

Trail Work Myth-Busting, p.12 Maps You Need, p.33 Trappers Peak, p.51

WASHINGTON TRAILS

July + August 2011 » A Publication of Washington Trails Association

www.wta.org » \$4.50

Head to the Crest

Hike the Pacific Crest Trail for stellar views and soul repair

INSIDE

PCT Feats and Firsts

Trail Angels

Trail Magic

Plus,

How to Tell Better Tales

Make Fish Tacos in the

Backcountry



» Table of Contents

July+August 2011

This Month's Cover »
Photo by Karl Forsgaard

Hiker Greg Jacoby amidst lupines and bistort on the Pacific Crest Trail near White Pass

Volume 47, Issue 4

News + Views

The Front Desk » Craig McKibben

Why we need the PCT, even if we never hike it.» **p.4**

The Signpost » Lace Thornberg

What motivates a PCT thru-hiker?» **p.5**

Trail Talk »

Reader survey results and a Q&A session with search and rescue.» **p.6**

Hiking News »

Anniversaries and road closures.» **p.8**

WTA at Work

Trail Work » Diane Bedell

We take a pulaski to our favorite trail maintenance myths.» **p.12**

Action for Trails » Jonathan Guzzo, Ryan Ojerio

A legislative session look back.» **p.16**
Why the Dark Divide goes too often unexplored.» **p.17**

Membership News » Kara Chin

Hike-a-Thon—it's on!» **p.20**

On Trail

Special Feature »

All about the Pacific Crest Trail

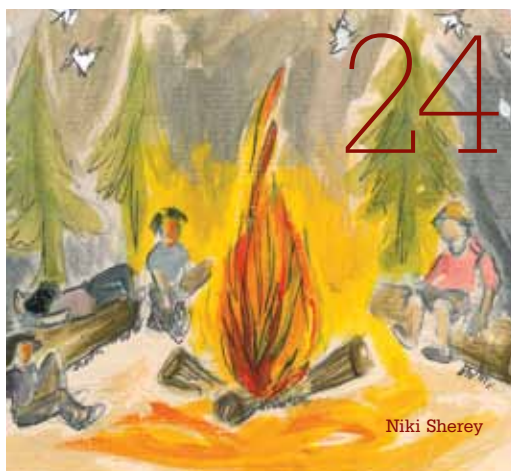
Best bets for a day or weekend.» **p.22**

PCT personalities.» **p.25**

The PCT across a lifetime.» **p.28**

The PCT's bold trendsetters.» **p.31**

Volunteer Vacations on the crest.» **p.32**



Backcountry

The Gear Closet » Susan Ashlock, Adam Scroggins

Navigate to the right map.» **p.33**

Family-friendly camping gear.» **p.35**

Sage Advice » Chris Wall

How to tell spell-binding tales.» **p.38**

Trail Eats » Sarah Kirkconnell

Dinner for two trailside.» **p.40**

Take a Hike

Day Hikes and Overnights »

Suggested hikes statewide.» **p.41**

Nature on Trail » Sylvia Feder

You've seen krummholz before, but did you know what it was?» **p.49**

A Walk on the Wild Side »

Elizabeth Lunney

The essence of trail magic.» **p.50**

Featured Landscape » Buff Black

Why you really must visit Trappers Peak.» **p.51**

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Washington Trails Volume 47, Issue 4

Owner & Publisher WASHINGTON TRAILS ASSOCIATION

Washington Trails (ISSN 1534-6366) is published bimonthly by the Washington Trails Association, 705 Second Ave., Suite 300, Seattle, WA 98104. Annual membership dues include a subscription to *Washington Trails* and are \$40. Single copy price is \$4.50. Periodicals postage paid at Seattle, WA, and at additional mailing locations. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to: Washington Trails Association, 705 Second Ave., Suite 300, Seattle, WA 98104.

WTA Highlights »

A few snapshots we just had to share



Crew leader Mike Owens celebrated his 2,000th work party this spring at Evans Creek Preserve.



Edmonds Community College named WTA as their Outstanding Non-Profit Organization of the Year in recognition of the "alternative spring break" we hosted with them. Youth Program Coordinator Chris Wall accepted the award. Photo by Trevor Anderson.



How stoked are we that this truck is one of our two new rigs? Super stoked! Matt Thyer, Fireside Circle member, Hike-a-Thon participant and gear reviewer, donated this 1995 Toyota 4Runner to us. Facebook fan Sarah McGann donated her 1991 Toyota Land Cruiser. We extend our sincere thanks!

News+Views

The Front Desk »

The Impractical Dream

Thru-hiking the Pacific Crest Trail is one of those oversized goals, like climbing Mount Everest or sledging to the South Pole, that takes on a meaning beyond the physical facts. Hiking 2,650 miles from Mexico to Canada is not something you do for practical reasons. You're not going to get rich doing it, but for many people, adventures are what make life worth living.

Reading the accounts of thru-hikers, I'm struck by the wide range of emotions and feelings that come up. While I can't speak from personal experience, these thru-hiker's feelings appear to be on a slow-motion emotional roller coaster. Instead of the rapid changes of city life, their thoughts and feelings seem to slow down to hiker speed, in sync with the hills and valleys of the trail.

Two years ago, I confirmed this suspicion. Our daughter Fiona was co-leading one of the WTA weeklong Volunteer Vacations so, naturally, my wife and I signed up. (If you have been through the parenting experience you will understand.) We found ourselves working on the PCT near Wapatus Lake in the Central Cascades. Fellow volunteer crews had brushed the trail the year before, and we were here to work on tread improvements. Each day, three or four thru-hikers would pass our work site. They always thanked us for the work we were doing to maintain the trail, but they generally did not stop. After 2,000 miles, they probably had seen work parties before and we were nothing special. Some were deep in an internal dialogue and they barely noticed us. Others were looking at the gorgeous mountains. They gave us big smiles and kept on moving. One PCT veteran on his third thru-hike had time to stop and chat. Maybe with experience came the confidence that he could stop and chat and still make his mileage goal for the day.

For us not-yet-thru-hikers, the PCT is important beyond the hiking itself. It's a symbol for great adventures both in the past and dreamed about for the future. Even if I never quite get it together to commit six months to the venture, just knowing that the trail is there, knowing that it's an option, and knowing that people do hike it helps to sustain me.



Craig McKibben

Acting Executive
Director
craig@wta.org

Would like to volunteer on the PCT? WTA will host two Volunteer Vacation trips for adults and three trips for youth on the PCT later this summer. See page 32 for details.

The Signpost »

Why the PCT?

It's called "the border swath" and it's a clearcut, just the sort of thing hikers typically try to avoid seeing when they venture into the wilderness. But this particular clearcut, which defines the border between the United States and Canada, is the end goal for the 300 or so people who undertake the full-length of the Pacific Crest Trail annually.

Why? What is it about this trail? Is it the length? Or the terrain it crosses? The vistas one can take in?

Does the allure have anything to do with the trail at all?

It's entirely possible that the people who have thru-hiked the PCT would've taken on any number of other challenges laid before them. But, personally, I suspect that the existence of the Pacific Crest Trail, and other long trails, spurs people to think big, to dream, and to eventually realize that a five-month hike is something that they really could do.

While putting together the special features in this issue, I've had the great pleasure of corresponding with several PCT thru-hikers—regular folks like you and me, except that they've traveled the length of three very long states on foot. As you can guess, I have learned a lot.

For one, I learned the motto "Hike Your Own Hike," a sentiment that guides many PCT thru-hikers. From all the different stories I heard, I realized that each and every thru-hiker has a unique success to celebrate. On page 25, you'll read about WTA member Jack Kaleas, the only person to have ever hiked all of the PCT in Washington by means of day hiking only—or so he thinks, having not heard of anyone else to do so. Another member, Connie Davis, told me, "My son and I thru-hiked in 2005. As far as we know, we are the only mother-son team to thru-hike the trail." It seems that many of these feats would otherwise go undocumented, so we've taken a few pages to showcase a few of them here. There are more, to be sure.

I've also learned that while hiking the trail will strengthen your connection to nature, there are no guarantees when it comes to personal relationships. As thru-hiker Shelly Leavens told me, "My relationship with my husband followed the ups and downs of the path." They

ended up closer, but other relationships fall apart completely. (See "Trail Magic" by Elizabeth Lunney on page 50.) And in yet another case, the PCT provided first a place to get out of one relationship and, later, a place to start an entirely new one. Read about Carolyn Burkhart's PCT experience (starting on page 28) for that story.

To cover absolutely everything about the 2,638-or-so-mile-long PCT, we'd need to pen a hefty book, or at least to make it the subject of this magazine every month (and the *PCTA Communicator* already does that), so I hope you'll forgive us for not touching on the subject of gear at all—not how much or how little to bring, nor the inventive solutions thru-hikers dream up nor the quantities of hiking gear that one might burn up on a five-month hike. We also gave very little space to logistics, leaving the subject of resupply boxes and mail drops more or less behind. Check out the growing number of blogs on these topics. Many are quite fascinating.

Instead, we talked a lot about thru-hiking and thru-hikers. And we included plenty of inspiration for those of us—that's most of us—whose PCT experiences will be measured in days and nights, not months. For Eli Boschetto's piece, "Best of the Crest," we polled prolific PCT hikers about their favorite stretches in order to give day hikers and weekend backpackers a taste of the absolute best stuff that this trail has to offer.

Of course, you never know. Take our advice and visit one of those splendid places, and you might find that a day, a night, a week, or a month just isn't enough. I've always insisted that I wouldn't want to thru-hike the PCT. After working on this issue, I am not so sure anymore. The allure of this fabled trail has certainly grown.

Lace Thornberg



The PCT offers restorative experiences for day hikers and thru-hikers alike. Photo by Connie Davis.



Lace Thornberg

Editor
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Trail Talk »

Survey says ...

Reader feedback shapes each issue of *Washington Trails*. By Lace Thornberg

As a magazine by and for Washington's hikers, reader input lies at the heart of our editorial calendar. This spring, we polled 6,000 *Washington Trails* readers to find out what they love, loathe, and want to see changed about this publication. A tremendous 1,300 readers replied so we have some great data.

Though not surprising, it's quite helpful to know that **64 percent of you will day hike more than 10 times this year**. Thirty-eight percent of you will backpack once or twice. It was also useful to learn that 36 percent of you don't plan on snowshoeing this year, 76 percent of you won't be mountain biking and 81 percent of you won't be running down the trail. Lots of day hiking, some backpacking, not so much for other trail pursuits. Got it.

And the clearest message our readers sent? Our photography rocks! Thirty-six percent of respondents ranked the quality of our photography as "excellent." Another 44 percent called it "very good," and photographs were consistently cited among people's favorite elements, described as an inspiration to get outside. Clearly, it's high time to publicly thank the many photographers who have been exceedingly generous with their photography over the years. Thank you—your efforts have not gone unnoticed by the hiking community!

The themes that emerged in the answers to our open-ended questions, when you could have said anything at all, were fascinating.

You really like that it's local. We heard "close," "local," and relevant" a lot.

- "Local info that stretches my brain and gets my butt into gear."
- "It's a local magazine with local information and helps with fund raising and lobbying to protect our local assets."

You're pleased with the "mix" and "variety" of coverage, through which *Washington Trails* achieves "a nice balance."

- "I believe the great variety of items covered is fantastic and provides something for everyone."
- "Nice balance between general hiking and outdoor topics and news about trail maintenance, volunteer opportunities, projects, recognition of crews' work."

A decent number of you mentioned that **you like that our magazine "exists."** Simple as that. It seems the existence of this magazine provides some validation of hiking as good use of one's time. You're welcome!

Of course, we also wanted insight into how to improve this publication. While there were many interesting ideas here, by far the most popular answer was "nothing." **Many people took this opportunity to express their contentment with *Washington Trails*.** Some were downright apologetic about liking it, saying, "I like it as it is frankly" and, "Really, everything is great as is." Well, shucks! Again, we have to thank our regular magazine volunteers who do such a wonderful job.

The next most prominent theme concerned our "Take a Hike" section, and the feedback was consistently along these lines:

- "You probably do not need hiking trip reports. With the wonderful website you have, a person could find a review of possibly any hike. For hikes, I rely mostly on the Web, rather than the magazine."

And, what would these folks like to see instead of the trip reports?

- "More current hiking suggestions for the current season and current hiking reviews."
- "Perhaps replace Trip Reports with Hiking Guide type content instead."

Wow, what a great suggestion! Umm ... wait ... we already did that.

We actually stopped republishing the hiking trip reports that are submitted online as of our November+December 2010 issue. All of the hike suggestions since then have been just that, hike suggestions for the upcoming season. Clearly, I didn't make this transition obvious enough, so, in this issue, I've tried to be a bit more explicit about it and—bonus!—we're using a new map for your overall orientation and have added maps to each hike suggestion. (Thank you, Mark! Thank you, National Geographic TOPO!)

Sixty percent of you want to see more hike suggestions, so we plan to continue in this "suggested hikes" fashion. But, to do so, we will need your help! So far, Steve Payne has contributed more than his fair share of these hike suggestions, and we know Steve isn't the only avid hiker out there! To share your hike suggestions with fellow readers, please visit www.wta.org/suggestahike.

Or, what the heck, skip the form and just email me. **What is your favorite fall hike?** Send your 300-word suggestion, along with all the relevant stats on mileage and elevation gain, to editor@wta.org by August 15.



Write to Us »

Send a letter to
705 Second Ave.
Suite 300,
Seattle WA 98104
or
email
editor@wta.org

Chat With Us »

To discuss trail
issues online, visit
the Signpost Blog
at www.wta.org/blog
or follow WTA
on Facebook or
Twitter.

Q&A

WTA's Holly Chambers talks with King County Search and Rescue Association's Public Information Officer Scott Preston

What is the most common reason that people call for search and rescue services?

Our "bread and butter" mission is for someone with an injured ankle or knee who needs help getting back to the trailhead. Next would be a mission for a hiker or backpacker reported overdue by a loved one.

Is there a charge for search and rescue services? What if a helicopter is used for a search or an evacuation?

No. Search and Rescue services are indirectly paid for through tax dollars. Even if someone is evacuated by a county helicopter, or if a county helicopter is used to search for a missing person, that person (or their family) won't get a bill in the mail. However, the units that constitute KCSARA are nonprofit volunteer organizations, and donations are gladly accepted.

How does a lost or injured hiker request search and rescue services? What information is needed?

Dial 911 and tell the operator what is going on. Provide as much pertinent information as possible—what trailhead did you start from, what is your current location (how far or how long did you hike), do you have any injuries, are you alone, what equipment or gear do you have with you?

If a lost or injured hiker is able call for help, can't search and rescue just use their cell phone to determine their location?

It depends. There are ways to locate someone based on a cell phone call, but these tools are not always available or accurate enough to direct search and rescue to a specific location. It's safer and more reliable to learn how to use a map and compass well (or a map, compass and GPS), than to rely only on a cell phone. That said, take your cell phone with you on hikes, even if you leave it turned off and stowed in your pack. If needed, it could be used to make a call, possibly to get a general idea of your location, or to signal a helicopter using FLIR (forward looking infrared).

What should a lost or injured hiker do in an area without cell reception?

Prepare before you hike! Make a hike plan before your trip, and leave it with someone at home (where you are going, when you'll be back, etc.). Have the appropriate gear and equipment for your trip (including the Ten Essentials). Consider using a personal locator beacon that can signal your need for help in areas without cell reception.

If you do get injured or lost, stay put! That can be hard to do once in panic mode, but it is the best thing that you can do to increase your chances of being found by ground teams that may include animal and human trackers. Stay calm. Find or make a shelter (put those Ten Essentials to use). Staying warm and dry are essential steps for preventing deadly hypothermia. Wait for help—either rescue teams or other hikers and backpackers. Having a whistle handy is a great way to respond to rescuers' calls or to signal to other hikers.

If someone is overdue from a hike or backcountry trip, is there a 24-hour waiting period before they can be reported missing?

No! Call for help as soon as you know that someone is overdue. The responding law enforcement agency will determine whether a search is warranted. It is better to get resources moving earlier rather than later. KCSARA responds to missions 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Scott Preston joined King County Search and Rescue Association (KCSARA) in 2006. In addition to serving as KCSARA's public information officer, Scott is the incident support team unit leader, an instructor and an EMT. When Scott isn't volunteering with KCSARA, he helps keep the University of Washington prepared for emergencies as their business continuity manager.

Read more online at www.wta.org/hiking-info/basic-search-and-rescue. Learn more about volunteering with or donating to KCSARA at www.kcsara.org.



“Staying warm and dry are essential steps for preventing deadly hypothermia.”

