

ON THE JOB WITH Jen Loofbourrow

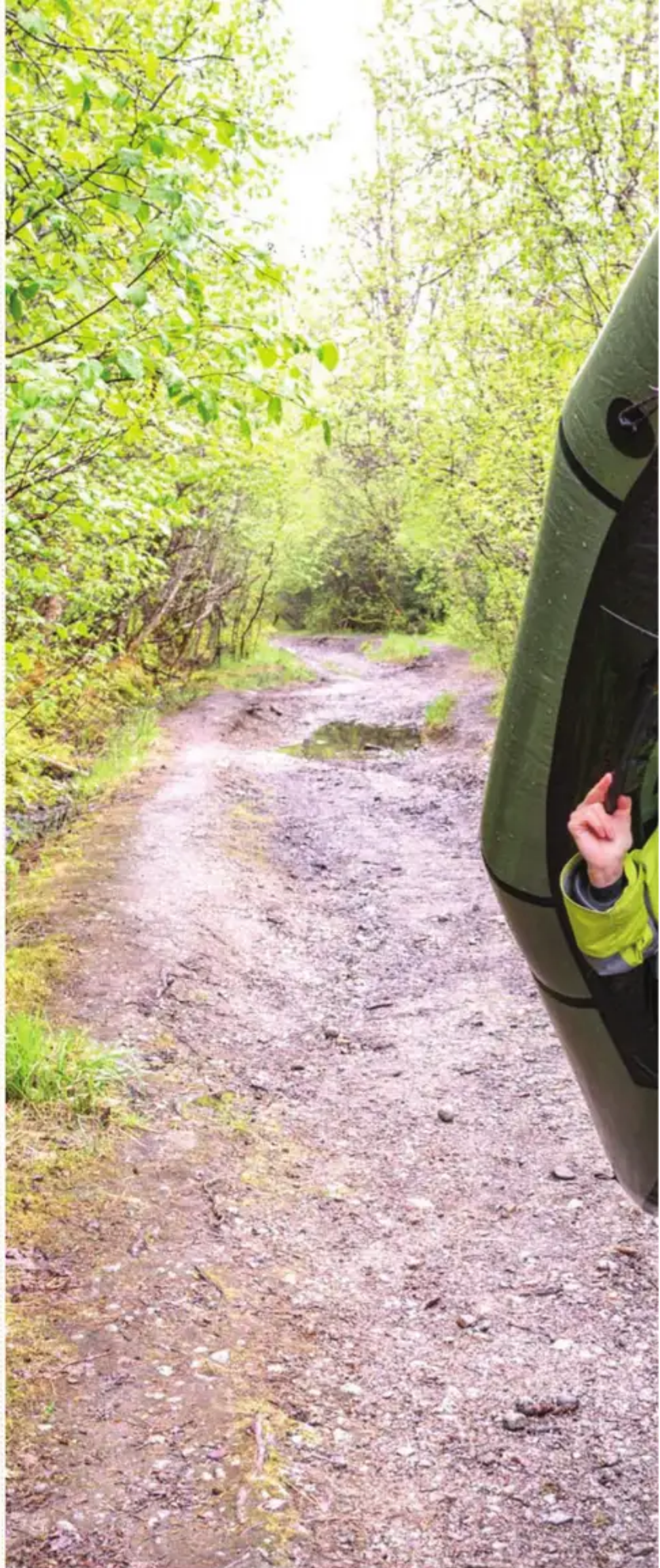
By Caroline Eubanks

For travelers who enjoy time in the outdoors, there's nothing quite as important as the right clothing to wear. We've all been caught ill-prepared on a trip and found ourselves desperately in need of additional layers. Jen Loofbourrow, who grew up in Ontario, Canada and spent her summers camping with her family, founded Alpine Fit as a culmination of years spent outside.

"My favorite parts of my childhood summers were always our family going camping for two weeks at this place called Long Point," Jen says. "[I also loved] going up north in Ontario to my grandparents' little off-grid cabin and swimming in the lake. There was no power; there were no normal amenities.

It was really an off-the-grid woods type of experience and we would just go fishing and hiking and swimming and canoeing and things like that."

Eventually, Jen decided to move west in search of a deeper connection with nature (and along the way met her now-husband). "I went out west to Vancouver and then fell in love more with the outdoors, mountains and camping. I visited Alaska and fell in love with camping in the real wilderness, not just car camping or cabin camping. It's just been this lifelong pursuit of spending more time outdoors."





While at university, Jen got her start in what would become her career. “My undergrad was in chemistry and business at the University of British Columbia,” she explains.

“I was working in stores for Lululemon and loved their technical fabrics and the performance attributes of these things.” She learned about materials and sustainability while working for the company.

“I finished my undergrad working in their materials department at their head office and I got to liaise between their design team and the fabric mills that they sourced the fabrics from,” she says.

“Being able to use my education to understand the technical properties of fabrics, like the fiber science and its application for comfortable fabrics for the performance features you want for outdoor adventures and travel ... was a major building block.”

She had learned about the different performance and comfort levels and fiber styles that outdoor lovers and travelers alike need to stay comfortable, with features like quick dry, sun protection, insulation and odor resistance. All of her knowledge went into the creation of her business, Alpine Fit, which creates base layers out of high-end materials like merino wool and silver-infused fabric.

“I pulled on my love of the outdoors and camping and my knowledge of the technical fabrics and the features and designs you want in fabrics to just have a comfortable, versatile travel wardrobe,” says Jen. “You can go for that hike and then you can sit in camp around the campfire and then you can sleep overnight in it.

And it works with you through those different stages of your day when you’re maybe packing light or traveling with a few things or reduced access to laundry while you’re on the road. Whether it’s hiking, camping, road trip, whatever it may be, here, you would always have these few essential pieces.”



Those essential pieces Alpine Fit offers include long-sleeved shirts, leggings, hats, headbands and tank tops for men and women with inclusive sizing, all made in America. “We just narrowed our focus on key pieces that could work for at least five to seven of your favorite activities, just a cheesy thing to say, but it’s really true,” she says.

“Our bushwhacking leggings, you can just wear them on their own, wear them hiking and even wear them as a base layer. These pieces would always be brought with you on any trip, and then you would just change what footwear you have or what jacket you have.”

Despite running a successful business, Jen still makes time to travel and explore her own backyard with family. “I usually do a handful of trips within Alaska,” she says. “We usually do a couple of overnight or multi-day camping trips. We’ll do a car camping trip to Seward with the kids or rent forest service cabins and hike into them and stay overnight.”

