



# Time for Nature



## They bring you the stories behind the scenery

Working as a guide in Canada's Rocky Mountain national parks

When Joel Hagen was a young kid, there was no doubt in his mind what he wanted to do when he grew up. He wanted to do fun shows about animals just like the ones he saw while visiting Canada's national parks.



Joel Hagen and Nadine Fletcher are award-winning interpretive guides.  
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His partner, Nadine Fletcher, also fell in love with the outdoors. And where are they today? They've set up shop in Canada's Rocky Mountains, where they work as interpretive guides in Banff, Kootenay and Yoho National Parks.

## Combining education with a dose of fun!

Nadine and Joel established a guiding firm, Great Divide Nature Interpretation, and designed trips for all kinds of clients – young, old and in-between. On the “Fondue with a View” outing, chocoholics enjoy dessert at a historic fire lookout site that provides some of the most expansive views in the Rockies. On the “Wonder of Water” hike, visitors pass by tumbling waterfalls, slot canyons, and beautiful Bow Lake to see how water and ice have sculpted the landscape.

## Connecting with nature

As Nadine sees it, there's much more to guiding than naming plants and animals. Her job is to “give people the big picture,” she says, helping them understand nature's complexity and our place in the ecosystem. She loves finding graphic ways to explain ecological concepts. On the “Mountains and Glaciers” hike, for example, she describes a glacier like a bank account. “It has a zone for deposits and a zone for withdrawals.” For a glacier to grow there must be more snow being deposited than meltwater coming out. With global warming, the retreating glaciers of the Rockies “have a serious cash flow problem.”



In the Rockies, every season is a new adventure.  
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## Every season tells a story

When you're a guide, every season is a new adventure. In Banff and Yoho, the birds of the Rockies are a big attraction from the end of spring migration to the height of



breeding season, when visitors can see everything from Hummingbirds to Golden Eagles.

Summer hikes include lessons about mountain geology and life in the forest in its peak season of growth.

The Golden Larches tour gives the fall feeling in the high country.

In winter, it's not the grand vistas that are the main attraction, "but what's under your feet". Animal tracks in the snow tell an intimate story of the cold weather struggle for survival.

### "It's a wonderful way to make a living!"

Nadine and Joel like the challenges and rewards of guiding. They enjoy the outdoors and the opportunity to connect with people. And on every hike, they develop their skills.

"We've both always known we wanted to do this," says Nadine. And clients agree that they do it well: "A hike with Joel and Nadine is like seeing in colour for the first time," said the Hustons of California.

For more information visit [www.pc.gc.ca](http://www.pc.gc.ca)



Summer hikes include lessons about mountain geology and life in the forest. © Great Divide Nature Interpretation.