Hiking News »

A New Pass for Hikers to Carry

As of July 1, hikers need a Discover Pass to visit Washington's state parks and public lands

At the start of 2011, Washington's hikers faced the daunting proposition of losing access to our state lands, from Deception Pass to Mount Si, Frenchman Coulee to Beacon Rock. Each day brought a new list of potential closures and various proposed solutions, from per person fees to agency consolidation to higher license renewal donations. Hikers had questions: Would parks be open? Would we pay to visit them? How much?

Now that the Discover Pass has been enacted by the Washington state Legislature, we have answers. We know that our state lands will remain open and that hikers will need a new \$30 annual vehicle pass to visit them.

If you followed this legislation in the news or on Washington Trails Association's website, you know that the path that brought hikers to these answers was a long and winding one.

As the voice for the Evergreen State's hikers, WTA considered it our job to make sure there was funding for state trails in the state budget. We also knew that any new fee would have to be a reasonable amount that hikers would be willing to pay. When the original proposal was released last year, the fee proposed was \$40 per person, not per vehicle. WTA pushed back, advocating a fee structure that was more reasonable for hikers and would

be easier to enforce than the original option forwarded by the agencies.

Thanks to the support of hiking advocates, WTA was able to bring about these changes to the Discover Pass:

- WTA lobbied legislators to change the user fee proposal to a \$30 per vehicle pass, much like the Northwest Forest Pass.
- We advocated a lower volunteer hour requirement to earn a free annual pass, and we were successful in changing this requirement from 40 hours to 24.
- We pushed for a single pass for all three agencies rather than a confusing multi-pass system.

While not all hikers agree that the Discover Pass is a good solution, many, including the 2,000 hikers who signed a petition supporting it, see it as the only way to ensure that these special places receive the dedicated funding they deserve. This critical legislation to keep our state parks, Department of Natural Resources and Department of Fish and Wildlife sites open and maintained would not have passed without hikers voicing their support for it.

This summer, annual (\$30) Discover Passes and day passes (\$10) will be available for sale online through the Department of Fish and Wildlife, in person at any vendor that sells hunting and fishing permits, and by phone at (866) 320-9933. Beginning in the fall of 2011, you will be able to purchase the Discover Pass through the state Department of Licensing vehicle registration and tab renewal process. For more information, visit www.discoverpass.wa.gov.♦

Gov. Gregoire signing the Discover Pass bill into law on May 12, 2011.



Washington State Governor Chris Gregoire signs SB 5622.

20110512-0005 W/ASenate JB

What Pass Do I Need?

Federal and state lands require different passes. If you are wondering what pass you'll need to display while hiking this summer, head to WTA's website for advice. You can find complete information at:

www.wta.org/hiking-info/basics/what-pass-do-i-need-faq

www.wta.org/hiking-info/basics/what-pass-do-i-need-faq/passes-and-permit-info

Road Closures on the MBS

A good news, bad news situation as the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest undertakes numerous road repairs this summer

If you've been a WTA member long enough, you know that one perennial topic of conversation is storm-damaged Forest Service roads—particularly on the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest—that don't get repaired season after season because there are no funds to repair them. Well, here you have it, finally, there are some funds to repair roads!

The down side is that the Forest Service's window of opportunity to make repairs overlaps entirely with the hiking prime time: summer.

"If I had to characterize how hikers will feel about their access this summer in one word, it'd be *frustrated*," says Darrington District Ranger Peter Forbes.

For the full, long list of closures, find the "Road and Trail Conditions" report on the MBS website. WTA will also keep hikers updated about these closures as they happen.



In June, a WTA contingent hiked a portion of the Suiattle River Road to milepost 14.4 to look at a potential reroute site.

Western Access to Glacier Peak Will Be Very Challenging

Road construction this summer will effectively cut off all western access to Glacier Peak and the Glacier Peak Wilderness. The only reliable access for climbers and hikers this summer will be a long approach from the east on the White River Trail.

Road closures and scheduled road work in this area include:

North Fork Sauk Road (Forest Road 49).

This road is already closed at its start and will be closed through late summer, as road crews repair washouts. Several trails will be inaccessible during this closure period, most notably the North Fork Sauk Trail 649, which leads up to the Pacific Crest Trail and Pilot Ridge Trail 652.

White Chuck River Road (Forest Road 23).

We will be regaining some of the glory of the White Chuck River area—in 2012. The Forest Service has this road closed at its start, but will be reopening it to MP 5.7 when remainder of the old road is decommissioned and all other work along the route is complete, possibly by late fall of this year, but more likely in June 2012. All access will be restricted during this summer's construction.

State Route 530. Washington State Department of Transportation will be moving SR 530 away from the Sauk River at milepost 59.5, 10 miles north of Darrington and Suiattle River Road, and south of Illabot Road, began in March and will last through the summer. Hikers should expect travel delays. The road work in the Stagland Hill area west of Darrington on Highway 530 is complete.

Suiattle River Road (Forest Road 26). Earlier this year, this road was scheduled to be

reopened to milepost 20. The Federal Highway Administration has now abandoned this project and the road will remain closed after MP 12.6, leaving a number of trailheads, including Huckleberry Mountain 780, Downey Creek 768, Green Mountain 782 and many more, off-limits to vehicles. Beyond the current gate at milepost 12, access will be limited to foot and bike travel. (See article on page 11).

Other Spectacular Hikes Will Be Periodically Off-Limits

The Cascade River Road (Forest Road 15)

outside Marblemount will be periodically closed at milepost 12 to repair Hard Creek Bridge. Currently the Hard Creek Bridge is in a "one-lane" status. Check with the Forest Service before setting off to hike to Cascade Pass and points beyond.

Canyon Creek Road (Forest Road 31). This road is the easy way into Damfino Lakes and Excelsior Peak 625, as well as the Canyon Ridge Trail 689. Unfortunately, the road is closed at milepost 0 until further notice.

Tupso Pass Road (Forest Road 41) is closed to vehicles at milepost 3.5 through August, blocking access to the Three Fingers Peak 641 and other trails in the area.

Cayada Creek Road (Forest Road 7810). Put gorgeous Summit Lake 1177 on your list for fall or next year, because road construction will block access July 15 and into August.

The **Middle Fork Snoqualmie Road** outside North Bend will be closed at milepost 15 from July 5 to July 15, blocking access to the Dingford Creek Trailhead 1005.1. Hikers can still reach the Middle Fork Campground.♦

This report is current as of June 10 and certain to change over the summer. Check the "Road and Trail Conditions" tab found at www.fs.usda.gov/mbs for the most current information.

You can also check WTA's blog and sign up to receive *Trail News*.



James Holloway

Work on Cape Horn Resumes

After the project was stalled this winter by wet weather and highway construction blocked access to the project site, WTA volunteers have resumed construction on a new foot bridge on the Cape Horn Trail.

To help fund bridge construction and other trail improvements, the National Forest Foundation is matching gifts to the project dollar-for-dollar. To date, WTA has raised \$8,743 in private funds towards the \$13,000 goal for WTA's half of the anticipated \$26,000 project costs. The silver lining of the delays is that WTA received an extension on our original deadline. To help us reach our goal and have your gift doubled, you can contribute online at www.wta.org/capehorn until September 15, 2011.

This summer, we're also lending a hand to the Friends of the Columbia Gorge to build an overlook at the high point on the trail. WTA crew leaders coordinated trail construction work on National Trails Day in partnership with the Friends of the Gorge, REI and the Cape Horn Conservancy. This new ADA trail will one day connect to a day-use parking area planned atop Cape Horn. ♦



Alyssa Krieder

WTA Fields District Leaders

WTA's staff size swells in the summer, as we hire crew leaders to head up field work. Here are our district crew leaders for summer 2011, from left: Arlen Bogaards (Mount Baker), Marcus Bianco (Snoqualmie - North Bend), Ryan Schreiner (Gifford Pinchot and Gorge), Claire Hanson (Snoqualmie - North Bend), Forrest Kelly (Skykomish), William Jahncke (Olympics - Hood Canal). Not pictured: John Longsworth (Rainier). ♦



Josh McCullough

Columbia River Gorge Turns 25

On November 17, 1986, the Columbia Gorge became the first landscape to be designated as a National Scenic Area, in a bill signed into law by President Ronald Reagan. In six years, Friends of the Columbia Gorge and its allies achieved a goal that had eluded Gorge lovers since 1937, when federal protection was first proposed. This year, as the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area celebrates its 25th anniversary, there's never been a better time to explore the Gorge—or to think about how this landscape could have turned out very differently.

Encompassing more than 292,000 acres, the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area includes a mix of private, state and federal land, plus 13 designated urban areas. The purpose of the act is to protect cultural, scenic, natural, and recreational resources while promoting economic viability in the 13 urban areas.

In the early 1980s, a hiker named Nancy Russell was inspired by the stunning views along the Cape Horn Ridge and determined that those views would always be open to the public. Nancy founded the Friends of the Columbia Gorge, and, with help from the Trust for Public Land, purchased 12 of the 16 Rim View Estates plots lining that spectacular bluff. Instead of being lost to a housing subdivision, public access to this bluff was protected.

It's taken decades, but the land on the Cape Horn bluff is now under Forest Service ownership and a 6.8-mile public trail is complete. It's the newest trail in the Gorge, and it was worth the wait. The terrain is moderate, with plenty of reasons to visit, including coniferous forest for year-round greenery, deciduous trees for fantastic autumn foliage, sweeping views of the Columbia Gorge and an impressive waterfall—all found just 25 miles east of Vancouver. The Cape Horn Trail made the Friends of the Columbia Gorge's list of Top 25 trails. The 25 Trails, 25 Years celebratory hiking challenge is going on now and runs through October 31.

The Cape Horn Trail is also the site of one of the many celebrations taking place this year to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the act. This summer, there will be a flurry of activity at the top of Cape Horn Trail as the Friends of the Columbia Gorge, U.S. Forest Service, and Cape Horn Conservancy and WTA work together to clear debris, build a handicapped-accessible trail and plant native plants to complete site preparation for the Nancy Russell Overlook that will be dedicated on August 13.

To learn more about the 25 Trails, 25 Years celebratory hiking challenge, visit www.gorgefriends.org/25trails. For more information about the Nancy Russell Overlook dedication and other upcoming 25th anniversary events, visit www.Gorge25.com. ♦

Story by Maegan Jossey, Outdoor Programs Coordinator for the Friends of the Columbia Gorge.

Leave No Trace designates Mount Rainier as a 2011 Hot Spot



It's easy to see why people flock to Paradise, but we all have the responsibility to stick to the designated trails. Photo by Mariya Smit.

This spring, the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics named Mount Rainier National Park's Paradise area as a Leave No Trace Hot Spot.

With the tallest volcano and the most heavily glaciated peak in the contiguous United States, Mount Rainier National Park is an extremely popular park, receiving 1.5 million to 2 million visitors each year, with over 10,000 summit attempts made annually. The "ground zero" for much of this activity is Paradise—the most heavily visited location within this popular park.

Paradise is well-known for its outstanding scenery, spectacular wildflower displays, historic inn, hiking trails and winter recreation opportunities. Consequently, the recreation-related impacts at Paradise are severe, including miles of social trails and damage to subalpine meadows caused by off-trail travel. All these factors led to the designation of Mount Rainier as a 2011 Leave No Trace Hot Spot.

In partnership with the National Park Service, the Leave No Trace Center will work to mitigate the recreation impacts in this area by providing Leave No Trace training and best management practices for key park service staff and volunteers, developing Paradise-specific Leave No Trace information, and creating signage to convey the newly developed information to visitors. Look for community events hosted in conjunction with the Hot Spot initiative that will involve the local community in order to raise awareness about the designation and the program.

The Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics will be collaborating with volunteers, nonprofit organizations, friends groups and governmental agencies to reduce the impact of recreational activities at Paradise. For more information on the 2011 Hot Spots initiative, as well as ways to get involved, visit www.lnt.org/01_community/hotspots.php. ♦

At right: The Suiattle River as seen from Suiattle River Road milepost 14.4. Photo by Susan Elderkin.

Suiattle River Road Repairs Delayed

The U.S. Forest Service and Federal Highway Administration have ended their plans to repair the long-washed-out Suiattle River Road (Forest Road 26) this summer. The \$1.7 million project, which was to use emergency highway funds for the repair, was abandoned when federal funding was withdrawn in light of a recent lawsuit.

The Suiattle Road project had been challenged by a lawsuit seeking an injunction. Two organizations, the North Cascades Conservation Council and Pilchuck Audubon Society, and Lynnwood engineer and hiker Bill Lider sued to halt work on the road repair project, contending that repairs at mileposts 12.6 and 14.4 were not properly scoped for environmental impacts. The lawsuit also objected to the use of emergency highway repair funds for the project.

The Suiattle River Road, which provides west-side access to the Glacier Peak Wilderness, has been washed out in several places since massive flooding damaged the road in 2003 and 2006. The washouts have prevented hiker access to stunning day hikes like Green Mountain and backpacks like Vista Creek Loop.

The Suiattle River Road is a critically important access route into the Glacier Peak Wilderness, so this news comes as a blow to many west-side hikers who love this area. WTA has long mourned the loss of this road, and we feel strongly that this route is worthy of being rebuilt.

The Federal Highway Administration has not taken future repairs off of the table. The agency will include additional environmental analysis the next time it considers making repairs to the Suiattle River Road. ♦



WTA at Work

Trail Maintenance »

Trail Work, True or False

We answer questions and debunk a few myths about trail maintenance

You don't lead 100,000 hours of volunteer trail work without getting a few questions from hikers and volunteers. And when we get questions, we like to refer people to the appropriate passages in Forest Reserve Order No. 36.

What's that you say? You've never read Forest Reserve Order No. 36?

Allow us to introduce you! Written in 1906 by Gifford Pinchot, the first Chief of the U.S. Forest Service, Forest Reserve Order No. 36 is the first document we're aware of that provides directions for trail builders, and we still follow many of its guidelines to this day.

Here's an example. "A general system of trails for the whole reserve should first be decided upon, and those trails of greatest immediate importance should be constructed at once." Sure enough, this principle rang true as ever on our Evan's Creek Preserve project, where our volunteers are building a phased series of loop trails for the City of Sammamish.

Of course, a few things have changed since nineteen-aught-six. For instance, Pinchot's pamphlet is full of directions to men (*your men should always do this first, have your men do that ...*), and we've got

just as many women as men on our trail crews! In addition to referring back to Pinchot's early guidelines, we also consult with our partners at the National Park Service and turn to the Trail Construction and Maintenance Notebook produced by the Forest Service and we've dog-eared most pages of the Student Conservation Association's trail building and maintenance manual

Lightly on the Land.

Keeping in mind the old adage that if someone asks you a question, others have wondered the same thing, we thought it'd be useful to provide answers here in the magazine to a few of the questions we're asked most often.

Why do trails need to be built? Can't trails just be "hiked in" the old-fashioned way?

This is a commonly held notion—I used to think that many of my favorite trails were just boot-hiked in as well! Prospectors and sheep herders did develop miles of trails, but these trails are often poorly located, and they are the most difficult to maintain today. Truth is, the best trails we have today were carefully designed and built decades ago.

One of the ways I honed my own trail skills was to evaluate trails constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the 1930s. (You know you're officially a trail geek when you scramble over the edge



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A CCC crew building trail in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest

of a trail just to gawk at an absolutely amazing rock wall holding up the trail, much of it so moss-covered that you might not realize it is a constructed feature.) CCC crews constructed many of the bridges, dry-laid rock retaining walls, rock steps and trail shelters we still enjoy to this day. Many of the trails in my favorite state parks, like the Hamilton Mountain Trail at Beacon Rock State Park, were constructed by the triple Cs. The steps at Heather Meadows, sections of the Washington Cascade Crest Trail (precursor to the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail) and improvements to the Wonderland Trail at Mount Rainier National Park were all constructed by the CCC in the 1930s.

In contrast to social trails that develop through regular use, today's well-built trails are designed and maintained to ensure that there are no truly unsafe conditions along the trail. The path will be sited to shed water and correct causes of significant trail damage, like erosion, sedimentation or the trampling of vegetation and soils. A well-built trail is constructed with particular design standards in mind, and the ease of travel will match the range of users and the recreational setting. In other words, a short, popular trail frequented by large groups and families will be built to a different standard than a remote trail that is likely only visited by users with a high level of ability. Or, as Pinchot put it, *"When a trail is to be one of the main routes of travel, build it well."*

Why are you working on this trail? It looks fine to me.

Two words: sunlight and water. I would wager most of you understand why water is a problem. Just think back to any trail you hiked this spring. You probably saw a ribbon of water running down the middle of the tread (well, that is if you could find the tread under the snow). This runoff leads to trail erosion, which is no fun to hike on, and sediment deposition in nearby streams, which is definitely no good for the fish. Knocking back berms and keeping the drain dips, ditches and waterbars function-

ing properly help prevent trail erosion.

