



Hike by Lindsay Leffelman; photo by Dave Nielsen

## ▶ NORTH CASCADES

**LOCATION:** Hwy 20 at Concrete

**TOTAL MILEAGE:** 14 miles one way

**ELEVATION GAIN:** up to 500 feet

**HIGHEST ELEVATION:** 1,000 feet

**MAP:** Green Trails 46: Lake Shannon

**PERMIT:** NW Forest Pass

**DIRECTIONS:** *South Trailhead:* From Hwy 20, turn north on Baker Lake Rd. After 14 miles, turn right on Baker Dam Road, cross the dam and turn left on Forest Road 1107.

**POST-HIKE:** Drop into the Birdview Brewing Company on Hwy 20.



## Hike: Baker Lake

*Magnificent old growth forests, stellar views of Mount Baker, turbulent tributaries, and, of course, a beautiful lake make this trail a great path to travel.*

With two access points and multiple campsites, the 14-mile Baker Lake Trail offers a remarkable wilderness experience for hikers of all ages and abilities. The trail can accommodate a range of hiking interests, from short day hikes to overnight backpacking excursions. And thanks to the trail's low elevation, it is accessible even when most other Cascadian trails are buried under snow.

The trail flanks the eastern edge of Baker Lake, created by the 1959 damming of the Baker River. Starting from either the north or south trailhead, hikers will encounter a forest of maturing Douglas firs. Cedar used to dominate, but the 1843 eruption of Mount Baker triggered a forest fire, reducing the old-growth cedars to burnt snags. Cedar remains among the towering firs provide evidence of this historical event.

Along the trail, foliage, fungus, lichen and moss never fail to impress. Mushrooms dot the forest floor allowing hikers to forage for fabulous fungus as they traipse through the woods, and the towering trees draped with old man's beard provide shelter from the drizzly mist that accompanies most winter hikes in the Northwest.

Numerous cascading creeks cross the trail as they make their way from the mountains above to the lake water below. Sturdy bridges span these tributaries keeping your feet dry and your brain pondering how a trail crew could build such a strong structure in the wilderness. Most impressive of all is the suspension bridge over the rushing Baker River, just a half-mile from the northern trailhead.

Located intermittently along the trail, several campgrounds provide a temporary homestead for backpackers and logical turnaround point for day hikers. All camping areas are complete with fire pits and vault or backcountry toilets.

A wonderful trail for getting outdoors in the midst of winter (without snowshoes or skis), the Baker Lake Trail makes a marvelous wilderness escape any time of year.





Hike and photo by Dawn Erickson

## ► PUGET SOUND

**LOCATION:** Everett

**TOTAL MILEAGE:** 4 miles one way

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 50 feet

**HIGHEST ELEVATION:** 171 feet

**MAP:** Snohomish Co. Centennial Trail

**PERMIT:** None

**DIRECTIONS:** The Bryant Trailhead is at the corner of SR-9 and Stanwood-Bryant Road; 4 miles east of I-5 exit 212.

**POST-HIKE:** Load up on sandwiches and baked goodies at the Wild Rose Bistro, on Olympic Avenue in downtown Arlington.



## Hike: North Centennial Trail

*Local, national and world histories intersect on this peaceful farm north of Arlington. It's worth a trip just to see the barn and contemplate all that transpired here not so long ago.*

This newly completed section of the popular Centennial Trail runs from Bryant to the Skagit county line and is a 4-mile link in the 29-mile trail that runs from Snohomish to the Skagit County line. The Centennial Trail is constructed on the original railway built by the Seattle, Lake Shore, and Eastern Railroad in 1889.

Start at the new Nakashima Heritage Barn Trailhead located on the former Nakashima Farm. The farm was first a logging camp before being converted to a dairy farm in the early 1900s. The Nakashima family, one of a few Japanese families living in Snohomish County, ran the farm until 1942 when they were forced to sell the farm and sent to internment camps. The Nakashima Barn is the first to be designated "Washington Heritage Barn" status by the Washington State Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation in 2006. The Trust for Public Lands purchased the farm in 1997 and shortly after transferred control to Snohomish County.

Now hikers, bikers, joggers and equestrians can enjoy sweeping views of the farm's pastures as they descend from the barn to the trail. The paved portion of the trail turns south and begins its gentle meander through cedar and spruce wetlands and second growth forest before climbing along the banks of Pilchuck Creek. At 3.5 miles the trail crosses the creek on a bridge high off the water. Lovely views both up- and downstream can be had, and off to the west a peek of snow capped mountains. The trail crosses SR-9 just before the Bryant Trailhead and continues on to Arlington and all points south.

