quality walking, hiking, and trekking trips for women in North and South America, Europe, Asia, and New Zealand. As Deputy Director of California State Parks, Collins designed and implemented the highly acclaimed "Woman in the Outdoors," a program that taught a broad range of outdoor skills to women of all ages. This background, combined with her chairmanships of the California Trails Commission and Sonoma County Parks, has made Collins an acknowledged leader and innovator of women's adventure travel.

*Note to Editor: Interviews are available upon request. For further press information, please call Anna Stancioff at Hawkins International Public Relations at 1-212-255-6541.*

## 2007 Trips: Doug McConnell's OpenRoad Adventures with Mountain Travel Sobek

### ***Ultimate Alaska Expedition • July 30-August 7 & August 13-21, 2007 • 9 days • from \$3,490***

If you only have one shot at visiting Alaska, this is the trip for you! It's the "triple crown" of sea kayaking, with the most diverse and rewarding experiences in Alaska you'll ever find. Paddle to the world-famous Pack Creek Brown Bear Sanctuary on Admiralty Island, which boasts the highest concentration of brown bears in the world, kayak at Point Adolphus, Alaska's most active humpback whale feeding area, then head to Glacier Bay National Park for an overnight kayaking and camping expedition amidst a panorama of sprawling tidewater glaciers, icebergs, and stunning mountain peaks. Along the way, you'll visit with conservation experts Doug has worked with on *Bay Area Backroads* productions!

### ***The Real Hawaii • August 4-11, 2007 • 8 days • from \$2,390***

We've chosen Kauai and the Big Island for this active Hawaiian adventure sampler: hike along the fluted ramparts of the Na Pali coast and along fragrant trails in Waimea Canyon (the "Grand Canyon of the Pacific"); explore Volcanoes National Park with a hike into Kilauea crater, then watch as fiery lava plunges into the ocean with an angry hiss; kayak along a jungle stream and hike to a hidden waterfall; watch for humpback whales and swim and snorkel with green sea turtles and tropical fish. McConnell will personally escort this trip and introduce the group to a few of his favorite local haunts.

### ***Bryce, Zion, and the Grand Canyon • August 12-17, 2007 • from \$2,390***

Here's the ultimate "Grand Slam" of national parks and monuments in the Southwest! With its sheer walls of red rock, hundreds of plunging waterfalls, and narrow slot canyons, Zion Canyon has been called a "Yosemite dressed in red." Neighboring Bryce Canyon, smaller but no less spectacular, is a fairytale amphitheater of rock formations and pink "hoodoos" (pinnacles). To the south, the North Rim of the Grand Canyon boasts breathtaking vistas that go undiscovered by most visitors to this natural wonder. And along the way, explore a seldom visited slot canyon with its dynamic shafts of light in the Escalante/Grand Staircase National Monument. These gems of our national park system receive many visitors, but few hike the more remote and out-of-the-way trails or visit Doug McConnell's favorite places along the way like we do!

### ***Hiking Yosemite's Ansel Adams Wilderness • August 19-24 & September 2-7, 2007 • from \$1,590***

One of the best-kept secrets of California's High Sierra is the Ansel Adams Wilderness. Located on the southern border of Yosemite National Park, the wilderness boasts mile upon mile of sweeping granite ridges, spectacular vistas, and a lifetime of fishing possibilities in hundreds of high alpine lakes. Accompanied by naturalist guides, you'll hike into the heart of this pristine wilderness named for the famous landscape photographer (1902-84). Mules carry all the gear to a comfortable "base camp" set beside a scenic lake, so you can enjoy the backcountry of Yosemite without having to backpack! From here you'll have ample opportunity to hike, to photograph, or reflect on the peacefulness and beauty around you. Learn why Doug McConnell calls this California gem one of his favorite Bay Area-adjacent attractions!

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