So why is sunlight an issue? Given the lack of sun this spring, many of you might think I'm nuts to say it's a problem for hikers, but sunlight promotes plant growth, and plant growth is detrimental to trails. Many trails would quickly be lost or obscured if they were not periodically brushed. Sometimes the judicious use of a pair of loppers to trim back the huckleberries or encroaching conifer branches can be all that is needed to maintain a trail for the year.

Which leads us to the following question ...

Why are you cutting back SO MUCH brush?

Keeping trails properly brushed out is one of the most important tasks we can do for maintaining trails.

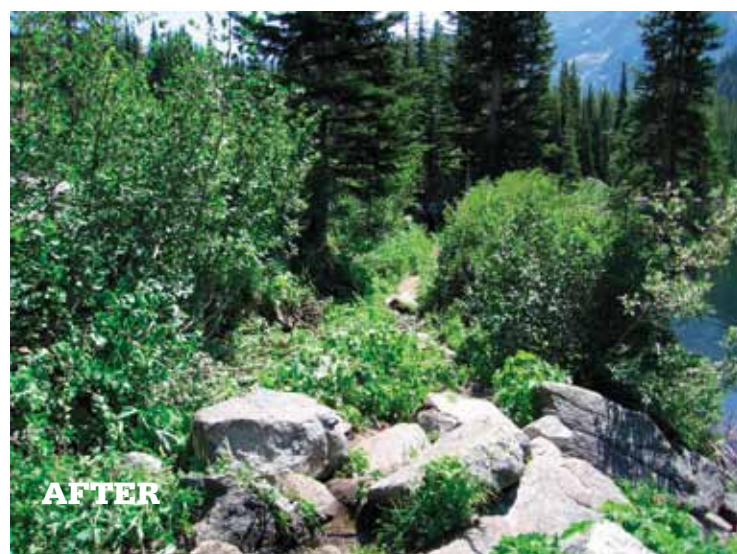
Failure to cut back encroaching vegetation can make travel unpleasant, as anyone who has hiked (swum?) a brushy trail on a wet day can attest. In heavy brush, hikers may lose track of the original trail and create new trail braids as they seek to avoid the vegetation and find their way. I've seen many trails literally pushed down the hill because of brush.

How we brush depends on the type of vegetation and the particulars of the trail. Some herbaceous brush grows so quickly we can't really keep it at bay, but we try. Other brush grows more slowly, but we focus our attention on it so rarely that by the time we do get to tackle the problem, we need to be fairly aggressive. In other cases, we know we won't be back to the trail for several years, so we try to get as much done as we can while we're out there. Branches often reach into the trail corridor from several feet back and we aim to prune the plants back at their base, not just lop the branches off in midair at the edge of the trail. We certainly try to avoid the "scorched earth" look, but sometimes the temporary outcome of a serious job of brushing can be a bit harsh-looking. In this case, our answer is always "it will grow back," and it always does.

Of course, it is not just the occasional bush

Before: Where's the trail? After: There's the trail!

By cutting back brush, volunteers help keep trails open for easy hiker access.



growing into the trail. Each year hundreds of trees fall upon trails as well, keeping our volunteer sawyers busy all spring and summer. That's when get this one ...

Why not use a chain saw to clear downed logs?

There is a place for chain saws in trail work, but only on lands where their use is permitted and only in the hands of fully trained and certified personnel. WTA often works in designated wilderness areas where no mechanized or motorized equipment is allowed. Further, power tool use is not often conducive to a great volunteer experience.

For clearing logs, our go-to tool is the crosscut saw. Yes, this iconic tool requires skill and care to learn to use well, but it also offers great rewards in the sense of accomplishment and teamwork that come with using the tool.

WTA volunteers work in teams of three with at least one certified sawyer and two assistants who take turns with each saw. Part of making trail work fun and safe is not rushing the job and crosscut saws encourage the sawyers to take their time, to really assess the most safe and efficient way to cut a log.

Most importantly,

crosscut sawing requires close cooperation between team members that many volunteers find very gratifying.

Why are you making this trail so easy? Why did you make the tread so wide?

The short answer is that WTA doesn't decide on a trail's steepness or its width, at least not in most cases. Land managers make the ultimate decisions about where a trail will be located and how steep or wide it will be.

The long answer is that those land managers have considered a host of factors, including the desired trail difficulty, the amount of use the trail gets, whether the trail will be open to other users such as stock or bikes, safety issues, soil and terrain conditions, findings from environmental and cultural reviews, and their past experience about what has worked well in similar circumstances. Taking all that information into account, the land manager will then determine the trail's characteristics, and WTA's volunteers will do their best to build and maintain the trail to that desired standard.

In some cases, the standard that is set initially has to change as a trail becomes more popular. Rattlesnake Ledge, Franklin Falls and

Little Si are good examples. The original trails in these places accommodated light traffic, but they weren't sufficient when the volume of hikers using these "lower standard" trails increased exponentially.

Another challenge trail-builders face is that today's hikers are out in all conditions. We hike trails when they're wet and we hike trails when they're dry as dust, all of which compounds a typically poor soil profile (with lots of volcanic ash) and the steep slopes of the Cascades, leading to erosion right down to boulders or bedrock. Deeply eroded trails don't allow for much hiking enjoyment, and they're not good for the environment either.

What about trail structures, like steps? Why are they installed on trails?

Steps are put in when a trail needs to gain a lot of elevation in a short period of time, and to limit erosion on steep sections of a trail. Sometimes steps are installed on an existing trail to fix a problem caused by poor trail location or design. Trail structures in general, and particularly steps, require regular maintenance in order to function well, so land managers generally seek to avoid having them installed unless they are absolutely necessary to stabilize the tread and protect against erosion.

Do you need a lot of knowledge and experience to maintain trails?

Yes and no.

I say "no" because WTA's work parties are designed in such a way that anyone can come out for a single day and be a tremendous help and I say "yes" because our regular volunteers and crew leaders have taken the time to learn both the underlying principles and the fine points of trail maintenance. In fact, that's exactly how our system works.

On any WTA trail maintenance work party, you will find a chief crew leader (in the blue hard hat) who has a lot of trail knowledge to share. You will also meet other volunteers—our assistant crew leaders—who wear orange hard hats and who are committed to sharing what they have learned over time. WTA depends on these crew leaders to offer guidance and support to new volunteers. With the different colored hard hats, it is easy to find the people who can share trail maintenance know-how and answer questions. Even Gifford Pinchot recognized the value of good leadership, noting, *"You should make a special point to train up your Rangers in trail work under the practical supervision of a man who knows the business. Good work must be brought about almost entirely from practical experience."*

WTA works hard to teach volunteers the joy of trail maintenance, and we hope that by investing our time in teaching the principles of trail maintenance, we'll see volunteers coming back again and again.



WTA volunteer Elizabeth Lunney wields a crosscut while clearing trail near Hart Lake. Photo by Holly Chambers.



Hard hats protect volunteers and help distinguish the crew leaders. Lake Serene Trail, photo by Cathy Clark.

You have to be young and strong to do trail work, right?

Absolutely untrue! Trail maintenance is a great activity for people of all ages and a range of abilities. Our work parties offer a variety of tasks, and volunteers can select an activity that suits their interests and abilities. You won't find a production schedule on a WTA work party. Volunteers can work at their own pace, taking as many breaks as they need. Tired from shoveling out drain dips or hauling buckets of soil or gravel? Try brushing back vegetation for a while, or just take a breather between tasks and get to know your fellow crew members.

Why do WTA crews wear hard hats?

Hard hats are a requirement on WTA work parties, and they are a requirement for many agencies with whom WTA works. Hard hats protect volunteers' heads from being hurt by branches, tools or anything else. They serve as a visual reminder to everyone that the trail crew is at a work site, where keeping safety at the forefront is the top priority. WTA volunteers also are required to wear work gloves, boots and long pants, and we recommend long-sleeved shirts. All of these items offer added protection when working with hand tools, rocks, logs, soil and so on.

These are the questions we hear most often. No doubt there are other questions, and we welcome them. Send us an email, or give us a call. If you ask really nicely, we'll send you your very own copy of Forest Reserve No. 36! Better still, come out on trail, and maybe you will discover the answer to your question through the direct experience of working with other volunteers to maintain trails. ♦

Special thanks to Mike Stenger for contributing to this article.

Featured Trail Project » Chelan Lakeshore Trail

The dark black trunks of burnt pines contrast sharply with the lush green bunch grass growing by the side of the trail. Jagged snow-covered peaks with names like Pinnacle, Emerald and Pyramid tower above, providing a delightful backdrop for the osprey soaring overhead. Spring flowers like balsamroot, Indian paintbrush, chocolate lily and lupine provide additional pleasure to the eye, while wild onions, cilantro and miner's lettuce tickle the palate. The views up and down lake remind you of why you love to recreate in the great Pacific Northwest.

And those places where trees that have fallen over the trail and the tread has worn away? Well, those places remind you about just how important is to volunteer.

Over the last ten years, dozens of good-natured, hard-working and fun-loving folks have come out for a week of wonderfulness on the Chelan Lakeshore Trail, leaving behind all the comforts of home for all the adventure of a WTA Volunteer Vacation. After repeated fires in the area, many trees had fallen across the trail and needed to be removed with crosscut saw teams to open up the trail. Every year in April and May, our crews have set up base camps at Moore Point and Prince Creek, then set out to clear the Chelan Lakeshore Trail from Prince Creek in the south to the National Recreation Area boundary in the north, with side trips up Fish and Prince Creek Trails. It's an amazing location to get your fix of spring trail work! Our highest priority work is always logging-out, but we've done plenty of drainage, brushing and tread work as well in order to make the trail a pleasure to travel. Ken Dull, U.S. Forest Service land manager in Chelan, credits WTA with getting this trail back on the radar. As a result, many more hikers have been making the trek out to explore this trail over the years.

We'd like to thank the hearty folks who have come out to work on this trail, and all you hikers who've made it our pleasure. ♦

—Tim Van Beek



WTA has hosted dozens of Volunteer Vacations on the Chelan Lakeshore Trail, based purely on the need to restore the trail. The sublime scenery doesn't influence our decision to keep working here at all. (Okay, maybe a little.) Photo above by Tim Van Beek. Photo below by Greg Friend.



Hike It»

Chelan Lakeshore Trail

Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest / Lake Chelan National Recreation Area

Distance: 10 miles **Elevation Gain:** 1,000 feet **Highest point:** 1,700 feet

Map: Green Trails Stehekin 82 **Best Season:** early summer **More Info:** *Don't Waste Your Time in the North Cascades* by Kathy and Craig Copeland, Wilderness Press

Action for Trails »

Not So Bad After All

What could've been an ugly summer for hikers turns out okay, thanks to hiker advocates keeping their guard up

The legislative session is over. The special session finished. All the legislation, budget and otherwise, that the Legislature wrangled with over the past months has been wrapped up and topped with neat little bows. It's time to take a look back at all the park and recreation related activity that transpired during this eventful session.

WTA's top priority was to ensure that the Department of Natural Resources and State Parks recreation sites were kept open for another season, and ideally to develop some creative and sustainable new sources of funding to help insulate the agencies from future deficits and cuts. To that end, **we worked hard to pass Senate Bill 5622**, which established the Discover Pass. (See story on page 8.) Discover Pass revenue will go to pay for recreation infrastructure and maintenance, and if the expected funds are raised, the pass revenue should accomplish the end of keeping important places like Mount Si, Squak Mountain and Umtanum Canyon open and maintained.

We haven't taken our eyes off the prize, though. When the state recovers from this long and sputtering recession, we plan to advocate strenuously for general fund dollars for outdoor recreation. At that time, we hope to see Discover Pass funds used to pay for capital projects and new facilities while appropriated general funds are spent on day-to-day maintenance. After all, outdoor recreation is a core public service and needs to be treated as such.

As this new user fee is just one slice of the funding pie for Washington's recreation areas, keeping an eye on the Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicle Activities (NOVA) program was another key priority. In 2009, NOVA program funds were swept up in order to pay to keep state parks open during the emerging economic shortfall. State and federal land

management agencies suddenly lost access to grant funds that had been used to pay for trail maintenance and education and enforcement programs. Land managers cut back, scrambled to make up the difference, and fretted over what would happen next year.

Had that sweep-up occurred again this year, the Cle Elum Ranger District would not have been able to field a trail crew for this hiking season. The Cle Elum District manages the trails to Esmerelda Basin, Spectacle Lake and dozens of other classic hiking trails, so the loss of their trail crew would have been disastrous. And that's just one example among countless other potential losses.

WTA worked hard to make sure that NOVA funds were restored in this session, and fortunately, **the Legislature saw the eminent wisdom of restoring NOVA funds to the grants for which they were intended.** The Recreation and Conservation Office will disburse NOVA grant funds as before, based the NOVA Advisory Committee's rankings.

Finally, **the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP), which pays for habitat restoration, lands acquisition and trail maintenance, was funded at \$42 million this year.** This

allocation is a dramatic improvement over the very real possibility that the program would be zeroed this year. Fifty projects—including new bridges at Tiger Mountain—were awaiting funding news and can now get underway. While WTA is not directly engaged with WWRP funding, we are members of the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition and could not be more pleased with this outcome.

All told, hikers—and the land managers that WTA works with—fared considerably better than we might have. Thank you, members! You attended Hiker Lobby Day, wrote letters, called elected officials and signed petitions to support our advocacy work in large numbers. These victories would not have happened if you hadn't lent your voice to the effort. ♦



The trail to Spectacle Lake will see maintenance, thanks to NOVA dollars. Photo by Cameron Brandt.



Jonathan Guzzo

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The Dark Divide

Have you been there lately—or ever? This area offers all the charms of its well-known neighbors, but it's often overlooked

Make it to the top of Snagtooth Mountain in the Dark Divide Roadless Area and you'll be rewarded with the largest clearcut free vista remaining in the South Cascades. To the east, you'll peer into the Quartz Creek valley, home to towering old-growth trees. To the north, the spine of the Dark Divide is punctuated with craggy peaks. Ridgetop meadows extend west and east separating the Cispus and the Lewis River drainages.

At more than 75,000 acres, the Dark Divide is the largest roadless area in Western Washington, yet relatively few hikers venture there. Either they haven't heard of it at all, or what they have heard of the Dark Divide—that its trails are motorized and unmaintained—keeps them away.

The Dark Divide's neighbors all have impressive titles: Mount Rainier National Park, Mount St. Helens National Monument and the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. The Goat Rocks, Indian Heaven and Mount Adams are designated wilderness areas, garnering more hiker attention.

And yet the Dark Divide's wild character, scenic value and rich biodiversity are just as great as these other gems in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. The Dark Divide missed its shot at wilderness status with the 1984 Washington State Wilderness Act that protected many other unique wilderness areas throughout the state. Strong opposition by a timber industry looking to log old growth in the area's deep valleys kept this area off the list.

Although the economics and politics around logging old growth have changed significantly in the last thirty years, the memories of timber's boom years persist and wilderness designation may not be politically viable yet. Opposition would also come from the motorized users who have historically ridden in the Dark Divide on trails originally designed for foot and horse traffic to access fire lookouts.

Motorized use is particularly common on trails in the area's northern terrain and hikers familiar with those trails know to expect deeply rutted trails and encounters with motorcycle riders. In the 1990s, the U.S. Forest Service sought to implement a recreation plan that would have greatly increased motorized use in the Dark Divide. This effort was defeated in federal court when a judge sided with a coalition of recreation and conservation organizations (including WTA) who showed that the

Forest Service had not considered the environmental impacts that such motorized recreation would impose on the landscape.

Of the area's 18 major trails, only the Quartz Creek Trail is designated nonmotorized. In the Quartz Creek Valley, where motorcycles are



prohibited, the principal deterrent to hikers is a lack of maintenance. Sections of trail are all but impassable due to the sheer number of trees that have been knocked down across the trail. Trail signs are often missing; the trail itself can be hard to find in the remote reaches of the valley.

This summer, a series of WTA work parties including two Backcountry Response Teams (August 12 to 15 and September 9 to 12) will address the most pressing maintenance problems in the first 8 miles of the Quartz Creek Trail. This work—as well as other high priority maintenance projects on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest—is being funded by a generous Title II grant from the South Gifford Pinchot Resource Advisory Committee.

Our hope is that an accessible trail into this spectacular area will invite more people to appreciate its wonders and carry on the effort to protect it for future generations to enjoy.♦

HIKE IT»

Read about the Quartz Creek Trail in our Take a Hike section on page 46.

The Quartz Creek Trail features tremendous old growth. Photo by Kurt Wieland.



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Membership News »

Hey, Teachers—Have We Got A Deal for You

From high-school science classes to mountain schools, many community organizations benefit from their partnership with WTA

It was a bluebird morning, with a light breeze blowing and warm sun evaporating the meadow's dew. A faint murmur rose out of a huddle of WTA crew leaders, as they discussed work party logistic and the day's tasks.