One can also wander north from the Nakashima Heritage Barn Trailhead on the unpaved portion of the railway grade. Turn north from the pavement just as it angles south. Views of the barn and farm pasture can be had through the grand cottonwoods that line the grade. To the west, spruce and cedars dot ever more wetlands.



Hike and photo by Mike Morrison

## ► PUGET SOUND

**LOCATION:** Paradise

**TOTAL MILEAGE:** 4 miles RT

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 300 feet

**HIGHEST ELEVATION:** 300 feet

**MAP:** Green Trails 41S: Deception Pass

**PERMIT:** None

**DIRECTIONS:** From I-5, take the Burlington-Anacortes exit. Follow signs past the ferry landing to Washington Park.

**POST-HIKE:** While in the area, pay a visit to Deception Pass State Park and watch for wildlife from the bridge or beaches.



## Hike: Fidalgo Head Loop

*An easy hike that can be done year-round, with spectacular wildlife viewing as well as panoramas of the San Juan Islands.*

The Fidalgo Head Loop Trail is found in Washington Park, part of the City of Anacortes located on Fidalgo Island. This 220-acre park has some great ocean views. The trail is best started by parking near the restrooms just inside the park past the boat ramp parking lot. From here you can start downhill on the road and meet up with the small one lane loop road that travels through the park. This loop road is not open until 9:00 a.m. so hikers, bikers and baby strollers can walk the road without worrying about vehicles.

The trail parallels the road and crosses over the road for some portions and connects with other trails. All of these trails can be hiked in one day. For the best views of the sound, hike a combination of the road and trails. You will see the San Juan Islands, as well as the ferries heading out. There are always lots of kayakers and if you watch closely you can see bald eagles, blue herrons, seals, deer and if you're lucky maybe a killer whale.

Start on the Green Point Trail for views, then hop on the loop road for a spell and cut off the road where it connects with The Fidalgo Head Loop Trail. This route climbs slightly uphill for a spectacular view of Burrows Island, Burrows Pass and finally Flounder Bay. On the south side of the peninsula you can stroll the offshoot trails of Rosario Strait, Juniper Point, Burrows Bay, Channel View, and Hawkst Monument Trails; or stay on the Fidalgo Head Loop Trail which will take you through the middle of the park to the campgrounds, or back to the entrance, near where you parked.

All trails lead back to the entrance of the park or the loop road, so it's difficult to get lost. Caution is recommended when hiking some of the side trails as most of them head downhill to the waters edge and some of them are quite steep. Hang on to little ones.





*Hike and photo by Nate & Jer Barnes*

## ▶ ISSAQUAH ALPS

**LOCATION:** Redmond

**TOTAL MILEAGE:** 4.2 miles RT

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 200 feet

**HIGHEST ELEVATION:** 520 feet

**MAP:** King Co. Soaring Eagle Regional Park

**PERMIT:** None

**DIRECTIONS:** From SR-202, east of Redmond, take 224th Ave. NE south to E Main Drive. Turn east to park entrance.

**POST-HIKE:** Depending on which direction you're going, grab some post-hike grub at Fatburger in Redmond or North Bend.



## Hike: Soaring Eagle Trail

*Hike Soaring Eagle Regional Park's well-signed network of trails to explore this 600-acre urban forest just minutes from Seattle.*

Soaring Eagle's boundaries form an almost perfect square, a legacy of the early 1800s, when Washington was first surveyed. The state was divided into townships, each with 36 sections of one square mile, with one section in every township held in trust by the state for the building of schools. Soaring Eagle was such a section, and was managed by the Department of Natural Resources until 1993 when King County acquired the 600 acres from the DNR, and slowly began developing the area into a regional park. Grand plans of play fields were mothballed due to a lack of funding, and instead the mixed forest and wetlands were allowed to survive, supporting a host of wildlife, including deer, bears and a variety of birds.

