



## The Great Outdoors

*How Tymeson parlayed his sportsman spirit into a dream career.*

Chat with **Chris Tymeson, '98**. Ask him anything. Chances are, talk will turn to hunting, fishing, and wildlife in a matter of minutes — and with good reason. Those things have been his passion for as long as he can remember. Growing up in Storm Lake, Iowa, wide open spaces were plentiful, and you couldn't *keep* Tymeson inside.

“When we were kids, my mom would just turn us loose, and we'd play outside sunrise to sundown.”

Some things never change. Tymeson's enthusiasm for the world outdoors has fueled his travel to all 50 states and five continents. Hunting trips to Africa, fishing excursions to Canada. His wife and two kids have even caught the bug. But instead of just filling his free time, that fascination drives his workday, too.

As chief legal counsel for the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism, Tymeson gets paid to be outside. With the

department since 2000, he has trekked to each of the state's 105 counties, from the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve in the east to the Arikaree Breaks (that are "like a little Badlands") in the west. His days revolve around hunting, fishing, boating, parks, travel — "all the outdoor stuff I love to do."

"I get to make a difference in something that I care about. That's what's great about it. I have to do other things — personnel and contracts. But everything relates back to something, at the core, that I care about," said Tymeson, who drafts regulations, collaborates with legislators, and meets with the public.

"Every day, I wake up, and I look forward to coming to work. It is the dream."

But the dream didn't happen overnight. It took patience and persistence for him to build the career he truly wanted. After a four-year stint as an Army paratrooper — arriving by helicopter in enemy territory — he put the GI Bill to work for his undergraduate schooling in Missouri and his JD at Washburn Law.

"I visited the school, and I loved the atmosphere. It's a small, tight-knit community, and people are proud to be from Washburn Law. I think being here in the capital, the center of government for Kansas, helped prep me for where I'm at today."

Graduating a semester early, he scored a good job with the state. But it just wasn't inspiring him. So one day, on a hunting-related call to what's now the Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism, he asked if they happened to have an attorney position open. As fate would have it, they did.

That single question reinvented his career. Suddenly, he had just what he longed for: a life in the great outdoors — *and* one of public service.

"I've almost always been a government servant, in the Army, and then in the VA work-study. Then when I was in law school, I interned at the Department of Revenue in legal services. I like to help people, and there's some satisfaction when you can solve people's problems for them."

**Dusty Mullin, '99**, partner with Ryan & Mullin, P.A., in Clay Center, has seen Tymeson's commitment to service firsthand. The two met at Washburn Law, both small-town sportsmen who'd rather be outside than just about anywhere else. Still close today, they squeeze in hunting trips when work and family life allow.

Citing his friend's civil service, military duty, and 17 years volunteering in hunter education, Mullin said Tymeson is "the kind of guy you hope your kids can grow up and be like."

"Obviously, Chris probably could have made more money in private practice. But he has spent a tremendous amount of time supporting hunter education, trying to get youth involved in our sport. His willingness to give up his time shows how much he believes in what he does," Mullin said.

That devotion has kept Tymeson in his job for three times as long as any previous attorney. His longtime presence means he's able to create real change in everything from regulations to conservation, a big cause of his.

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"As we settled this country, unregulated hunting and fishing wiped out entire species, like the passenger pigeon. And populations of elk and antelope and deer had dwindled to almost nothing. It's only through the conservation efforts of hunters and anglers that funded it, and people who work for agencies like ours, that they brought wildlife back into abundance. You have to have those people on the ground doing that work to preserve it for future generations."

Things are as they should be, if you ask Tymeson. He's working daily to protect and promote the state's natural resources — to make Kansas better for everyone. What's more, his lifelong pastime has become a lasting profession. He can only hope the same for the next generation.

"When your passion and your job come together, it's like you don't work," he said.

"I think the advice that I would give to my kids is: Do something that you care about and that you love, and you'll never work a day in your life."