This stillness soon gave way to peals of laughter when a bus full of high-school students parked and unloaded. As the teens prepared for a day of volunteer trail maintenance, they radiated with energy, pure enthusiasm for being outdoors. Clare Jenkins, Eastside Catholic High School's advanced placement environmental science teacher explained, "This was a nice opportunity to step out of the lab and classroom and apply what we had studied during the year, applying our course theme 'sustainability' to a local project. Students were able to see the issues involved in erosion and how to remedy that problem."

WTA's trail work parties offer youth tangible outcomes to the work they put into a project. During a work party, volunteers often have to solve problems, using critical thinking to assess situations and work together. As Jenkins noted, "I saw students working together as real teams. No one complained. They were genuinely interested in their work."

Partnering with WTA also provides community organizations with an opportunity for someone else to take the lead, to do all the legwork of organizing a project and to ensure that the necessary equipment is available. Washington Trails Association can meet with groups ahead of time to provide an introduction to trail maintenance and explain what to expect while volunteering on trail. Jenkins loved the crew leader's introduction to the project because it emphasized the need for stewardship in your local community. "I think that was really good for the students to hear," said Jenkins, "Many times during the year they were overwhelmed by global issues—population explosion, global warming, et cetera—and felt that there was no hope for the future. This project showed them that they can make a difference at a local level."

Josh Epstein, assistant director of YMCA



These BOLD Mountain School participants joined WTA for a day of trail repair on the Asahel Curtis Nature Trail.

BOLD Mountain School, values their partnership with WTA because it enhances their participants' learning by giving them another way to connect to the outdoors. While the BOLD Program focuses on taking kids into the wilderness to foster a connection to nature, work parties with WTA can help emphasize a connection through service. "Many of the BOLD expeditions hike the vast trail systems in Washington and use it as a way to experience remote, beautiful places. Working with WTA, the students see, learn and participate in the maintenance of these trails, giving them a very real sense of what it takes to keep the trail system going."

If you are looking to expand your students' learning opportunities, provide an outdoor experience, or emphasize giving back to the community, WTA can be your partner. ♦



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Past President Ron Barensten Passes Away

In early May, Ron Barensten, a past president of Washington Trails Association, died of complications from Alzheimer's at his home in Richland, Washington.

Ron's involvement in WTA extended into all spheres of our work. Ron authored a regular column in this magazine. "From Ron's Backpack—Helpful Hints, Words of Wisdom and Other Tidbits of Useful Information" ran from 1993 to 2005. In each column, Ron suggested a new "Eleventh Essential," an "extra item needed for your next backpack trip."

Ron also participated in volunteer trail maintenance work parties and, along with his wife, Rachael Black, joined several of WTA's earliest Volunteer Vacations. Long after serving on the board, Ron remained active in WTA governance as a member of WTA's fundraising committee.

Ron's family has requested that memorial donations be sent to Washington Trails Association's Greg Ball Trail Fund, or to the Seattle Opera. ♦

NORTHWEST EXPOSURE



Photo by Hally Swift, used with permission. Photo by Greg Ball, used with permission.

ENTER YOUR BEST outdoor photos in NORTHWEST EXPOSURE,
the photo contest from Washington Trails Association.

Categories: hikers in action wild landscapes
flora and fauna families on trail offbeat outdoors

Entries accepted Aug 15 - Oct 10, 2011

Info and enter: www.wta.org/northwestexposure

Meet Our Members!



Hally Swift

Come midsummer, Hally Swift is just as likely to retrieve her cash and her ID from a ziplocked bag as she is to take it out of a real wallet. This habit is a by-product of her frequent backpacking trips.

Hally joined WTA when she joined the WTA board in 2000. Through numerous board terms between 2000 and 2008, she's held the titles of secretary, treasurer, vice president of board development and vice president of fundraising. In 2004, when WTA's Hike-a-Thon was a brand new thing, Hally was there—one of the 16 brave hikers who helped us to launch this event.

While working for The Mountaineers Books, Hally became convinced that there must be "one, most beautiful hike in Washington" and she was determined to find it. Knowing that guidebook author Ira Spring would visit Upper Lena Lake for his birthday and anniversary, she figured that it must be "the one." She made a hopeful pilgrimage, only to discover that Upper Lena was a pretty alpine lake—like most pretty alpine lakes, but nothing unworldly. After that trip, she finally understood that so much of what you love about a hike is the attitude that you bring to it: the anticipation, the people you are with and even the weather that day.

These days, when she's asked to name her favorite trail, she always says, "my last long backpack." Best of all are those weeklong trips, when "you come home and you've forgotten all your passwords." She'll be exploring "high and lonesome places" this summer with trips to Libby Lake and the Sawtooth range in the works.

Hally is currently the director of finance for the Burke Museum. She also volunteers for Rare Care, tracking the location of endangered species of subalpine wildflowers. What flowers? She can't say. Where? Not information she can provide. It's all confidential for the sake of the plants.

Hally has stayed with WTA all these years because she likes "being a part of an organization that is both scrappy and really smart," adding, "WTA delivers." We'd like to thank Hally for her many years of service to WTA!

—Lace Thornberg

On Now: WTA's 8th Annual Hike-a-Thon



Participating in Hike-a-Thon is as easy as playing Candy Land

We've all played the much-loved children's game Candy Land. With its happy gingerbread men, candy canes and wondrous gingerbread house destination, following the trail to Candy Land success is simple enough for even five-year-olds to play. We like to think Hike-a-Thon is just as easy. There may not be gingerbread men, but follow three simple steps, and you'll soon find yourself at a wonderful mountainous destination full of funds for trails and useful hiking gear prizes. It's amazingly easy to make your miles count this August!

After all, if you can hike, you can Hike-a-Thon. If this benefit event wasn't both easy and fun, it couldn't have grown as steadily as it has. In 2004, 16 hikers joined WTA for our inaugural Hike-a-Thon. In total, they hiked 700 miles during the month of August and raised \$5,300 for trails. Six years later, 118 hikers participated and, collectively, they hiked 6,300 miles and raised more than \$60,000! It's been truly inspiring to see so many new hikers joining this effort each year.

As we celebrate our eighth year, I'm confident that the 2011 Hike-a-Thon will be our best event yet—especially if you join us for the event! You can help make WTA's 8th annual Hike-a-Thon the best ever by making your miles count, too. Still thinking about it? Consider this observation from past participant Holly Weiler, "My favorite aspect of Hike-a-Thon is that while trail work is fun, hiking is even better. Only through Hike-a-Thon can I use hiking to help trail work."

Visit www.wta.org/hikeathon for more information, or to register for the event, view prizes, or sponsor another Hike-a-Thon participant.



Kara Chin

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On Trail

Special Feature»



Buff Black

The PCT.

Three little letters with an intense psychological pull, three little letters that have lured hikers into the wilderness since 1968, when Congress authorized the development of the Pacific Crest Trail as a National Scenic Trail.

The PCT is 2,650 miles long and there are nearly as many approaches to hiking it as there are miles. Successful continuous thru-hikers generally take between three and six months. Most start at the Mexican border at Campo near Lake Morena in spring and finish at Boundary Monument 78 at Manning Park in Canada in late fall, but the reverse route is almost as popular.

Many hikers tackle the trail in sections. Some hike it one state at a time. Some run. Some seek solitude. Others enjoy the camaraderie of hiking companions. As a lot, thru-hikers are “definitely a subculture of unique individuals.”

In this feature, we’ll follow this trail, and its hikers, as they wind through Washington’s most sublime scenery. We hope you find our advice useful and our profiles inspirational.

With its sparkling lakes and big vistas, the Goat Rocks earned high marks from PCT hikers. Photo by Doug Diekemma.

Best of the Crest

HIKE IT»

Shoe Lake

Round Trip Miles: 14

Elevation Gain: 2,600'

Snowgrass Flat

Round Trip Miles: 41

Elevation Gain: 8,940'

Eli Boschetto

Eli is a Northwest Trail Correspondent for *Backpacker*, and a regular contributor and gear team member for *Washington Trails*.

Hikers weigh in on their favorite day hikes and backpacks on Washington's Pacific Crest Trail

Few trails epitomize the phrase "the journey is the destination" as well as the Pacific Crest Trail. The trail winds 2,650 miles from Mexico to Canada—from California's high deserts and grand Sierra Nevada, across the volcanic badlands of Oregon, and through the glacier-capped Cascades of Washington. Yet, as many PCT hikers have proclaimed, "It's not just about getting to Canada." One doesn't need to take on the entire trail to experience the wonder and solitude of hiking this iconic route. There are plenty of shorter trip options available to give you a taste of what the PCT is all about.

To present you with some of the best locations for day hiking and backpacking on the Pacific Crest Trail, we turned to the seasoned pros: the big-mile thru-hikers who have thousands of PCT miles under their pack straps, who know all the ins and outs, and who can recall in glorious detail every feature along Washington's 380-mile portion. With their suggestions and advice, we've identified some of the best day hikes, loops and point-to-point sections the PCT can offer as shorter trips. And by using easy access points on many of the east-west highway passes, you can stop thinking PCT and start hiking PCT.

"Don't think you have to be a thru-hiker to experience the beauty and solitude of the PCT."

—Sonya "Sawin' Ya" Rodgers

When asked what the most scenic stretch of trail is, the majority of our Pacific Crest Trail hikers named the **Goat Rocks** as one of the most striking areas within the Washington section. The Goat Rocks region is noted for its rugged volcanic landscape—the remnants of an ancient volcano, now eroded into a series of jagged peaks and knife-edge ridges. That scenery abounds here is good news for weekend hikers, as many of the Goat Rocks trails are easily accessible from Highway 12. For a good day hike, pick up the PCT near the White Pass Ski Resort, and head south to **Shoe Lake**. This 14-mile round trip climbs through forest and meadows to the narrow ridge of Hogback Mountain, before descending on Trail 1119 to sparkling, horseshoe-shaped Shoe Lake. Camping is no longer permitted at Shoe Lake, but to turn this hike into an overnight, continue south on the PCT a half-mile to Hidden Spring Camp.

Want more? Make it a multiday trip by

continuing south on the PCT to **Snowgrass Flat**. Along the way, you'll make a steady descent from Shoe Lake to Tieton Pass, rounding tiny Lutz Lake and into the McCall Basin. From there, the trail turns west to Elk Pass, then south again, skirting Packwood and McCall glaciers. For peak-baggers, look to the east and the 7,920-foot summit of Old Snowy Mountain—a fave among PCTers. This moderate, nontechnical scramble gets you above the highest point of the PCT in Washington. From the top, soak in a 360-degree view of Rainier, Adams, and St. Helens, as well as the Goat Rocks Massif. From there, descend to the wide wildflower meadows and gurgling creeks of Snowgrass Flat, replete with an abundance of nice campsites. Be sure to pack a camera, as this is a photographer's wonderland.

“The range of the PCT in Washington is truly staggering—rugged ups and downs, ever-changing weather, ubiquitous wildlife and those gorgeous North Cascades peaks!”

—Katie “Little Engine” Lorah

Despite their rugged glacier-carved peaks, lush forested valleys and wide alpine meadows, **North Cascades National Park** and the **Pasayten Wilderness** continue to be listed as some of the least-visited wilderness in the country. Fortunately for hikers, the Pacific Crest Trail runs right through the heart of both. And according to a majority of our PCT hikers, these areas are definitely worth a visit—and not just because they are found near the end of the 2,650-mile journey.

For day hikers, check out the 5-mile hike to **Cutthroat Pass**. Starting at Rainy Pass on State Route 20, the PCT heads north along the flanks of Cutthroat Peak, gently gaining in elevation as it ascends Porcupine Creek. Along the way, you'll traipse through rock gardens and heather meadows, as big views of the jagged North Cascades ridges start to open up. From the pass, you'll look down on Cutthroat Lake 2,000 feet below. If you continue another 1.5 miles to Granite Pass, you'll enjoy views into the Swamp Creek Valley and sweeping vistas of more North Cascades and Pasayten peaks.

Backpackers can take on the **Holman Pass Loop**, starting at the Hart's Pass trailhead at the top of Forest Road 5400, out of the small town of Mazama. This moderately undulating section of the PCT travels through high meadows along Tamarac Peak and the Devil's Backbone, weaves between six mountain passes, and offers stunning views of the sur-

rounding country. Look for superb campsites in Oregon Basin, and if you're hiking this area in September, your camp neighbor might just be a PCT thru-hiker who can regale you with stories of their previous 2,600-mile journey. At Holman Pass, leave the PCT and head east on Trail 472A, descending to a junction on the West Fork Pasayten River. Turn south, and follow the river on Trail 472, passing beneath Pasayten Peak and the Gold Ridge, and skirting Haystack Mountain and Slate Peak as you climb back to your starting point.



“There are amazing and beautiful sections that demand to be hiked again and again, offering different wonders each time and each season.”

—Judy Roberts

Clearly, thru-hikers love the meadows and lakes in the South Cascades and the ruggedness of the North Cascades. Any love for the **Central Cascades**? Yes, indeed. There's plenty of trail and scenic wonder to be had as the PCT winds past Mount Rainier, over Snoqualmie and Stevens Passes, and through the Alpine Lakes and Glacier Peak Wilderness areas. It's in these regions that PCT veterans have identified some of the best day hiking and backpacking options within easy travel distance from the Seattle/Tacoma areas.

From the Snoqualmie Pass on Interstate-90, the trail to **Kendall Katwalk** makes an ideal day trip, offering limitless views of the Central Cascades lake country. Pick up the PCT

HIKE IT»

Cutthroat Pass

Round Trip Miles: 10

Elevation Gain: 2,400'

Holman Pass Loop

Round Trip Miles: 27

Elevation Gain: 5,200'

Looking southwest from Cutthroat Pass. Hike here during autumn to catch both larches and thru-hikers. Photo by Brett Walton.

**Approaching
Kendall Katwalk.
Photo by Abby
Wolfe.**



HIKE IT»

Kendall Katwalk

Round Trip Miles: 11

Elevation Gain: 2,600'

Spider Gap Loop

Round Trip Miles: 37

Elevation Gain: 7,200'

heading in a northeasterly direction, making large, gradual switchbacks out of the Commonwealth Basin and up the western flanks of Kendall Peak. Top out north of the peak and proceed another half mile along the narrow ridge of Kendall Katwalk for views of Red, Alta, and Alaska Mountains, and the Silver and Gold Creek valleys to the east. If you're backpacking, continue another 6 miles to the Park Lakes. The PCT continues north, past Alaska and Huckleberry mountains, high above

Alaska and Joe Lakes, then turns eastward, skirting Chikamin Peak and the Four Brothers. Divert south onto Trail 1331 for a short descent to the **Park Lakes** basin, with the Three Queens to the north and Hibox Mountain to the south.

If you have a thirst for alpine country, try the 37-mile **Spider Gap and Buck Creek loop** in the Glacier Peak Wilderness. Normally, this fantastic hike only uses a short stretch of PCT, but after the PCT was damaged a few years back, the detour route travels up Buck Creek, making half of this loop "official" PCT. At the top of Phelps Creek Road 6211, north of Lake Wenatchee, hike an easy 8 miles on Trail 1511 to the sprawling Spider

Meadows, beneath Phelps Ridge and Red Mountain. Continue north over Spider Gap and descend along the Lyman Glacier to Lyman Lake. Turn west on Trail 1256 and climb to Cloudy Pass, then drop through Suiattle Pass to a junction with the PCT and mind-numbing views of Glacier Peak. Turn south on the PCT for 2 miles to a junction with Trail 789, now PCT detour, and continue south to another junction at Buck Creek Pass. Divert onto Trail 1513, following Buck Creek south to close the loop.

"Day, section, or thru-hiker, get out there and enjoy yourself. See the sights that few get to, and take care of the trail so it can continue to take care of you."

—Bill "Troll" McCarty

In the end, the Pacific Crest Trail has something for everyone, whether you're a day hiker, backpacker, section hiker, or long-distance thru-hiker. And regardless of your mileage covered or elevation gained, it offers a chance to walk a path of unparalleled beauty in the footsteps of those who came before—and leaving your own for those to follow after—along the trail that celebrates the most magnificent landscapes that the Pacific states possess. And afterwards you just might find yourself enchanted by the Pacific Crest Trail, eagerly looking for where your next (longer?) hike might take you. As the renowned naturalist and conservationist John Muir proclaimed, *"In every walk with nature, one receives far more than he seeks."* ♦

In addition to Washington Trails Association members, we polled the members of the Pacific Crest Trail Association and the American Long Distance Hiking Association-West. Special thanks to Tom Magee of ALDHA-West and Chris Caviezel of the Mountaineers for their help recruiting qualified survey participants.