Like many regional trail systems, Soaring Eagle is a cobweb of interconnected trails that cover most of the park. To prevent confusion, each of the 28 trail intersections is signed and most have a map letting you know where you are. You can see most of the park by making a large loop starting from the main entrance. Although housing developments are initially visible, they quickly fade into the trees as you wander deeper in. The grade is gentle and the trails are mostly in good repair, letting you enjoy the surroundings. Birds are plentiful and fill the trees with constant movement. The landscape is surprisingly fluid—widely spaced stands of alder and maple change quickly to more densely packed swaths of fir and hemlock which yield to sections of marshy wetlands.

The park is very popular for biking and trail running, so be prepared to share the trails. The main Pipeline Trail is wide and flat, making it possible to bring the whole family out, stroller and all. If you're looking for new places to bring the dog, this is a good option as well. On the other hand, there is relatively little rigorous hiking in the park, so those looking for a good hill climb might want to look further afield.





Hike and photo by Kelsie Donleycott

## ► OLYMPIC PENINSULA

**LOCATION:** Salt Creek Recreation Area

**TOTAL MILEAGE:** 5 miles RT

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 850 feet

**HIGHEST ELEVATION:** 1,166 feet

**MAP:** Green Trails 102: Joyce

**PERMIT:** None

**DIRECTIONS:** From Port Angeles, take US-101 west to SR-112. Turn right on Camp Hayden Road to Salt Creek County Park.

**POST-HIKE:** Go for a homestyle burger at the Blackberry Cafe in Port Angeles.



## Hike: Striped Peak

*Hike to the top of 1,166-foot Striped Peak while visiting a park full of dramatic coastal scenery, forests, rocky bluffs, tide pools, sandy beaches and more.*

A regional park that draws visitors from around the northwest, Clallam County's 196-acre Salt Creek Recreation Area, and adjoining 1,500-acre Washington State Department of Natural Resources tract which encompasses Striped Peak, offers a little bit of something for everyone: playgrounds and play fields, hiking and biking trails, wildlife viewing, remnants from WWII-era Camp Hayden, year-round camping and panoramic views of the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

The Striped Peak trail begins just past the park's entrance booth with trailhead parking at the right. Start out among fir and maple, traveling along a well-constructed gravel path. The wide path narrows to a sometimes-muddy trail that hugs the hillside near the coastline.

Into the forest, the trail wanders through towering cedar, fir and hemlock while ascending to a viewpoint. Peer 200 feet below to a remote and isolated cove that is accessible by a short and steep side trail about 1 mile up. Passing Striped Creek Falls, the route drops quickly over rocks and roots that are slippery when wet.

The main trail continues, briefly climbing and then leveling to a gentler grade. After crossing a few creeks, the trail turns and switchbacks to a junction with an ATV-path. Keep right, past the large rocks and emerge onto a dirt road. Follow to the intersection, turn left and then take the first right. Continue on the road for a short distance to the summit. If skies are clear, enjoy expansive views of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, Canada's Vancouver Island and the Cascade Mountains.

Upon return to the trailhead, or prior to ascent of Striped Peak if low tide allows, take time to visit Tongue Point Marine Life Sanctuary, accessed by a stairway at the west end of the park. Tread lightly on the mussel-covered shore and use caution on the slippery mats of seaweed and kelp. Bring a field guide to help with identification of a vast array of marine life, including sea stars, urchins, hermit crabs, chitons and more.





Hike by Brittany Manwill; Photo by Rick Parvey

## ► WILLAPA BAY

**LOCATION:** Leadbetter Point State Park

**TOTAL MILEAGE:** 10.6 miles RT

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 35 feet

**HIGHEST ELEVATION:** 50 feet

**MAP:** Leadbetter Point State Park

**PERMIT:** Discover Pass

**DIRECTIONS:** From Drive US-101 south toward Long Beach. Turn right onto Sand Ridge Road for 11 miles, then north on SR-103 for 7 miles to Leadbetter State Park.

**POST-HIKE:** Enjoy friendly service while dining on tasty sandwiches and clam chowder at the Great Day Cafe in Ocean Park.



## Hike: Leadbetter Point

*Go long, and hike over 10 miles on the flat, sandy and peaceful trails to the mouth of Willapa Bay on the Long Beach Peninsula.*

Leadbetter Point lies at the northern tip of the Long Beach Peninsula. The peaceful and often deserted trails run along the Willapa Bay shoreline for more than 10 miles, passing through maritime forests, mudflats, and grassy sand dunes.

