

THE LOST ART OF READING NATURE'S SIGNS: USE OUTDOOR CLUES TO FIND YOUR WAY, PREDICT THE WEATHER, LOCATE WATER, TRACK ANIMALS AND OTHER FORG



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Gooley's more than two decades of pioneering outdoor experience include research among the Dayak people of Borneo and the Tuareg of the Sahara. With his first book, *The Natural Navigator*, he started a renaissance in the rare art of reading nature's clues.

Now, in *The Lost Art of Reading Nature's Signs*, Gooley has compiled more than 850 outdoor tips—many not found in any other book in the world—that will open readers' eyes to nature's hidden logic. He shares techniques for forecasting and tracking, and for walking in the country or city, along the coast, and by night. This is the ultimate resource on what the land, sun, moon, stars, plants, animals, and clouds can reveal—if you only know how to look!

- Sales Rank: #6172 in Books
- Published on: 2015-07-31
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.10" h x 1.20" w x 5.50" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 416 pages

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Most helpful customer reviews

43 of 45 people found the following review helpful.

A Fun Read, But A Bit Much

By Andy in Washington

Depending on your own personality, Tristan Gooley is either the world’s most interesting hiking partner...or...you will want to kill him within five minutes of getting out of the car. The man knows a lot about most aspects of nature, is quite observant, and loves to share his knowledge. If you feel that is enjoyable, you will like this book.

==== The Good Stuff ====

* Gooley has hiked in many locations throughout the world, including many in the US, Britain, Asia and Africa. He makes detailed observations, and shares both his insights and his methods for making those

determinations. His wisdom includes traditional book knowledge, lessons and lore passed on from the natives, and common sense deduction. It is a remarkable tour de force of botany, biology, geology and astronomy.

* While the author spends a lot of time on specific observations, the real lesson of the book is how to develop an attitude of curiosity. While many of us might see “just a tree”, Gooley sees a navigational aid, a history of the area, and clues about the local topography, climate and civilization. While these insights can span the range from useful through trivial and even go all the way to arcane, they do serve as a motivation to make your own observations and deductions. It is sort of a cross between John Muir and Sherlock Holmes.

* There are a few useful gems for just about anyone. Even city dwellers will find some enjoyment in Gooley’s astronomy observations, and while much of his hiking experience is in Britain, he also discusses the flora and fauna of many parts of the United States.

* Some of the best parts of the book were the time spent with “exotic” cultures. For example, from spending time on Borneo, we find the natives use some very remarkable means of navigation, and prefer to think of “upstream and downstream” rather than the Western concepts of “east and west”.

=== The Not-So-Good Stuff ===

* I was expecting more of a practical “how-to”, but the book is more of a motivational lecture on letting your own knowledge and observations run wild. For example, there are a number of tips for determining direction. There is the familiar “moss on the north side of trees”, rule, but there are seemingly hundreds of other techniques of direction finding. More than you could possibly remember, and indeed, more than I was interested in.

* Gooley has a habit of referring to plants by their common name. This can be a little problematic, since the US and Britain can not even agree on what “corn” means. I would have preferred plants be referenced also by their Latin names to avoid any confusion.

* Many of the observations become almost overwhelming and frustrating. The author has spent time with some very interesting cultures, and I would have liked to see more information on some of their novel technologies (such as the upstream/downstream navigation previously mentioned) rather than more mundane trivia.

=== Summary ===

If you are expecting a “Fieldbook”, I think you will be somewhat disappointed in this work. While there are numerous “tricks” for getting information about your environment, they are not organized in any way to reference them other than your memory. Rather, the book is more of a motivational guide to learning to trust your instincts and observations about your environment. I found the book enjoyable, but would have liked to see it edited a bit tighter.

=== Disclaimer ===

I was able to read an advance copy through the courtesy of the publisher and NetGalley

25 of 26 people found the following review helpful.

The book I wish I had had in high-school

By Praanav R Lal

I had read about Mr. Gooley's courses on Natural Navigation some years ago in the Reader's Digest I believe. At that time, I was fascinated because he claimed to be able to use natural navigation in cities too. I do not live in the UK and consequently did not have easy access to the course or his teaching. I was thrilled to discover that he had put his discoveries into a book.

I am one of those people who learn by reading. Yes, a picture is worth a thousand words but there are times when words are crucial. I had thought the book to be full of pictures without much context. I could not have been more wrong.

Mr. Gooley starts with a masterful introduction about determining weather with the backdrop of a beech and an amorous couple. He explains about distances, the wind and clouds before segwaying into his subject. This is not a universal book. The author is clear about the geographies in which the material in the book is applicable.

The book is split into several chapters; each chapter deals with a specific aspect of natural navigation. There are chapters on trees and plants, the landscape, the wind and many more, each dealing with how to use that attribute for finding your way. Yes, he does bring them all together. For those who like checklists, there are plenty of those as well. One of the most fascinating portions of the book is when he describes his walk with the Dayak. However, I wish there had been more detail. For example, how did they get away from the bees in the forest?

This book is a must read for educators, math teachers and geography teachers because it illustrates how these subjects should be taught. It is much easier to understand the Pythagoras theorem by its application in crossing a river and calculating heights and distances rather than those proofs and out of context problems that students are made to solve at least when studying in India.

Over all, a great read and a reference book I will return to frequently.

11 of 14 people found the following review helpful.

A very interesting read which gives good insight into finding your way around the countryside without ...

By Tom Johnston

A very interesting read which gives good insight into finding your way around the countryside without the aid of a GPS and the other modern aids. Amazing how modern aids have made us forget the obvious navigational help that nature has provided us with. More Photographs and illustrations would have made the book more interesting and helpful !

See all 35 customer reviews...

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