Have you hiked on the PCT?

We need Hiking Guide entries for many stretches of the PCT. Help educate and inspire fellow hikers by filing a hiking guide entry online at www.wta.org/go-hiking/hikes.

Recommended Resources

To help you plan your outings, the go-to guidebook for PCT hikers is the **Pacific Crest Trail: Oregon and Washington**, published by Wilderness Press. This comprehensive directory of all things PCT through Washington will help you find the trail access points, local services, permit regulations, and elevation and mileage info. It also contains a section on the geology, plants and animals through each trail section.

Also, pick up the **U.S. Forest Service's Pacific Crest Trail maps**, available in southern and northern Washington sections. These oversized maps contain a bounty of useful information for each section of the PCT, including access points using major highway crossings and lateral trails.

Marathon Day Hiker Jack Kaleas

A bad spine couldn't keep him from scenic vistas



Jack Kaleas was born with an absolutely horrible spine. He tried backpacking, but when he did, the end result was migraines and pain. In order to see what the backpackers could see, he changed tactics. He became a marathon day hiker.

Jack settled in the Evergreen State in 1985. By 1986, he'd started day-hiking our stretch of the PCT, and decided sometime in 1995 to hike the whole of Washington, piecemeal, one day at time. He let snow considerations dictate his order, as much as anything else. In August 2000, he hiked from the Stehekin River Road south to Suitttle Pass, then spent the night at Holden Village. Done!

Jack believes that he is the only person to have ever hiked all of the PCT in Washington by means of day hiking only, although he does not know this for a fact and welcomes any information on anyone else who may have done the same thing. When he contacted the PCTA headquarters, he was told they keep no records on such matters.

As few hikers have wanted to go at his pace, Jack has generally hiked solo while working toward his PCT goal. His longest day hike in Washington, on the PCT, was 42 miles and among the most memorable. "My lollipop-loop route included Suitttle and Cloudy Passes and Miner's Ridge Trail. I had started from the end of Suitttle River Road, and I returned to that point at the end of the day."

As he generally did not arrange shuttles, Jack has hiked many stretches of the PCT twice, hiking in and then returning to the same trailhead at the end of the day. As he says, "This allowed me to see the PCT scenery very well." He estimates he's hiked at least 35 miles in one day at least a dozen times in order to make his goal.

Although Jack has also done about half of the PCT in California in the Sierra and short stretches in Oregon, he's not planning on finishing the whole trail, as that would mean hiking some fairly long uninteresting stretches. He chose Washington as his state to hike in its entirety, feeling that it is "much more consistently interesting and beautiful."

In recent years, he's "slowed down" to do more day hikes with others, hiking such highly scenic trails as Yellow Aster Butte, Ptarmigan Ridge, Burroughs Mountain, Maple Pass Loop, Hidden Lake Lookout and Colchuck Lake. ♦

Guardians of the Trail

By Ericka Berg

Today, many Pacific Crest Scenic Trail (PCT) hikers owe their success to a group of volunteers affectionately known as trail angels. From California to Canada, angels provide essential support and resources to weary adventurers. Some magically appear to refill water caches in dry, remote areas. Others drive hikers to resupply points. Along the way, angels provide shelter, camaraderie and, most importantly, a place to dry stinky wet socks.

In Washington state, Dinsmore's Hiker Haven provides a welcoming respite from the wetter portions of the PCT. The hostel is located in the town of Baring, 180 miles from the Canadian border.

Owners Jerry and Andrea Dinsmore became volunteer PCT hosts by accident. It all started in 2003 when Jerry came upon a group of bedraggled backpackers in Skykomish.



The Dinsmores stumbled into the trail angel gig.

Taking pity on them, he took the exhausted hikers home and helped them out. Word spread and the next year they received 100 thru-hikers on their property. In 2010, they had 310 thru-hikers and 10 cross-country cyclists.

When thru-hikers arrive in Washington, they typically encounter cold, wet and foggy conditions. At Dinsmore's, they can relax and dry out before hitting the trail again. There is a large lawn to pitch tents on and a hikers' dorm with bunk beds, showers, cooking facilities, laundry, computer and Internet. The Dinsmores will pick up and hold resupply packages from the Baring post office and even pick up hikers from the town of Skykomish.

All of the amenities and services at Dinsmore's are provided free of charge. For Jerry and Andrea, volunteer trail hosting is a labor of love that rewards them with the opportunity to help people achieve their dream of completing the final stretch of the PCT.

Dinsmore's Hiker Haven
www.dinsmoreshikerhaven.com

Other Trail Angels
http://pct.wikispot.org/Trail_Angels



Sunrise in PCT country looking south from Slate Peak. Photo by Buff Black.

Here we see the road winding up to Slate Peak and, more faintly, the PCT meandering below as it heads south to Hart's Pass just around the bend. The tallest summits on the southern horizon are Gardner Mountain (left), Silver Star Mountain (center-left), The Needles (center-right) and Tower Mountain (right).



The Pacific Crest Trail

Original planning for this long trail began in 1935 with the efforts of Clinton C. Clarke, considered the Atlas of the Pacific Crest Trail, who conceived of the trail, laid out the tentative route, and did some of the first trail building in the Angeles Forest. Clarke and Warren Rogers lobbied the federal government to secure a border-to-border trail corridor. Initially, they had to settle for several disconnected trails along the crest of each state—the John Muir Trail and Tahoe-Yosemite Trail in California, the Skyline Trail in Oregon, and the Cascade Crest Trail in Washington. Largely through the efforts of hikers and equestrians, the PCT was connected and then designated one of the first scenic trails in the National Trails System. Authorized by Congress in 1968, the trail was officially finished and dedicated in 1993.

—Joan Burton



The PCT Across a Lifetime

Carolyn Burkhart's 1976 solo thru-hike was just one of many life-changing experiences on the Pacific Crest Trail

My first memory of the Pacific Crest Trail was when I was three years old, walking a trail surrounded by blue flowers. I did not know it at the time, but the flowers were lupine, which I love to this day. I was near Chinook Pass on what was then known as the Cascade Crest Trail, and seventeen years later I would retrace those steps as I made my way from Mexico to Canada.

When my mother, Dorothy, was young, she and her dad would sing together, "the bear went over the mountain, to see what he could see." As a young adult, she set off to see "the other side of the mountain," and launched a tradition of backpacking journeys in our family.

From the time I was six years old, my mother would take me, my brothers and our friends backpacking for a week each summer. On one trip, we encountered extensive snow on the trail in an absolute downpour. She remembers me looking up at her and asking, "Mommy, are we in the rain forest yet?" At that moment, she realized that she was the only adult with seven children out there in the mountains in bad weather and wondered just how foolish she might be. In spite of bad weather at times, I grew to cherish our summers on the trails.

When I was thirteen years old, we backpacked into Snowgrass Flats on the PCT and I resolved to learn how to go on my own into the mountains. My mother, understandably apprehensive, told me that I would need to do the Mountaineers' Basic Climbing Course before I began to explore independently. She may have thought this would deter me, especially when I learned that I had to be 14 and would need to find a "sponsor." No such luck—I waited another year, found a sponsor and registered for the course. I learned how to navigate and how to climb on both rock and snow. With the Mountaineers, I climbed Mount St. Helens—the old

version, pre-eruption—and learned that proper layering refers to both the thickness and the number of layers. I had started to get hypothermic on the climb, but fortunately another Mountaineer noticed and loaned me his down jacket and gave me some food. I warmed up enough to complete the climb, then glissaded all the way back down...the best part of the climb!

When I turned sixteen and learned to drive, I began trekking on my own year-round. On one solo snowshoeing trip on Mount Rainier, a winter storm blew in just as I was about to set up camp. This time I was really concerned about hypothermia, so I used my navigation skills to snowshoe out to safety through blizzard conditions. As teenagers, my friends weren't mountaineers, nor even a little interested in it, but I had learned to cherish my moments in nature from my mother and I simply went forward with what I loved to do.

In 1974, I landed my first paid job: seasonal ranger in North Cascades National Park in Stehekin. I led nature hikes and evening programs on the wonders of the Cascades. On my days off, I backpacked by myself on the PCT and other trails. During college the following year, as part of my education, I spent the winter of 1976 in Leavenworth as an apprentice to Peg and Bill Stark, who were active contributors to *Signpost*. I helped with their winter mountaineering excursions into the Central Cascades. Loads of snow fell that winter; the North Cascades Highway did not open up until the end of May. While working with the Starks, I decided to take a break from college and use the money I had earned from working as a ranger to hike the PCT. By March, I had the book, the maps and all my food and gear ready, and I headed south to California.

On March 30, 1976, my brother's friend

Carolyn Burkhart

Carolyn was the first woman to solo trek the PCT. She finished her northbound trek on September 29, 1976.

dropped me off at the PCT trailhead on the Mexican border. I was twenty years old. My external frame backpack weighed 50 pounds. I wore heavy mountaineering boots, had a winter mountaineering bag and slept under a tarp. My mother shipped my food to nearby post offices or ranger stations. In these early days of PCT thru-hiking, there were no trail angels and no one had a trail name. According to the postmaster at Cabazon, California, around 90 backpackers had signed her trail register that year. Yet when I signed the PCT trail register in Manning Park, I saw only a dozen other names.

As a solo hiker, I typically traveled alone for days at a time, but I also hiked with other PCT hikers. I enjoyed the solitude and the company, especially those rare times when I met other women on the trail. For a week, I hiked with Jeanne Smith and Cynthia Stockwell from Oregon, the only hikers who had made it safely up and over Mount San Jacinto during an April snowstorm. Just north of Mojave in Cantil, I met two other young women, Katie and Karen, and then in northern California just south of Burney Falls, I met Teddi Boston heading southbound. And that was it—clearly, female trekkers were few and far between in those years.

The dangers of being a solo young woman on the trail are significant, and they stretch well beyond the hazards typically associated with wilderness travel. Hiking alone, I was particularly concerned about hiking along roads. When I was ready to head off across the Mojave, I went to the campground at Acton to meet up with other PCTers. Four of us hiked across the desert together and on through to Weldon. While in Weldon, I learned that another PCTer had been struck by a truck and killed five days earlier. While I grieved the death of this fellow hiker, I questioned continuing my journey.

Hiking solo out of Weldon into the Sierras I had my own safety challenges on the trail. While I generally enjoyed meeting and getting to know other PCTers, I developed an ongoing saga of apprehension about one hiker who was more than twice my age that I had met while crossing the Mojave, and who would continue to follow me into the high Sierra. When I went ahead, he caught up with me and he hung around when I stayed behind. My journal reflects the tension I felt after several encounters with this man: "Have run head on into the difficulties of being a lone girl on the trail." His threatening presence heightened my concerns for safety on the trail. As a young woman, my friendship with other supportive hikers on the PCT was the key to renewing my sense of trust and safety, and giving me the courage to

continue. Over time, I learned to listen more closely to my intuition in all arenas, whether it concerned other hikers, impending weather or river crossings.

After I began my trek into the high Sierra on May 12, the route became mostly snow-covered, and despite my mountaineering training and experience, it was dangerous terrain. On warm afternoons, I could sink into snow up to my waist. At other times, the snow was hard and crystallized, making descents precarious, even with an ice ax. My pace slowed as I spent more time routefinding. Consequently, my food supply ran low. At one point, I added a quart of water to a cup of soup mix and called it dinner. In the Sierra, I had to learn new skills about trekking at altitude, such as the greater caloric needs at high altitude and other acclimation skills not taught in my mountaineering course. When I got to lower altitudes north of the high Sierra I returned to my faster pace and lighter meals. In the heat of summer my journey continued on through Northern California, into the mosquitoes of Oregon and finally across the Columbia at Cascade Locks and into my home state of Washington.

“My mother hiked with me through to Chinook Pass, returning to the very place I had first begun hiking on this trail when I was three.”



Hiking northward in my own terrain, I met some wonderfully familiar faces at White Pass—my family and friends. My mother hiked with me through to Chinook Pass, returning to the very place I had first begun hiking on this trail when I was three. For a week, I brimmed with excitement and pride, to have my mother with me on the journey that she had inspired in me by taking me backpacking as a young girl.

When my mother and I parted ways at Chinook Pass, it was barely September, but it was snowing hard. Fortunately, the snow abated

Carolyn and her mother, Dorothy Burkhardt, near Chinook Pass in 1976

the next day, and the freeze had eliminated most of the mosquitoes and turned the larches golden for my final days in the North Cascades. I crossed the border into Canada on September 29, 1976, age twenty-one. My parents met me at Manning Park Lodge the next day to celebrate the completion of my solo trek on the Pacific Crest Trail from Mexico to Canada, my coming-of-age journey to adulthood.

I had had some difficult times on the trail, but I so loved the wonders of this wilderness journey that I promised myself I would return. I was strong and planning for my future, yet the challenges on the trail did not prepare me for what I faced ahead.

As a young woman, I ended up in a marriage marred by domestic violence. Each summer, during my breaks from nursing school, I managed to get away by myself with my children for a few weeks of vacation on the trail. Returning to the PCT year after year held me together through hard times.

As my children grew, I took them out for longer distances on the trail, as my mother had done with me. I hiked from Canada to California on the PCT with my eldest daughter. Six

years old when she started, she celebrated her seventh birthday at Diamond Lake in August 1985. For our hike, I developed a "tail," a rope tied to the end of my backpack that she could hang on to just as a baby elephant hangs on to her mother's tail. Three of my other children hiked with me through Washington when they were between seven and nine years old, carrying nothing but a whistle and a snack until they were strong, typically at age eight or nine. One hiked the John Muir Trail with me when she was ten and the following summer the Tahoe-

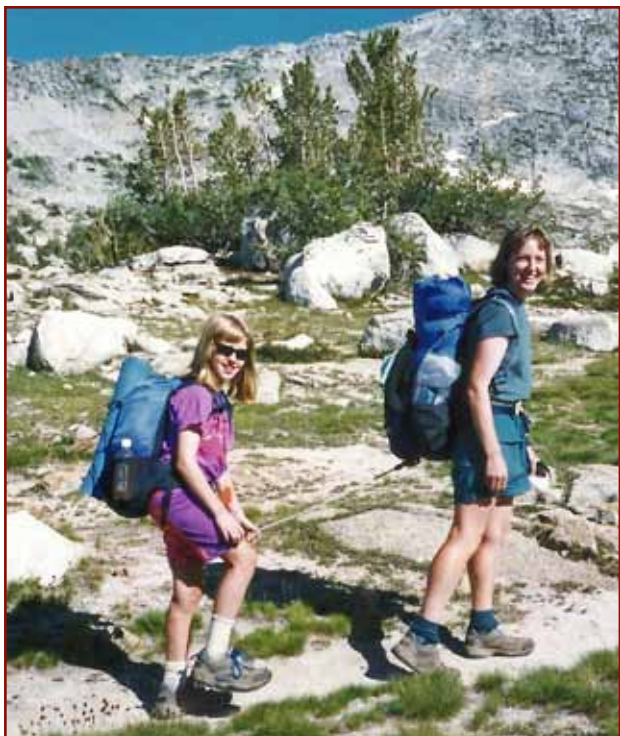
Yosemite section of the PCT, wearing a small pack weighing just under 10 percent of her body weight. Although one of my five children is severely developmentally disabled, I figured out ways to backpack short distances with her, too. She still loves to hike. She cannot speak or care for herself, yet she has one phrase—"Let's go!"—which means she wants to hit the trail.

The PCT was there for me in another way as an adult, helping me to recover from brain surgery. My brain bled during childbirth, and I ended up needing brain surgery for the stroke that had led to uncontrolled epilepsy. Following the surgery, I had double vision that did not resolve immediately, yet I returned to hiking on the PCT that summer, first on day trips and then overnight. I often tripped on rocks and roots in the trail and had difficulties crossing streams, and gradually my health improved. I grew stronger and my vision began to converge to where I saw single images. My neurologist could not believe my recovery. I explained that trekking on the PCT was my form of vision therapy. My eyes had to dart back and forth repeatedly as I watched the trail, to the extent that my brain rewired itself.

As I regained my strength, I listened to my inner voice and took the plunge to set my children and myself free from my abusive relationship. My husband's efforts to control me peaked after our separation, but I was able to face him, just as I had faced a cougar I met in the North Cascades.

I was solo on the Boundary Trail early in the season when I encountered a magnificent cinnamon-colored cougar. My loud shouting didn't faze it. It stood still on the trail, staring at me with its mesmerizing eyes. My five young children flashed through my mind. "They need their mother," I whispered to myself. I stood tall and asserted my dominance. I sprayed pepper spray in the cougar's direction and watched it leap from the trail into the brush in silence, nowhere to be seen. Hyper-vigilant, I kept the pepper spray ready as I trudged on through a storm of pelting rain and snow. A bit farther on, I came across a pile of grizzly scat. I banged my pot with my spoon to be as loud as I could and keep all the predators at bay. For the day's grand finale, I found that the bridges were out over Castle Creek and the Similkameen River, and both were raging higher than I had ever seen. I had to find alternate routes down a trail knee-deep in water with fish swimming by my legs. On the verge of hypothermia, as dusk turned to night, I at last reached my destination, Manning Park Lodge in Canada. I often wonder what the motel clerk thought when I arrived—an exhausted, drenched and shivering lone woman backpacker—and asked, "Have you got a room?"