From the trailhead, take the Red Trail (Dune Forest Loop) for 0.5 miles, then hop on the Blue Trail to the right for about 0.8 miles. The path passes lowland shrubs and forests before bursting onto the exposed sand dunes and heading to the beach. Continue north for another 0.5 miles, and take note of the Yellow Trail (Bear Berry Trail); you'll take this path on your return back to the trailhead.

The Willapa National Wildlife Refuge doesn't allow dogs, so if you brought your four-legged friend, this is your turnaround spot. Otherwise, continue north for another 3.5 miles towards Leadbetter Point, and pay attention for wildlife. Black-tailed deer and raccoons are prevalent, but the real attraction is bird watching. Long Beach Peninsula is right in the path of the Pacific Flyway, which is the main thoroughfare for migrating waterfowl. More than 200 different avian species frequent the area.

As you approach the northern tip of the Peninsula, you'll pass through some of the West Coast's best breeding grounds for bird species. You can even see nesting in action, as Leadbetter Point is home to one of the largest dune complexes in Washington state. Look, but don't touch. This area is off-limits to protect the endangered snowy plovers that nest here. Continue on until you reach Leadbetter Point. Relax at the point for a bit and enjoy the solitude of the Willapa Bay. When you're ready, double back and connect with the Yellow Trail to return to the trailhead.

Note that Leadbetter Point is constantly changing as the sand dunes shift or erode away. Changes in tide, rainfall or wind all impact the area. Sometimes you can continue beyond Leadbetter Point, and sometimes the trails are flooded before the point. Venture as far as is safe and the trail will let you.





Hike and photo by Aaron Theisen

## ► SPOKANE

**LOCATION:** Slavin Conservation Area

**TOTAL MILEAGE:** 3.3 mile loop

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 246 feet

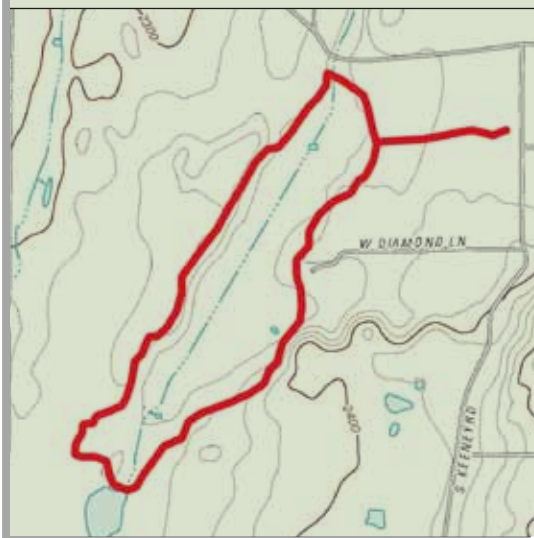
**HIGHEST ELEVATION:** 2,341 feet

**MAP:** USGS Quad: Spokane SW

**PERMIT:** None

**DIRECTIONS:** From Spokane, take I-90 west to Hwy 195 south. Drive 8.4 miles then turn right on Washington Road, and right again on Keeney Road. Park on left.

**POST-HIKE:** Visit the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture and the Campbell House in historic Browne's Addition.



## Hike: Slavin Pond Loop

*Purchased by Spokane County as part of its Conservation Futures program, Slavin Conservation Area is a link in the winter migratory flyway for many birds, where hikers, bikers and dog-walkers are likely to spot ducks, geese and owls on their winter forays.*

Depart from the parking lot and follow boot-beaten tread through a fallow field. At 0.4 miles bear right at a junction, cresting a small wooded knoll before dropping to the edge of a large pond. This wetland was restored from agricultural land by Spokane Parks Recreation and Golf, and now more than 120 species of birds visit its reed-lined banks. Walk alongside sedges at the edge of the pond to a ponderosa-dotted rock knob, a perfect picnic spot.

The track briefly descends crossing a fallow field under several old homesteader-planted trees before intersecting with an old two-track road at the base of a forested butte at 0.9 mile. Turn right and follow the old roadbed as it gradually climbs the edge of the butte. At 1 mile, bear right and descend along the edge of the field, entering a regenerating ponderosa pine forest at 1.3 miles. At 1.5, the forest opens to a small pond decorated with scattered aspens. Cross a man-made earthen dam and re-enter the trees. As the trail winds among ponderosas, exposed basalt rock and bunchgrass, it will occasionally fork; keep right, on the most well-trod path.

