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THE DEEPER YOU GET, THE DEEPER YOU GET

The Buying and Selling of Nature

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Featuring: Osprey Packs

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The Outdoor Retailer show blooms twice a year in downtown Salt Lake City. It is an eruption of mostly petroleum-based products designed to get you outside and keep you from dying there: sleeping bags, avalanche pillows, solar-powered pens. You see sellers of outdoor equipment and clothing, and hordes of ragged-haired adventurers roaming the cavernous convention hall. The North Face fortress is surrounded by innumerable booths made into tree houses, trailers, and seamless curvilinear plastic housings displaying new-season wares. There are a thousand brands and 22,000 people in attendance. It is a jungle gym of slacklines and money, the conquering of the useless, and people are buying.

Janet Ross, who comes to every convention seeking funding for her environmental-directed **Four Corners School** in Monticello, Utah, said that she once wore a pedometer to find out how far she roams the convention center. In three days, she walked 22 miles.

"Twenty-two miles of that," Ross said, thumbing over her shoulder at what sounded like a Las Vegas palace clanging with slot machines.

If you look past the unbridled capitalism, this show is actually about being outside. It is about firestrickers and adventurers, even under the hallucinogenic glow of convention-hall lighting.

Dolores, Colorado. Osprey is one of the more forward-thinking companies as far as preservation, using its position to lean on politicians, funding athletes and projects that promise environmental change.