These PCT experiences, and others, had given me the internal power and strength to break free and move on. After divorcing my husband, I moved to Winthrop with my youngest children to live on the edge of the Pasayten Wilderness and I returned to the PCT over and over again. The beauty of the trail helped me to heal from the wounds of trauma and be filled with its exquisite sense of simply being.



Carolyn and her daughter hiked southbound on the PCT from Canada to California.

Today, I have genuine love in my life, another gift of the PCT, as I met her in a snowstorm in the Goat Rocks twelve years ago. My partner, Judith Moore, and I love to backpack together and I am preparing to share the magnificence of the Sierra Nevada with her on a trek from Donner Pass to Mount Whitney this summer.

I'll also be out hiking with my brother Dick "Old Goat" Burkhart, who has nearly finished the trail himself. And I will certainly be out by myself again. The Northern California section of the trail has changed significantly from 1976 and I am planning to hike it solo to complete my second journey on the PCT, this time from Canada to Mexico. All of this love of the wilderness comes from my mother.

Two summers ago, my mother, at age eighty-five returned to the trail with my brother Perry, his packgoats and his family. Together, they backpacked out of Chinook Pass, just as my mother has done each year since I was a young child. I am looking forward to passing on my love of the trail to my own grandchildren someday soon, too. I don't know how those experiences might influence them, but I can see now what those backpacking trips have given to me. The trail I tottered on at age three has offered me a path for my journey through life. It has given me adventures with my own children that I will always cherish, and the balance and inner wisdom to reach for my dreams. By requiring me to be strong, the trail allowed me to regain my inner strength. I have found solace, spiritual connection and the joy of living in the moment on the trail. The Pacific Crest Trail has brought me home. ♦

WTA CREW LEADER FINISHES PCT IN JUST UNDER TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

Frequent WTA volunteer **Chad Creamer** thru-hiked California in 1977.

Then he got busy—starting a family, having a career and all that—but the dream of hiking the whole trail never disappeared. When he retired in 2000, he picked up right where he left off and hiked from Mount Lassen to Manning Park.

Chad continues to volunteer on the PCT regularly.



Chad Creamer, after finishing two thirds of the PCT in 1977.

Another one of WTA's assistant crew leaders has also thru-hiked the PCT. **Barry "Token Civilian" Teschlog** started on April 25 and finished on October 2, 2006. Prior to that, he had section hiked (nearly all of) Washington between 2001 and 2005. ♦

More PCT Feats

Walk a mile in these shoes.



In 1959, before the trail was officially open, **Don and June Mulford** made the first through-ride. These Cowlitz River area ranchers sold their shorthorn cattle, bought a 16 mm movie camera and 54 rolls of film and set off from Tijuana. In a post-ride interview, Don told his wife, "June, if we can encourage even one other couple to take the trail we've taken, we will have done them a favor they'll never forget."



The first PCT thru-hiker was a 17-year-old high school student. **Eric Ryback** had just finished hiking the Appalachian Trail from Georgia to Maine when he announced, "Next summer I'm hiking the Pacific Crest Trail." Immediately following his high school graduation in June, he traveled to Manning Park on the Canadian border and began hiking south. In October 1970, he reached the Mexican border, Monument 252. Though he was challenged about taking rides along the way, the charges were later dropped. He went on to hike the Continental Divide Trail, making him a Triple Crown Hiker. Read his account in "*The High Adventure of Eric Ryback*."



The first person to hike the trail both directions in one continuous round-trip was **Scott "Yo Yo" Williamson**—but, not the first time he tried, or the second or third. It was his fourth attempt when he succeeded in imitating the movement of a yo-yo. In 197 days of continuous hiking, he traveled from Mexico, to Canada, then back to Mexico. He yo-yo'd again in May 2006, hiking for 191 days through the three states. He hiked an average of 35 to 40 miles a day and wore out 13 pair of shoes.



Thus far, the youngest thru-hiker has been 10-year old **Mary Chambers**, who hiked with her parents, Barbara Egbert and Gary Chambers from April to October in 2004. Egbert chronicled their hike in **Zero Days**.

Photo Credits—Top left: from the collection of June Mulford. Top right: from the collection of Eric Ryback. Lower left: courtesy of Scott Williamson. Lower right: From the collection of Mary's parents, Barbara Egbert and Gary Chambers. Special thanks to the Pacific Crest Trail Association for the use of these photographs.

PCT Thru-Hikers with WTA Ties



Dr. Bob



Chris Burke



Ryan Carpenter

On Trail Now



Former WTA crew leader Meg McAlonis started on May 1.



WTA ACLs Jim Miller and Dona Snow-Miller gave the PCT a go this spring. Dona's knees decided to come home early; Jim plans to hike to Mount Whitney before heading home.

The PCT south of Pear Lake.
Photo by Shelley Earring.

Pitch In on the PCT

Does all this PCT talk have you itching to give back to the trail? Well, you've come to the right place! WTA will host several Volunteer Vacations on the PCT later this summer. A few spaces are still available if you act fast!

Indian Heaven Wilderness August 27 to September 3 and September 3 to 10

The area: More than 20,000 acres of broad, rolling country, straddling the crest of the Cascade Range with subalpine meadows and 175 small lakes. Originally known as "Sahalee Tyee," this area is culturally important to Native Americans. "Indian Heaven" offers visitors wildlife and panoramic views, as well as wildflowers and abundant huckleberries in season. Several interesting volcanic formations such as East Crater and Lake Sahalee-Tyee enhance the natural scenic beauty of this area. At 5,927 feet, Lemei Rock is the highest point in the area. Scramble up it for majestic views of the Cascades and Wapiki Lake.

The project: The East Crater Trail, one of the more popular entry points into this wilderness gem and a trail that connects to the Pacific Crest Trail, needs a 75-foot turnpike to elevate the trail above the water table. Side projects may include installing trail signs, clearing drainage structures and restoring existing turnpikes in the area.

To sign up: Register online at www.wta.org/volunteer/vacations.

WTA will also offer several volunteer trips on the PCT for youth, including these three late summer trips:

Pear Lake July 30 to August 6

The area: Looking for peaches and pears in a high alpine wilderness? You might not see the fruits, but you will find Peach Lake, Pear Lake, a garden of wildflowers and an easy climb up Fortune Mountain. The hike in is a bit tough, but this destination in the Glacier Peak Wilderness is worth every drop of sweat.

The project: As it winds north from Pear Lake, the PCT's trail tread has deteriorated over the past several years. Volunteers will restore this tread, do some brushing, and build rock structures, too.

Lemah Meadows August 13 to 20

The area: If you like lush green meadows, waterfalls and peaks in the distance, this is a trip you will not want to miss. Your camp will offer views in every direction, and after a day of tread repair, you can take a short hike to a refreshing waterfall. On your day off, you can check out the nearby alpine lakes or simply relax in a meadow filled with berries.

The project: This crew will focus on tread repair and installing proper drainage. You may also get to do some cross-cut sawing as well.

Cliff Tree Basin August 13 to 20

The area: If you've ever wanted to hike the Pacific Crest Trail, this is your first step. Base camp is halfway between Snoqualmie Pass and Stevens Pass. This is our most strenuous backcountry trip, but once at camp you will see the effort is well worth it! On your day off, perhaps take a stroll up to Jade Lake, or relax in the Alpine Lakes Wilderness.

The project: We'll restore PCT tread, working north from Deception Pass and do a little brushing, too.

To sign up: Register online at www.wta.org/volunteer/vacations.

Backcountry

The Gear Closet »

Maps-a-go-go

Get acquainted with the wide variety of maps you can use to plan and execute your hiking adventures

There you are, preparing for your hike, spooling through your Ten Essentials checklist. Water? Check! Extra clothing? Check! Headlamp and extra batteries? Got 'em! Map? Uh oh ...

If you're unsure about where to get the right maps or why "map" is even on that list in the first place, worry not. We'll get you acquainted with the variety of maps you may need in your hiking adventures.

Just as some people don't ask for directions when lost, some people don't bring maps along in the out-of-doors. If you have a good route description from your trusty guidebook (which may even include an overview map), is a map really necessary?

Yes! Imagine you've come to an unsigned trail junction. Or a junction where the sign gives you a trail number instead of a name. Maps, like pictures, can be worth a thousand words—far more than your guidebook's route description—and can help keep you found by showing you what terrain features you should see during your trip. Even better, maps give you the freedom to explore outside a guidebook author's prescribed route and into off-trail scrambling adventures!

Let's take a look at various stages of a hiking trip and what maps you might use during each phase.

Trying to Figure Out Where to Go

As a full-time desk jockey, I'll often get an email from a friend midweek asking if I want to head to a particular remote mountain

over the weekend. If I've never heard of that remote mountain, I'll do a little online research and definitely take a look at a map of the area using either **mapper.acme.com** or **National Geographic's TOPO! software**. If I really want to get an idea of what the terrain will look like, I can get immersed in the view using **Google Earth**.

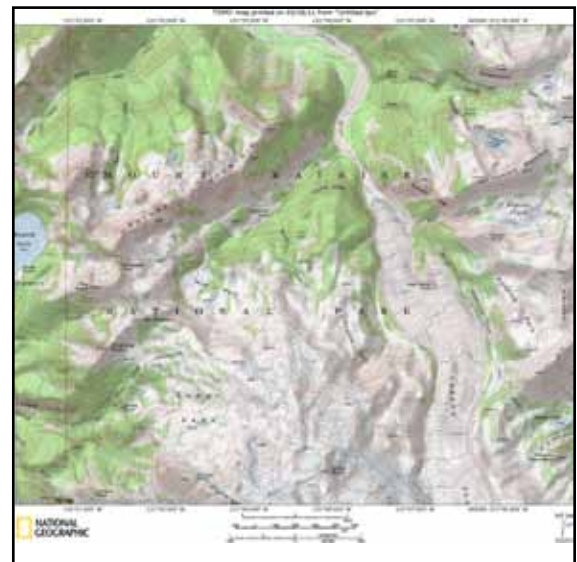
What?! Digital maps?

Yes, both digital and paper maps can be great. Both digital and paper have their strong suits. Digital maps can be very cheap, and they can be obtained at any time of night, long after retail stores close up. They can go with you wherever you have a computer, and searching for a particular terrain feature is a snap. The merits of paper maps are that they don't need batteries, often have a much larger surface area (compared to a computer screen), and usually have lines that are much smoother and easier to read. Choose whatever works best for you on each part of your trip.

Getting Ready for the Trip

Once I've figured out what the destination for our trip will be, I have to figure out what map(s) I want to bring along.

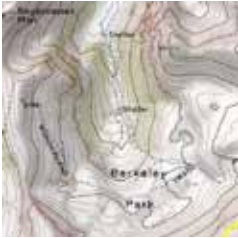
I love to have a copy of the **Green Trails**



A map of Mount Rainier National Park created using National Geographic TOPO! software.

**Susan
Ashlock**

map(s) for the area along with me. Unlike some maps, Green Trails maps include trail numbers and distances between trail junctions. If I'm thinking about going off-trail, I'll also bring along a higher-resolution map like the **U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute quad**. Printing out a digital version of the area of interest works well, but for serious off-trail use (where I want to be able to scrutinize every contour line), I'll try my best to get my hands on a paper version of the quad. This requires sufficient advance planning (for a trip to your favorite map store or ordering one online) or a large home library of USGS quads.



Web Extra »

Head to WTA's website to find a table covering all of the map types discussed in this article, sorted by usefulness to hikers! Table features include map type, scale area covered, where to purchase the map and the relative merits of each type of map.

www.wta.org/hiking-info/gear

Getting to the Trailhead

As bad as getting lost on a hike is, I really hate to get lost on the way to the trailhead! That's why a **DeLorme Washington State Atlas and Gazetteer** lives in my car. It's proven invaluable for getting to many a trailhead. Gazetteers include forest service roads, major topological features, some major trails, and contour lines at 100-meter intervals—just the right information for getting you to the start of your hike.

On the Trail

The same principle that covers cameras and water is true for maps: the easier it is to get to while you're hiking, the more likely you are to use it. I nearly always carry my map in my pants pocket. In Washington, where humidity is high—and it's been known to rain on occasion—protecting maps is crucial. Don't let your ticket home turn into a wet wad of mush! Plenty of map protectors are on the market, but using zip-locked bags (small, easy to fit in your pocket) or waterproof paper (which saves the step of taking the map out of its bag to refold) are my favorite solutions. I use my scanner and printer at home to copy the Green Trails map onto one side of a piece of waterproof paper, and the appropriate USGS map gets printed

onto the other. If I'm feeling especially motivated, I'll copy just the right bits of my route description onto a corner of that paper.

At the summit

If I expect to end up at a particularly good viewpoint (like a mountain summit) I'll usually throw the appropriate **National Geographic Trails Illustrated map** into my pack. These waterproof, 1:75,000 maps cover large areas (examples include the Glacier Peak Wilderness and North Cascades National Park) and are superb for identifying all the gorgeous peaks around you that you want to climb on your next trip!

When Things Don't Go Quite As Expected

Sometimes even the best-laid plans go awry: the bridge that you expected would take you across a roaring river is washed out or your climbing partner suggests that a different route home might be even more interesting. At times like these, I'm glad I've got an overview map (like the National Geographic Trails Illustrated Map or a Green Trails map) along with me. And although the screen is tiny and I try not to rely on it, my GPS can hold topographic maps for the entire state, which can be quite handy when we wander off the paper grid I've brought with me.

As I glance at the file cabinet that holds my map collection, it's hard to believe that when I moved to Washington ten years ago, I didn't have a single trail map to my name. I've come to love maps as a tool for fantasizing over future trips, carrying out the current one, and reminiscing about trips past. I hope you'll fall in love with maps, too!♦

When WTA Fireside Circle member Susan Ashlock isn't busy cataloging her maps, she helps instruct Washington Alpine Club's basic climbing and winter backcountry travel courses.

Learning How to Use Your Maps

Read *Wilderness Navigation: Finding Your Way Using Map, Compass, Altimeter and GPS* by Bob Burns & Mike Burns, The Mountaineers Books

Or try taking The Mountaineers Basic Navigation class. Find details at www.mountaineers.org/seattle/navigation.

Printing and Protecting Your Maps

National Geographic Adventure Paper is available at REI and through Amazon.

SealLine makes a variety of waterproof map protectors, also available at REI.

Map class at Maple Pass. Photo by Raymond Dion.



Through the Wringer

Hiking family tests camping gear that is both family- and budget-friendly

Wearing fully loaded packs, it had taken us three hours to reach Mount Walker's summit by way of the trail. It took just a few minutes of summit investigation for our ten-year-old son to find the parking lot.

"What? You mean we could have driven up here?" he asked, with at least modest irritation in his voice. He was stopped short when our nine-year-old shot back, "Hey, we are gear testing, not car testing."

After a good laugh and a little ribbing, we made our way to the south summit lookout to enjoy lunch in the all-too-rare sunshine. From our perch on the eastern fringe of the Olympic Peninsula, the views into the Olympics, down onto Hood Canal, and across Puget Sound to the Cascades were simply breathtaking. It was a great spot to sit and listen as the boys assessed how their backpacks had worked for them on the hike up.

For three (cold! wet!) months, Marika and I have put our six kids and a whole lot of gear through the paces. We've hit the trails, visited local state parks and camped out in our back yard all in the name of testing family-friendly backpacks, tents, sleeping bags and pads.

Our mission: To find and test hiking gear that the average household with kids could afford. With this in mind, high dollar items were out, but quality was not. We wanted to find durable gear that could be used by kids as they grew, shared between families, or passed down from older kids to younger kids from season to season.

We hope that you find our test results useful as you build your own gear closet.



Our hearty testing crew, the Scroggins-Forsell family, taking a break on the Tubal Cain Mine Trail this past summer

Read more test results online at wta.org.

The Kelty Salida 4 was a trooper.



The Big Guy: Tents

Our wants: Two- and four-person tents with components that can be distributed between multiple packs and footprints that will easily fit into smaller backcountry campsites

Tents tested: Eureka Scenic Pass 2XT, Eureka Apex 2XT, Kelty Salida 4

The size and layout of these Eureka tents are similar. The key difference is that the **Apex 2XT** has two vestibules and the **Scenic Pass 2XT** has one. The vestibules on both tents are rather small and require you to enter from the right side while entrance into the tents is on the left. This configuration works well for keeping out driving rain, but is cumbersome for loading and entering and exiting the tent. Because of this configuration, the vestibule is extremely limited in what you can place in it. The Apex 2T vestibules proved more useful, as you could keep gear

The Deuter Fox 30 earned high marks for flexibility.



