

# CASCADE DESIGNS®

[www.cascadedesigns.com](http://www.cascadedesigns.com)

## Company Profile – Outdoor Division

### OVERVIEW

For nearly forty years, Seattle-based Cascade Designs, Inc. has led the outdoor industry in designing innovative, useful and long-lasting equipment, manufacturing the majority of products in their Seattle, U.S.A. and Cork, Ireland facilities. From the original self-inflating Therm-a-Rest® camping mattress to the first multi-fuel stove, Cascade Designs® has developed products that explorers, adventurers, outdoor enthusiasts and weekend campers can rely on to deliver optimum performance in the outdoors through exceptional engineering and quality.

Cascade Designs's premium worldwide outdoor brands include: Therm-a-Rest®, the global leader in premium outdoor comfort; MSR®, the ultimate in high performance outdoor gear; Platypus®, specialist in modular hydration solutions for optimum performance; SealLine®, the outdoor leader in all-purpose, portable gear protection; and Tracks® lightweight walking staffs and trekking poles.

### HISTORY

The idea for the Therm-a-Rest brand mattress was born in 1971 after two laid-off Boeing engineers (Jim Lea and Neil Anderson) were inspired by their mountain-climbing friend's (John Burroughs) idea to create a better outdoor sleeping mattress.



*Therm-a-Rest Prototype*

One day while Jim was working in his yard, he noticed that the gardening cushion he was kneeling on expelled air as he shifted his weight. That's when lightning struck. Jim realized that open-cell foam had memory. Excited about this discovery, he and Neil began working on a mattress prototype. Their plan was to take a piece of open-cell foam, like that in the gardening cushion, and sandwich it between two pieces of airtight fabric. Using an old sandwich maker, they melted the fabric onto the foam, creating a bond that was perfectly airtight. They added a valve, and their prototype was ready to test.

For months, the three continued the process of testing, refining, and re-testing until they arrived at the perfect design. In 1972, Jim and Neil filed for a patent, and within two years they began production of Therm-a-Rest—the world's first

self-inflating mattress. Jim, Neil and John's collaboration produced a worldwide standard for outdoor sleeping comfort and a company – Cascade Designs, Inc.

While sticking to the founding principles of providing relevant and innovative products, exceptional quality and service that exceeds expectations, Cascade Designs has acquired strong companies with superior products and shared visions, including:

- 1986** SealLine® brand gear protection is born with the acquisition of a radio-frequency welding operation from Plas-Tech Company.
- 1990** Tracks® brand premium hiking and walking staffs acquired.
- 1993** Packtowl® brand camp towels acquired. (Currently, Packtowl is under the MSR® brand.)
- 1996** Platypus® brand collapsible bottle and hydration system line acquired from Traveling Light.
- 1998** SweetWater® line of water filters and purifiers acquired and eventually merged into the MSR line of water treatment products.
- 2001** MSR® (Mountain Safety Research) brand acquired and expansion of product line offered includes stoves, cookware, water treatment, hydration, shelter, snowshoes, trekking poles and camp towels.

### CURRENT

Though much of the world's manufacturing has shifted from North America and Europe to Asia, Cascade Designs still builds the vast majority of products in their Seattle, Washington U.S.A. and Cork, Ireland facilities while practicing Lean Manufacturing techniques. Manufacturing their own products allows the company to maintain control over product quality and availability, to distribute regionally, to minimize wasteful shipping and to keep jobs local.

Cascade Designs is a private, family-owned company. Joe Mc Swiney is the current President while co-founder John Burroughs serves as President of the Board and chief product tester.

With products distributed around the globe, the company has over 170 patents and pending patents in multiple countries. Outdoor products from Cascade Designs have earned and maintained an outstanding reputation for innovation and quality. The company and their products have received over 140 awards from retailers, mountain guides and design associations as well as the readers and editors of publications around the world including; *Alpin*, *Alpinist*, *Backpacker Magazine*, *Camping Life*, *Consumer's Digest*, *Field & Stream*, *National Geographic Adventure*, *outdoor magazin*, *Op Pad*, *Popular Science*, *Rock & Ice*, *Sea Kayaker*, and *TIME Magazine*.



**A Cascade Designs Manufacturing Floor in Seattle.**

Cascade Designs gear is also used by government agencies around the world. Some products, including the MSR MIOX<sup>®</sup> purifier, have been developed in partnership with such agencies. In addition, Cascade Designs manufactures and distributes medical seating and positioning products under the VARILITE<sup>®</sup> brand.

### **OUTDOOR ACCESS & CONSERVATION**

Cascade Designs understands the draw of the outdoors and the rewards people find discovering the world in its natural form. The company's social giving goal is to promote active outdoor recreation while protecting public lands, wilderness areas, and waterways. By supporting efforts around the globe and in their own backyard that are dedicated to maintaining and promoting environmentally responsible access to these areas, they are helping these organizations ensure the preservation of their continued use for generations to come.

#### **European Access & Conservation Organization Partner:**



#### **North American Access & Conservation Organization Partners:**



#### **Local Northwestern U.S. Access & Conservation Organization Partners:**