At 2 miles the large pond once again comes into view, this time some thirty feet below the butte on which you stand. Accompanied by the honking of ducks, geese and swans, amble along the butte, enjoying peekaboo views of the pond. At 2.6 miles the trail breaks from the trees and encounters a fence, beyond which is private property. Follow the fence right entering the edge of the marshland on the north side of the pond. At 3 miles, re-join the main trail from the beginning of the hike and return to the parking lot.

*Note: seasonal flooding occasionally inundates the trail at the edge of the marshland. If your boots begin to take on water, follow the drainage dike north until a crossing permits.*



## ► YAKIMA

**LOCATION:** Hanford Reach Recreation Area

**TOTAL MILEAGE:** 6-7 miles RT

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 600 feet

**HIGHEST ELEVATION:** 900 feet

**MAP:** DNR: Priest Rapids

**PERMIT:** None

**DIRECTIONS:** Take I-90 east to Vantage and cross the Columbia River. Immediately after crossing the river, turn right (south) at exit 137 onto SR-26 and continue 0.9 miles to the junction with SR-243. Turn right and drive 14.3 miles, then turn left (east) onto the Mattawa Highway/SR-24 cutoff road (signed as 24SW). Drive 13.8 miles to a junction with SR-24 and turn left. Just past milepost 63 turn right and pass through the gated entrance to the Wahluke Unit of the Hanford Reach National Monument. Continue straight ahead 4 miles, through an intersection, then another 4.1 miles to a gate and parking area atop the bluffs. Hanford Reach is open from 2 hours before sunrise to 2 hours after sunset.

**POST-HIKE:** Visit the Drumheller Channels National Natural Landmark. View the effects that the ancient Missoula Floods had on the central part of Washington in creating the dramatic Channelled Scablands, a landscape of deeply eroded cliffs, buttes and canyons amid high, volcanic plains.

*Hike and photo by David Hagen*

## Hike: South White Bluffs

*Take in views of banded, sedimentary bluffs and badlands, up and down the last free flowing stretch of the Columbia River, and across the Hanford Nuclear Reservation to Rattlesnake Mountain and the distant Cascades.*

For a change of scenery during winter, hike the White Bluffs in the Hanford Reach National Monument. The trailhead sits atop the bluffs and has a wonderful view of the entire White Bluffs and Hanford Reach area.

To start, walk around the gate and follow the old paved highway as it descends the bluffs. Watch for ripple and cross-bedding patterns in the gray Ringold Formation (ancient river and lakebed sediments that make up the White Bluffs) beside the roadway. After about 1 mile the road crosses a bench and then descends to river level through a large cut. Follow the pavement as far south as the gate just past the power lines and then cross the flat to the east and make a moderate climb to the top of the nearest bluffs. These bluffs are actually the ridge on the southwest side of the Great Valley. From here it is an easy descent into the valley and a mile or so of easy walking beneath 300–500 foot cliffs and badlands.

For even better views and a nice lunch spot, follow the boot/game trail northwest along the crest of the ridge to the high point. After soaking up the views, continue along the ridge crest, gradually descending to the northwest end of the Great Valley, then follow the trail as it traverses below the bluffs back to the old highway where it crosses the bench. If time permits, it's easy enough to combine the ridge walk with a tour of the valley.

Once back at the old highway, it's an easy walk back to the trailhead. But for more, continue across the road to a faint trail leading to the obvious sandstone pillar above the river. The area around the pillar is very hummocky (evidence of an ancient landslide) with many game trails providing lots of interesting terrain to explore. When you've had your fill, hike back to the old highway and climb the final half-mile back to the trailhead and the conclusion of another scenic walk in the shrub-steppe.