Each pack tested had its perks. Here's one pack in action on the Mount Walker Trail.



As seen through the tent screen, this tester looks pleased with her sleeping bag/sleeping pad combination.

dry in one vestibule, and enter and exit the tent through the other.

During one driving rainstorm, the Scenic Pass 2XT began to leak. Its rain cover only extends halfway down the two ends of the tent, so the rain saturated the lower portion of one side and wind drove water up and into the screen portion of the tent under the rain fly.

The Eureka Scenic Pass 2XT and Apex 2XD tents came with fewer stakes than needed to set up the tents as directed, requiring us to add additional stakes before hitting the trails.

Although we were specifically looking to share the responsibility of carrying the tent, it was reassuring to know that both Eureka tents were light enough as a whole for our ten-year-old boy and thirteen-year-old girl to carry if necessary.

The Kelty Salida 4 turned out to be our workhorse tent. Getting inside was easy. The single vestibule holds two large backpacks, and there is interior floor space for some limited gear storage. Though listed as a four-person tent, it slept two adults and three children comfortably. The Salida 4's rain fly extends nearly to the ground on all sides, providing excellent shelter from driving rain and wind.

If you're looking for a family tent, especially if you have young children, the Kelty Salida 4 is a perfect blend of size, weight and ease of access. A family of four to five could live comfortably for several days on the trail without feeling like you are sleeping on top of each other. For a stand-alone children's or teenager's tent, the Eureka Apex 2XT works well in all but the stormiest conditions. Access is cumbersome, even for children, but, let's face it, they are flexible and will only notice the inconvenience if it is brought to their attention.

Just as Important: Backpacks

Our wants: Internal frame backpacks with the ability to fit multiple body styles and grow with a child through their teenage years or be passed down to younger children

Backpacks tested: Kelty Courser, Deuter Fox 30, High Peak Luna 45+10

Although it has the smallest capacity, the **Deuter Fox 30** was by far the most flexible. For small children and teenagers on day hikes and simple overnight trips, this is an excellent pack. Not only did this backpack fit our nine- and ten-year-old boys and thirteen-year-old girl, it also adjusted enough to fit six- and seven-year-old girls. The torso length adjustment can be made in seconds, allowing us to switch the backpack from one kid to another midhike. Flexibility at its finest! With ample tiedowns and compression straps and the roomy side compartments, you can easily store and stash your rain gear and snacks. This is a great pack for kids or teenagers who are carrying some common gear like tents and cooking equipment, and it should be more than adequate to last into early adulthood.

If you're looking for a hefty overnight or multiday trekking pack for your tween and teenager, the **High Peak Luna 45+10** is your pack. Our ten- and thirteen-year-old kids were able to carry all of the gear required to be self-sufficient on an overnight hike using this pack. The torso length adjustment allowed this pack to fit the frame of children ranging from ages nine to thirteen—or even Marika and me. The hip belt was not able to adjust small enough for our nine-year-old boy or six-year-old girl. While the Luna 45+10 may not be flexible enough to fit small children, it can be used by adults as a large day pack or small overnight pack. The built-in rain cover is easy to deploy without taking the backpack off. This nice feature should be made mandatory on all packs sold in Western Washington!

The well-built **Kelty Courser** is a typical top-loader, with adequate compression straps and tiedown points. It's suitable for teenagers and adults, but the lack of torso length adjustment means this pack will not be able to adapt with children in their early- to mid-teen years when they are growing the fastest. We could adjust the pack to fit kids ages ten to thirteen, but even then it shifted and didn't feel secure to the kids.

Critical for Warmth: Sleeping Bags

Our wants: *Lightweight and durable sleeping bags that can either grow with a child or be passed down to the younger kids from season to season, to eliminate the need to purchase new sleeping bags each year*

Sleeping bags tested: *Kelty Big Dipper 30 and Little Tree 20, REI Kindercone +30, Deuter Starlight EXP, High Peak Summit 20 Jr. and Summit 0 Jr.*

The **Kelty Big Dipper 30** and **Little Tree 20** earned mixed reviews during our testing process. These sleeping bags are the bulkiest of those we tested, taking up a chunk of space in our packs. They have an integrated compression storage sack, which is a novel concept, but its implementation leaves much to be desired. The compression sack is little more than a cinch bag that is hard to load the sleeping bag into, and its design leaves one side of the bag open to the elements. But we liked the Kelty sleeping bags when we got to camp because they are roomy and durable. The expandable foot section in the Big Dipper 30 will allow you to shorten the bag to keep small kids warmer at night and open it up as they grow taller.

The **REI Kindercone +30** proved to be a solid performer. Our kids appreciated the easily accessible head lamp storage pocket and the liner in the head of the bag where you can stash a small pillow or clothes for better head support during the night. The only common complaint was that the interior lining was coarse and could become irritating on exposed skin overnight.

The **High Peak Summit Jr.** bags were the only sleeping bags to come with compression bags, a handy inclusion that should be taken into account when making purchasing decisions. We tested both the Summit 0 Jr. and Summit 20 Jr., and found the 20-degree bag to offer enough warmth for Washington's cool spring weather. Unless you're camping in winter, at high elevation, or near the snow line, you probably don't need the warmer but heavier zero-degree version.

The **Deuter Starlight EXP** was the most expensive bag we tested, and it was by far the best of the group. This bag is made from lighter weight materials than the other bags. Compressed, it came to half the size of the next smallest sleeping bag we tested, leaving plenty of room for other gear. With an expandable foot section, the bag fit everyone, from youngest to oldest, snugly at night.

For a Good Night's Rest: Sleeping Pads

Our wants: *Lightweight comfortable sleeping pads that require limited pack space and provide more value than the average personal inflatable mattresses*

Sleeping Pads tested: *REI Trekker 1.0, Therm-A-Rest ZLite, Trail Scout and Ridge Rest*

We tested three Therm-A-Rest items and each provided vastly different levels of comfort and convenience.

In our tests, the **Ridge Rest** seemed to provide the most protection from heat loss to the ground, but the least amount of flexibility in use. As it can be packed only into a large roll, forcing it to be attached to the outside of a backpack, it's more useful as a car-camping sleeping pad than a backpacking one. The **ZLite** uses an egg-carton style in a series of panels that fold up into a relatively compact size. This pad provided good protection from heat loss, and it earned the "most comfortable" distinction from one tester. The self-inflating **Trail Scout** rolls into a compact size that can fit inside a backpack, but the pad's material does not seem as resistant to abrasions as the other sleeping pads tested.

The **REI Trekker 1.0** is a self-inflating pad designed just for kids. Shorter and thinner than the other tested sleeping pads, the Trekker packed down to the smallest size and held up well to abrasions. We found this sleeping pad provided the perfect balance between size, weight and comfort. ♦

Story and testing photos by Adam Scroggins



The REI Kindercone +30 offered a comfy headrest, but may need to be washed a few times to soften up the lining.

NEXT UP» Gear for Going Light

Summer has finally arrived and, hopefully, getting back on the trail has rekindled your love for the Pacific Northwest. By golly, it was another long winter and a somewhat relentless spring, but here we are in the prime time!

Just like you, WTA's Gear Team will be taking full advantage of this wonderful window. We're putting the newest and coolest gear through the wringer in an effort to "go lighter."

Beyond just buying the lightest gear, going lighter calls for a change in mindset while you prepare, and requires you to bring the right gear for each situation. We want to give you a good idea of all the factors you should consider when trying to lighten your load. And we'll talk about the options you have if you just cannot give up certain creature comforts.

Our September+October issue will feature gear reviews, packing strategies and other helpful tricks to help you go farther, go faster and be more comfortable doing it! Less weight means less wear and tear on the body and ultimately more years of backpacking bliss. Stay tuned—you won't want to miss this one!

—Patrick Leahy

Sage Advice »

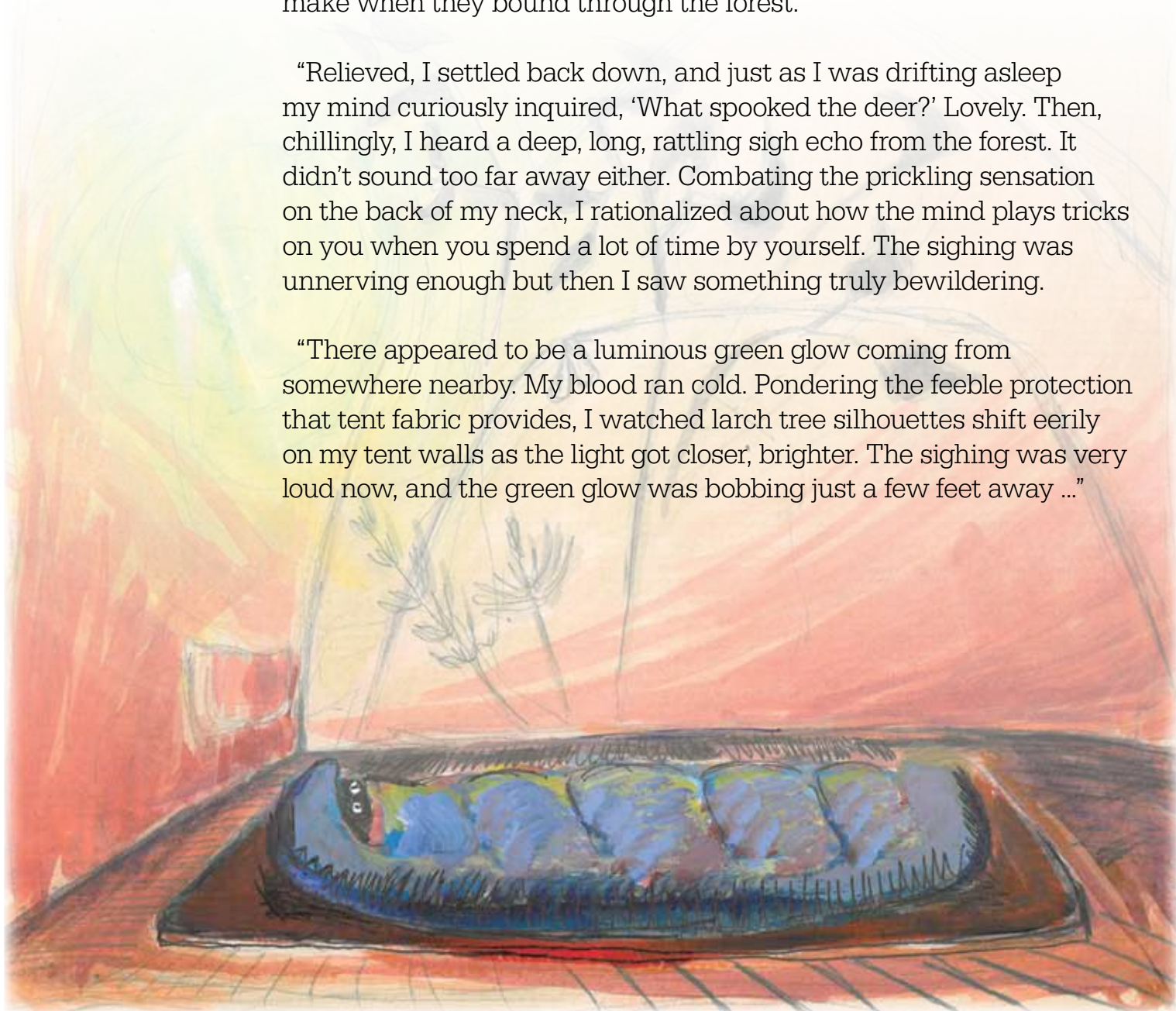
Tales from the Trail

Entertaining your camp mates is easy, if you follow our storytelling advice

"After a 26-mile day on the PCT, I'd crossed into the Pasayaten Wilderness from Windy Pass. I made camp under a moonless sky, then wolfed down a bland pasta dinner. Exhausted, I crawled into my tent. About 3 a.m. I was startled awake by a 'thud, thud, thud' sound. Mind reeling with explanations, I gratefully recognized the sound deer make when they bound through the forest.

"Relieved, I settled back down, and just as I was drifting asleep my mind curiously inquired, 'What spooked the deer?' Lovely. Then, chillingly, I heard a deep, long, rattling sigh echo from the forest. It didn't sound too far away either. Combating the prickling sensation on the back of my neck, I rationalized about how the mind plays tricks on you when you spend a lot of time by yourself. The sighing was unnerving enough but then I saw something truly bewildering.

"There appeared to be a luminous green glow coming from somewhere nearby. My blood ran cold. Pondering the feeble protection that tent fabric provides, I watched larch tree silhouettes shift eerily on my tent walls as the light got closer, brighter. The sighing was very loud now, and the green glow was bobbing just a few feet away ..."



The origins of storytelling have become lost in the mists of time. The oldest physical evidence are the 30,000-year-old animal paintings in the Chauvet cave of southern France. However, the practice is far, far older, likely dating back to the time people first learned how to speak.

Storytelling is as natural to humanity as eating and breathing. It's unique to the human species (as far as we know) and is deeply tied to the development of every culture on earth. And fortunately for us, it's fun and easy to learn.

Most of us use storytelling techniques every day as we share funny experiences or the highlights of our day. With a few tweaks here and there, these skills can blossom, and you'll find yourself captivating any fireside gathering with your tales.

First, you have to choose a story and make sure it's one you really love. It's got to be the type of story that you can't wait to share with someone else. It can be fictional, true or even a personal experience that you have written down. Story in hand, find a quiet place and read it aloud. Pay special attention to key points in the story that are worth memorizing (e.g., songs, sounds, certain phrases). Make notes about the structure and plot progression of the story.

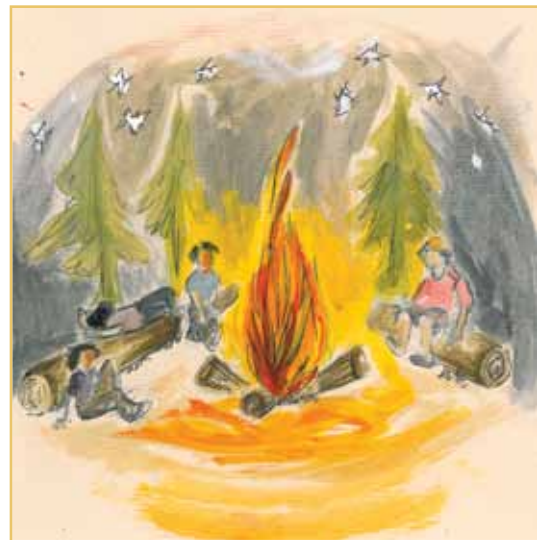
Once you've read it through, try and tell it from memory, referring to the original only if needed. Upon finishing, review the story and note any important details you left out. Tell the story again from memory. After you've made it through the second time, re-evaluate how true to the story you were.

Now you are ready for an audience. For your first attempt keep a few things in mind. Relax! Stories are malleable so it's not a big deal if you leave something out or if you embellish a little. Try to stay true to the original story and theme but know that each storyteller leaves a bit of his or her personality in the story with each telling. Give it your best shot but in the end just have fun with it. The best storytellers leave an audience thinking about the story well after they have finished.

With a few storytelling experiences under your hip belt, you'll realize ways to improve your skills. The more stories you tell, the better a storyteller you will become. Just remember that you are providing entertainment, and challenge yourself to read and respond to the reactions of your audience. Storytelling is an art form, but it is an art form that anyone can be good at with a little practice.

If you take the time to learn a few stories well, you can provide an entertaining experience anywhere, anytime. I encourage you to break out your new storytelling skills at your next fire or stove-side gathering. The best thing about it is it won't add any weight to your backpack!♦

Story by Chris Wall.
Illustrations by Niki Sherey.



