



Presentations by Adventurer Paul Schurke: **Arctic, Amazon, Antarctica**

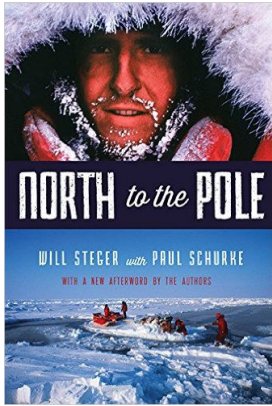
The Centennial Trilogy: Retracing the Footsteps of Exploration Giants



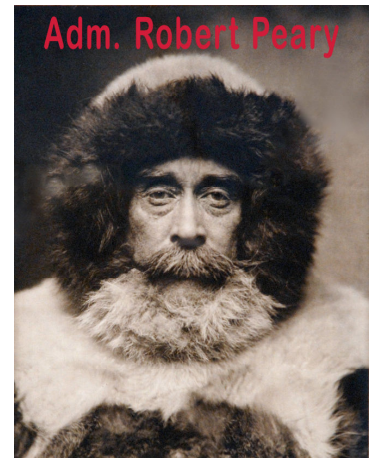
Author & educator Paul Schurke received the "Explorer Award" from the International Center for Exploration, the "Adventurer of the Year" from Outside Magazine & the "Environmental Hero" award from the Wilderness Society. A featured presenter for the National Association for Campus Activities, Paul operates Wintergreen Expeditions & Wintergreen Northern Wear clothing company with his wife Susan in Ely, Minnesota. Paul's 2015 presentation series features his three expeditions of the last 30 years that retraced the routes of exploration giants of a century ago.



1. North to the Pole! Debunking Myths from the Great Age of Exploration



Thirty years ago this coming winter, Paul Schurke and Will Steger and their team of 8 people and 50 sled dogs set out from the north coast of our continent to reach the North Pole. In a deliberate throwback to the early explorers, they sought to complete the journey without resupply and were entirely reliant on the three tons of supplies they brought with them. There would be no airlifts with rested dogs, new equipment or extra food or fuel. And they sought to shed light on the historically vexing question of whether Robert Peary had fudged the facts with his claim of having reached the North Pole by dogteam in 1909.



Paul's & Will's team, after enduring 2 months of a thousand zig-zag miles across shifting sea ice and -70* temps, surmounted the hinge pin of our planet. Their epic trek resulted in a National Geographic cover story and a television special. Their best-selling book "North to the Pole" was heralded as "one of the most thrilling adventure stories of our time." This fall, in a Minnesota Historical Society legacy project, an updated version of "North to the Pole" is being released and in his presentations, Paul is recounting the journey that changed of lives of all 8 team members, that National Geographic deemed a "landmark in polar exploration," and that impacted the historical legacy of Robert Peary.

Audience comments "You kept me on the edge of my seat and sent me off inspired. Never again will I let self-doubts stand in the way of my dreams." D. Anderson, Control Data Corp. regional manager

"I have heard many famous speakers at conferences—Jesse Jackson, Mario Cuomo, Walter Mondale, George Will and others. None could surpass you for your combination of language skills, quality of message and style of speaking." K. Dalgaard, U of MN faculty

"Give me winter, give me dogs and you can keep the rest." Knud Rasmussen, Greenlandic explorer

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2. Exploring the Amazon's "River of Doubt" & the Amazing Life of Theodore Roosevelt



Theodore Roosevelt's 1914 canoe descent of the Amazon's mythical River of Doubt ranks among history's most remarkable adventures and was undertaken by one of America's most remarkable presidents. During the centennial summer of that epic trek, Paul Schurke and Dave Freeman retraced Roosevelt's route. They also dug deeply into the life of a passionate outdoorsman whose towering political career didn't keep him from exercising his personal commitment to spending at least 30 days annually sleeping under the stars - even during his White House years! But the rigors of the River of Doubt - illness, insects, starvation - nearly cost Roosevelt his life. When he realized his debilitated condition might prevent his teammates from finishing the trek alive, he contemplated suicide.

Paul & Dave dodged those pitfalls. But the river, now called the Rio Roosevelt, held many surprises for them as well. And they encountered a key element of the river that Roosevelt "felt" but never saw: the Cinta Larga Indians, the Amazon natives who fiercely control access to this region. They silently stalked Roosevelt's team with poison arrows and did not make contact with the outside world until 1970. While planning the trip, Paul & Dave were repeatedly warned that they remain hostile to outsiders. But the Cinta Larga embraced Paul's & Dave's arrival in their settlement. And they shared with Paul & Dave their heartrending story of their abrupt transition from Stone Age to Digital Age and their hopes for the destiny of their tribe and river (now called the Rio Roosevelt) that is the centerpiece of their ancestral lands. Ride this wild river with Paul on his presentation about this two-month jungle canoe trek and learn about our most adventurous president.



3. Probing the Mysteries of Shackleton's Endurance Expedition



It's considered the greatest survival tale in polar expedition history. In 1914, British explorer Ernest Shackleton sailed to Antarctica with 27 men in hopes of traversing the continent by dogteam. But his ship, the Endurance, was crushed by ice the Weddell Sea, propelling the team into a 20-month nightmare of cold and near starvation. In a desperate attempt to seek help, Shackleton undertook a treacherous 800-mile ocean crossing by open boat to South Georgia Island. There with Job-like resolution, he faced his saga's climatic chapter: traversing the island's soaring uncharted ramparts to reach a remote whaling station. In the end, he brought his entire team home alive.

In 2012, Paul Schurke retraced that South Georgia route on a ski mountaineering trek that followed Shackleton's diary notes. At the Trident Peaks, where a 2,000-foot near-vertical descent obliged Shackleton's crew to cast their fate to the winds in white-out conditions, Paul's crew faced a similar challenge but found a very different solution. It was also there that Paul's team became mindful of the "unseen presence," a curious reference found in the diaries of Shackleton and his colleagues throughout the crossing. Paul believes that mystery may be embodied in one of the trek's most beloved artifacts: a trail-seasoned banjo that Shackleton was determined would survive the journey with them as most other personal possessions were jettisoned. Paul is returning to South Georgia Island for another Shackleton trek in November 2015.



Audience comment "Explorer, philosopher, poet - you have a powerfully moving story and the eloquence to match. Yours was the most beautifully crafted presentation I've ever heard." R. Sutton, Valley City College