Hike and photo by Kimberly Craig

## ► YAKIMA

**LOCATION:** Cowiche Canyon

**TOTAL MILEAGE:** Up to 9.2 miles

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 1,140 feet

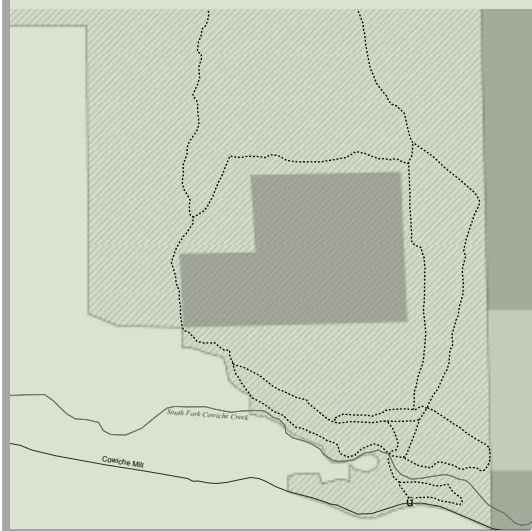
**HIGHEST ELEVATION:** 3,376 feet

**MAP:** <http://cowichecanyon.org>

**PERMIT:** None

**DIRECTIONS:** From I-82 in Yakima, take the 40th Street exit and drive south. Turn right on Summitview Ave. and continue 8.7 miles to Cowiche Mill Road. Turn left and drive 2.4 miles to Snow Mountain Ranch.

**PRE-HIKE:** Before heading out, fuel up with breakfast or lunch at Vicky's Cafe in Tieton.



## Hike: Snow Mountain Ranch

*For a flat riparian ramble, or a great workout to a scenic summit, Snow Mountain Ranch is a winter-walking wonderland.*

Cowiche Canyon Conservancy hopes to re-invigorate native shrub-steppe habitat to the once working cattle operation at Snow Mountain Ranch, a scant 9 miles west of Yakima. As hikers, we get to see their efforts up close.

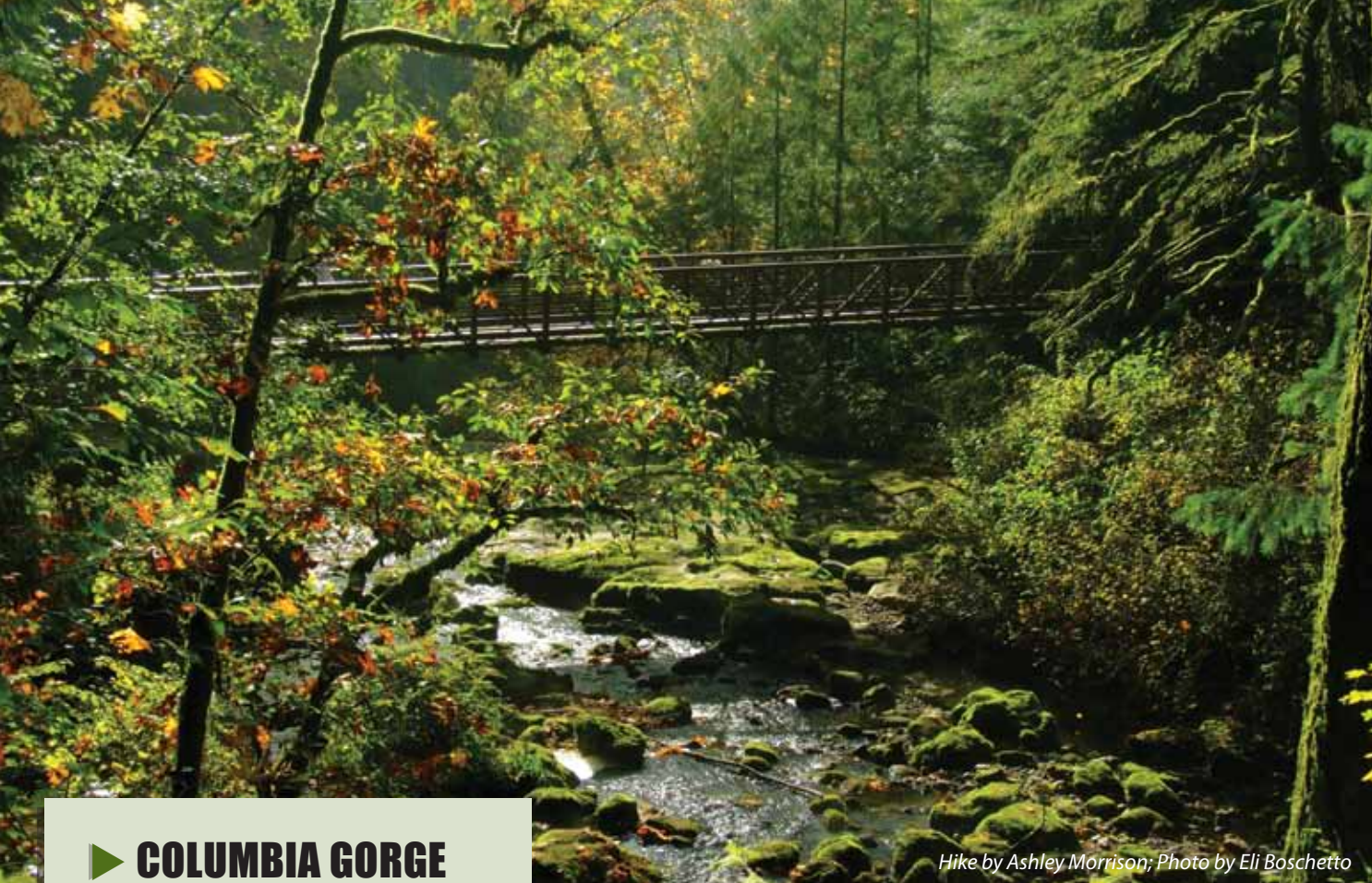
Snow Mountain Ranch offers a variety of winter walks on 9.2 miles of trails. Relics of the old cattle ranch still remind hikers of the past on this 1,800-acre property. The ranch was home to Elon and Joan Gilbert, friends of Justice William O. Douglas, who would often stop to visit on his way into the Cascades from his home in Yakima.

