

For Immediate Release
September 2, 2004

Lightweight Gear Guru Completes First Un-Resupplied Trip of Vermont's Long Trail

Long Trail, Vermont / Boulder, Colorado – Demetri “Coup” Coupounas, a 38 year-old Boston native and co-founder and President of GoLite, a Colorado-based lightweight outdoor gear manufacturer, became the first known person to hike Vermont's 273 mile Long Trail entirely un-resupplied when he reached the Southern terminus of the Long Trail August 31 at approximately 11am EST. His total hike of 280 un-resupplied miles, including approach trails at either end, commenced at 5pm EST, Wednesday, August 18, and concluded at 12:53pm EST, Tuesday, August 31, for a total elapsed time of 12 days, 19 hours, 53 minutes.

The completion of the Long Trail marked the second of three un-resupplied long distance trails for Coupounas, a sort of mini “Triple Crown.” He hiked the length of the 218 mile (including approach trails) John Muir Trail in July 2004 with no re-supply. While completing the John Muir Trail, with its beautiful and rugged stretches of high Sierra Nevada mountain trekking and 40,000 feet of elevation gain and loss was a significant accomplishment, the Long Trail is more difficult due to its steeper terrain including 66,500 feet of elevation gain and loss, longer length, and more variable weather.

The Long Trail covers the length of Vermont between the Canadian and Massachusetts borders along the spine of the Green Mountains. The Long Trail is America's oldest long distance hiking trail and was the inspiration for the Appalachian Trail. When thru-hiked, the trail is normally completed in 20 to 30 days with several re-supplies.

Through these three hikes, Coupounas, an avid backpacker and lightweight gear guru, is establishing a whole new style of hiking that he calls “Alpine Style Thru-Hiking.” The style entails hiking a major trail from one end to the other continuously without re-supply or support of any kind. Other than water, readily available from sources on the routes, everything is carried by the hiker from the start including all clothing, equipment, and food.

Coupounas is also highlighting how lightweight gear can enable an average hiker to cover far greater distances without re-supply. Lightweight gear is not only enabling outdoor enthusiasts to see more when they go outside as evidenced by Coupounas covering more than 20 miles per day during his adventures, but it is also showing average Americans how easy it is to go outdoors to begin with, important in a nation plagued by epidemic levels of inactivity and obesity.

Coupounas will attempt his third of three unsupported hikes of America's “crown jewel” wilderness trails when he steps onto the 470 mile Colorado trail on September 11. Coupounas expects to complete the rugged trail in approximately 21 days, and if he does so, he will have taken ultra-lite long distance travel to an entirely new level of possibility for all hikers.

“Enjoying an alpine style thru-hike of a trail as long as the Long Trail wasn't even thinkable a decade ago” said Coup. “Now with 1 ¼ pound packs, 1 pound shelters, 1 ¼ pound sleeping bags, ¾ pound waterproof-breathable parkas and the like, it's totally achievable. Actually, the load I started with was less than what I used to carry for a weekend before my wife Kim and I founded GoLite.” Coup's gear list and satellite phone updates from the trail can be seen at www.golite.com.

Coup doesn't need your support while out on the trail, but Big City Mountaineers does. Among the main objectives of Coup's hikes was to challenge common beliefs held by backcountry travelers about what's possible. This purpose is similar to that of Big City Mountaineers, a Denver based non-profit, that challenges inner-city teens to step out of their comfort zones by taking them on weeklong trips in the backcountry. For many participants, these trips have been life-changing experiences as they have seen what is possible in the outdoors and their own potential.

Industry members as well as consumers can make a contribution to Big City Mountaineers at www.golite.com or by calling GoLite's customer service department directly at 888-546-5483. For more information on Big City Mountaineers please visit them on-line at www.bigcitymountaineers.org.

For more information, an interview, or to join Coup on his Colorado Trail attempt this September, please contact Coral Darby, PR Manager at 828/667-5421, 828/230-0170, or coral@golite.com.