History is just one of many attractions at Snow Mountain Ranch. Hike the riparian areas for a chance to glimpse great horned owls, or focus your binoculars on the local pond for sightings of a variety of ducks. The lowland fields provide excellent hunting grounds for red-tailed hawks, sharp shinned hawks and northern harriers.

There is also a resident population of elk that wander in and out of ranch area. Deer and coyote signs are apparent on all trails. Hike to the top of Cowich Mountain for views westward of Mount Adams and Mount Rainier, and a large elk feeding station managed by WDFW. To the east Yakima is visible

Snowshoes are not usually required, but traction devices can come in handy when trails are icy.





Hike by Ashley Morrison; Photo by Eli Boschetto

## ► COLUMBIA GORGE

**LOCATION:** Vancouver/Camas

**TOTAL MILEAGE:** 4.5-mile loop

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 350 feet

**HIGHEST ELEVATION:** 400 feet

**MAP:** <http://cityofvancouver.us/parks-recreation/index.asp>

**PERMIT:** None

**DIRECTIONS:** From Vancouver, drive SR-14 east to Camas, exit 12. Continue along the SR-14 Business Route, through the intersections with Dallas and Garfield Streets, then left into a gravel parking area.

**POST-HIKE:** Check out the assortment of eclectic shops, art galleries and cafes in downtown Camas, or take a scenic drive along the Washougal River.



## Hike: Lacamas Park

*An easy outing to flowing streams, waterfalls and woodsy surroundings, ideal for a quick escape to nature in any winter conditions.*

Lacamas Park is a surprising find smack in the middle of the town of Camas, and ideal for a quick fix of crisp Gorge air. Amid streams and waterfalls swelled winter's runoff, you're sure to forget the quaint Camas downtown is but a few minutes away.

Start from the 3rd Avenue trailhead. If you're not paying close attention, it's easy to drive right by and never know this hidden little oasis exists here. Right away, the path parallels Lacamas Creek, often busy with blue herons, standing like statues hunting their next meal. The path is wide and graveled with some rolling ups and downs as it works its way to a picnic spot and Lower Falls. Watch for mushrooms in the forest duff. Cross the bridge, where the trail splits, hiking in a counter clockwise loop will take you uphill for roughly 50% of the excursion, saving the best of the sights for last.

Follow the trail, here an old gravel road, taking time to explore the small offshoots. While the main loop trail is open to bikes, the side trails are hiker-only and are clearly marked. As you approach Round Lake, veer off to the left, skirting the southwest section of the lake, where the path narrows again as it winds against the steep shore. You'll see where it leads up to the small dam and towards the main entrance (main parking lot/restrooms/playground/picnic areas). Rather, take the junction to hike back southeast, following Lacamas Creek and peering down at The Potholes from above. The pools and rock in this area are an interesting feature of the 312-acre park, but also easy to pass by, so keep your eyes on the water as you pass through this section.

If the sun peeks out during this time of year, it is likely to do so here, where the trees are a bit open and the angle right for soaking up some sunbeams. From here, the trail continues, narrow and winding, often muddy in the winter months, as it enters an area of cedar and lush vegetation. Remember, this is a quick outing, so just as the going gets really good, you'll find yourself back at the bridge at Lower Falls. Turning right, follow the wide path back to the trailhead.