Storytelling Resources

The Storyteller's Start-up Book by Margaret Read MacDonald

Creative Storytelling: Building Community, Changing Lives by Jack Zipes

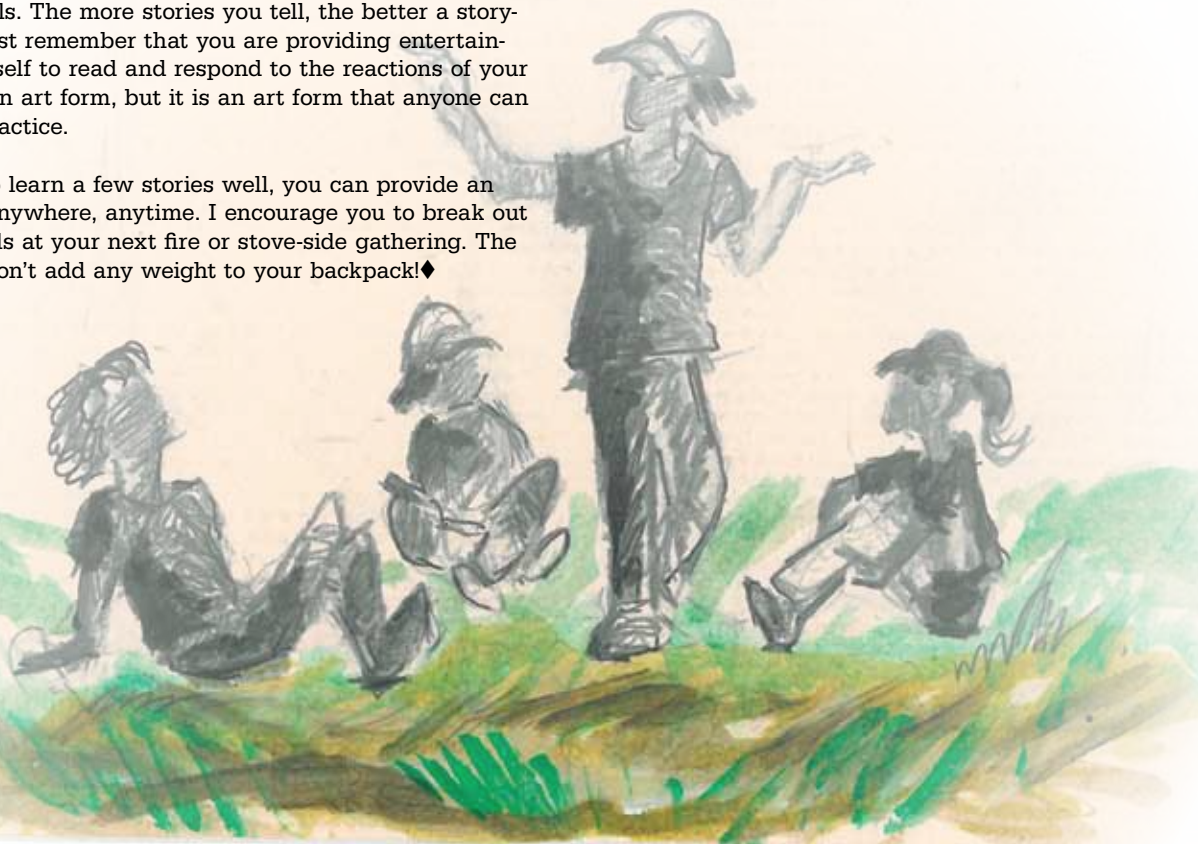
World Tales collected by Idries Shah

Earth Care by Margaret Read MacDonald

Spirit of the Cedar People by Chief Lelooska and Christine Normandin

Strange Monsters of the Pacific Northwest by Michael Newton

Special thanks to Ed Sheridan for his resource suggestions.



Trail Eats » Sarah Kirkconnell

Dinner For Two—Tacos, Rice Pilaf and Seasonal Berry Dessert

Fish Tacos

Bring:

- 2 5-ounce pouches albacore tuna or salmon
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil (1 packet)
- 2 small or 1 large fresh lime(s)
- 4 small soft-taco -ize tortillas

In a small spice bag:

- 1 tsp. Old Bay seasoning blend
- 1 tsp. granulated garlic

In a sandwich bag:

- 1 cup shredded cabbage (plain or tri-color with carrots)

Directions: Heat the oil in your pan (or fry pan lid if you have one) over a low flame. Add the spices and the tuna or salmon; gently heat through till sizzling, stirring often. Divide between the tortillas, cut the lime(s) in half and squeeze juice over your fish. Top with cabbage as desired.



Notes: If you fish, you have another option.

Catch and clean a fish, prepare bite-size chunks in the manner you prefer—gently steamed or panfried—and proceed as directed above. You can cook your fish over a camp stove or a campfire, just pack in more oil. For warm tortillas, bring a piece of aluminum foil about three times as big as your tortillas. (You can gently fold it at home to make it small.) Before starting the fish, heat up your tortillas one at a time in a dry pan. Stash the warm tortillas in the foil, folding it over like an envelope, and they will keep warm while you cook! Fresh cabbage is easy to carry while hiking and stays crisp for days. For ease, buy a bag of preshredded cabbage. Finally, if you like salsa on your tacos, stash a few salsa packets away after a fast food taco meal or order individual packets at www.minimus.biz.

Herbed Tomato Rice

In a quart freezer or sandwich bag:

- 1 cup instant rice (white or brown)
- 1/4 cup freeze-dried corn
- 1/4 cup diced sun-dried tomatoes
- 1 Tbsp. diced dried onion
- 1 1/2 tsp. lower-sodium beef or chicken flavor bouillon
- 1 tsp. granulated garlic
- 1/4 tsp. dried oregano

Also take:

- 1 Tbsp. olive oil (1 packet)
- 2 ounces cheddar or pepper-jack cheese

Directions: *Freezer-bag cooking method:* Add 1 1/2 cups near-boiling water and the oil to the dry ingredients in a quart freezer bag. Seal tightly and tuck in a freezer bag cozy to insulate for 15 minutes. *One-pot method:* Bring 1 1/2 cups water and the oil to a boil; add the dry ingredients. Take off the heat and cover tightly. Let sit for 15 minutes. In cooler temperatures or at altitude, use a pot cozy to retain heat. Dice up the cheese and fold in.



Berry Dessert

In a quart sandwich bag pack:

- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 Tbsp. cornstarch or arrowroot flour
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp. dried lemon zest

Also take:

- 1 Tbsp. butter or margarine
- a slab of cake of your choice (pound cake, desert cups, angel food cake, Twinkies, etc.)

Pick while hiking:

- 2 cups huckleberries, blueberries or blackberries

Directions: Add the dry ingredients to your pot, stir in 2 Tablespoons cool water and add the berries. Place the butter on top. Over a very low flame on your stove, bring the mixture to a gentle boil, stirring often. Once thickened, remove from heat and serve over your cake.

Notes: For a lighter-weight, longer-lasting variation, substitute 1 tablespoon butter powder for the butter. Look for butter powder in specialty kitchen shops or online at packitgourmet.com. Molly McButter and Butter Buds are found in the spice aisle at grocery stores. Dried lemon zest is also found in the spice aisle. Or carry a small fresh lemon for a gourmet touch.



Photos by Kirk Kirkconnell.

Take a Hike!



If you need more ideas, try WTA's **Hike Finder**, online at www.wta.org/go-hiking/map.

Safety Notice

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Day Hikes»

❶ Colonel Bob Trail is tucked away in the fairly remote Quinault area. Make a weekend out of exploring the rain forest.

❷ Maple Pass—Lake Ann. Like many North Cascades hikes, the window of time when this trail isn't buried under snow is small...and the scenery is always huge!

❸ Lake Serene—Bridal Veil Falls. Sometimes you just need to chill out at an alpine lake. You will find serenity here.

❹ Burroughs Mountain rewards hikers with some of the most diverse terrain and jaw-dropping views in Mount Rainier National Park. Seize the moment!

❺ White Mountain is a challenging and inspiring hike in one of Washington's most secluded wild areas. Experience it now and you can express your support for wilderness designation during an upcoming Forest Service comment period

❻ Quartz Creek. Go to see towering old growth. You'll probably have it all to yourself.

Overnights»

❼ Spider Meadow. Creepy name, but totally pleasant in reality. This nice easy backpack trip offers some stunning sidetrips, too.

❽ Royal Basin holds many rewards: flowers, wildlife, alpine meadows, a picture-perfect lake and access to surrounding snow-covered mountains.



1 Colonel Bob Peak via Pete's Creek

Region: Olympic Peninsula

Total Mileage: 8.2 miles
 Elevation Gain: 3,500 feet
 Highest Elevation: 4,510 feet
 Managed By: Olympic National Forest
 Maps: Green Trails Grisdale 198

Sure, you'll drive three hours from Seattle. But the views—down to Quinault Lake and its surrounding rain forest, over to Mount Olympus, and all the way to the Pacific Ocean on a clear day—make this trip well worth the effort. From a small trailhead near the Hump-tulips River, the trail gains gradually along Pete's Creek. Then the climb begins and really doesn't let up, as you gain some 3,000 feet over the next 3 miles. You'll do some rock-hopping as you pass the campsites at Moonshine Flats before the final push to the summit. Once there, replenish carbs and fluids, and seek out the benchmark and summit register. (Read my inspired words: "Solo Steve wuz here!") Return to civilization the way you came. If time allows, consider adding a drive around Lake Quinault on the South Shore and North Shore Roads for wildlife sightings, photography, and even some history at the Kestner Homestead.

Note: If you're looking for more of a challenge (14.4 miles, 4,200 feet gain), Colonel Bob Peak can instead be reached from the main trailhead just off the South Shore Road along the Quinault River. But be sure to check recent trip reports and allow extra time. The trail is through old-growth forest, and you're sure to encounter fallen trees crossing the trail.



2 Maple Pass—Lake Ann

Region: North Cascades

Total Mileage: 7.2 miles
 Elevation Gain: 2,150 feet
 Highest Elevation: 6,850 feet
 Managed By: Okanogan National Forest
 Maps: Green Trails Washington Pass 50, Mount Logan 49

Pick up the trail from the large parking lot at the Rainy Pass picnic area. This is a loop hike, but if you plan to make the side trip to Lake Ann, it's best to do the trip counterclockwise. After a gently sloped 1.3 miles, veer left at the junction with the Lake Ann Trail. Mentally store what you see at ground level to compare with the views you'll see as you head back to the main trail and up to Heather Pass. A short side trip in this area offers dramatic views of Black Peak to the northwest. (Back-packer alert: campsites here!) Continue climbing to a series of flat meadows, where marmots may be out to entertain you. A spiderweb of social trails laces the meadows. Prevent further meadow damage by staying on the main trail whenever possible. After a final steep push to Maple Pass proper, you'll take in more jaw-dropping North Cascades views.



As you start your descent, Rainy Lake can be seen down and to the east. It's fed by a massive horsetail waterfall. Still room on your camera's memory card? Once you're done descending, head right along a paved trail to snap some shots of Rainy Lake. Following your hike, head up to the picnic area at Washington Pass for dramatic views of Liberty Bell Mountain and Early Winters Spires. If "homeward bound" is westward, this stop will make for a slightly longer drive home, but you'll be smiling the whole way!

Colonel Bob and Maple Pass—Lake Ann suggestions by Steve Payne.



About this image:

Lake Serene—Mount Index Panorama

Photo by Guy Crilly

Taken with a tripod using a homemade panoramic nodal bracket holding the DSLR (digital single lens reflex) camera vertically set at ISO 400 and f/8.

3 Lake Serene—Bridal Veil Falls

Region: Central Cascades

Total Mileage: 7.2 miles

Elevation Gain: 2,000 feet

Highest Elevation: 2,521 feet

Managed by: Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest

Map: Green Trails Index 142

Just over an hour outside Seattle, this decently challenging hike offers two scenic destinations—the peaceful, aptly named Lake Serene, and the roaring, ferocious Bridal Veil Falls. Either one is worth the trip, but there's plenty of time to see both.

The trail opens with a fairly easy 1.5 mile rise along an old logging road. Think of this section as a warm-up, and take your time to appreciate the foliage around you. About a 1.5 half in, you'll reach a fork marked with a sign. The left path continues 2 miles to Lake Serene, whereas the right path treks 0.5 mile to Bridal Veil Falls. You're free to choose whichever you like first, but the falls tend to be the first destination for most hikers.

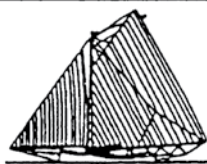
The trail to Bridal Veil Falls is steeper than the beginning of the hike. It will all pay off, however, when you reach the roaring beauty of Bridal Veil Falls. The falls are at their best in the summer, when the snowmelt is high and the temperatures are higher. The falls beg you to take a break, snap some photos, and take a look at the scenic valley vista laid out before you.

Once you're done at the falls, head back down the path to the fork, and head up the trail to Lake Serene. This section of the trail is a bit run-down, with some downed trees, impeding rocks, and possibly lingering snow—but all these can be traversed without too much trouble. Take things slow and keep your footing, and you'll get through without much issue.

The lake lives up to its name. It's crystal clear, with the enormous Mount Index towering above it. Relax, eat some lunch, and check out for a while. This escape can only be experienced.

Jake Strickland
Seattle, Washington

Please Note
The maps in this section were created by Mark Canizaro using National Geographic TOPO! for purposes of reference only. Not for use while hiking.



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Anne May

4 Burroughs Mountain

Region: Mount Rainier

Total Mileage: 5 to 6 miles

Elevation Gain: 1,000 feet to Second Burroughs Peak

Highest Elevation: 7,400 feet at Second Burroughs Peak

Managed By: Mount Rainier National Park

Map: National Geographic Trails Illustrated-Mount Rainier

Starting from the Sunrise Visitor Center, the Burroughs Mountain Trail (named in honor of naturalist John Burroughs) begins at an elevation of 6,400 feet and steadily climbs past meadows, alpine lakes, glaciers and tundra. Pikas, marmots and mountain goats may be spotted farther along the trail.

Hikers commonly start at the upper end of the Sunrise picnic area. From there, follow the Sourdough Ridge Trail to snowcapped Frozen Lake, Sunrise's main source of water in summer. At the junction, climb the Burroughs Mountain Trail to First Burroughs Peak. Along the way, you'll pass through an area of tundra—one of the most fragile ecosystems in the park. Stay on the trail to help protect the delicate plant life.

From the top of the first peak, you'll have close-up views of Winthrop and Emmons Glaciers. Emmons Glacier is the second most popular route to Rainer's summit. From here, it's a half-mile ascent along the ridgeline to Second Burroughs Peak. At the top of this plateau, a rock bench commemorates the life of Edmond Meany (1862-1935), president of The Mountaineers for 27 years. This overlook offers stunning, panoramic views of Rainier's northeast slope and the Cascades.

You can return to Paradise via the Sunrise Rim or Shadow Lake loop trails or retrace your steps via the Sourdough Ridge Trail.

Before heading out, talk to a park ranger about trail conditions. At this elevation, there is still snow in summer and you will probably traverse one or two steep snowfields. Due to its easy accessibility, the Burroughs Trail can be crowded.

Arrive early for more solitude. Many hikers do turn around at Frozen Lake, so parts of the trail see fewer crowds. There is no camp on Burroughs Mountain, but Sunrise Camp lies along the way, approximately one mile from the parking area.



Ericka Berg
Seattle, Washington

5 White Mountain

Region: Northeastern Washington

Total Mileage: about 6 miles

Elevation Gain: about 1,800 feet

Highest Elevation: 6,923 feet

Managed By: Colville National Forest

Map: USGS Sherman Peak

White Mountain has long held special spiritual significance to regional Native American tribes.

The trail climbs to the southernmost peak on the Kettle Crest National Scenic Trail and the namesake of the White Mountain Fire that burned over 20,000 acres in the Kettle Range back in 1988. The open subalpine meadows created by the fire and the naturally open terrain of the summit combine for a hike filled with wildflowers and incredible views of the Columbia River and wild roadless areas along the Kettle Crest in the Kettle Range Mountains. From White Mountain, you can see peaks in all directions, from the snow-covered Cascade summits to Rocky Mountain peaks along the Selkirk Crest in Idaho and British Columbia.

Conservation Northwest and Kettle Range Conservation Group invite you to hike White Mountain with an experienced guide on Saturday, July 9, at the Kettle Range Rendezvous. This annual hiking weekend takes place at a campground in the Kettle River Range about 20 miles east of Republic, and offers options for five different day hikes in proposed wilderness areas followed by a delicious potluck BBQ dinner and breakfast on Sunday morning. It's free, with donations accepted. Have fun while learning how you can help preserve these unique wildlands that connect working lands and wildlife habitat between the Cascades and the Rocky Mountains. Everyone is welcome, but space is limited. Register for the Kettle Range Rendezvous and White Mountain hike at www.ConservationNW.org/hikes11.

Crystal Cartner
Spokane, Washington



Tim Coleman



WTA Work Parties

Date(s)	Location	Date(s)	Location
July 1	Stirrup Lake	Aug 2-4	White Chuck Bench
July 1-2	Meadow Creek	Aug 4	Cape Horn
July 1-3	Glacier Basin	Aug 5	King County Parks
July 1-3	Gold Creek	Aug 5-6	PCT S from Stevens
July 2-3	Mount Baker	Aug 5-7	Mount Rainier
July 2-3	Upper Dungeness	Aug 5-7	Snow Lake
July 5-7	Cold Creek / Twin Lake	Aug 9-11	Kelly Butte
July 7	Mount Spokane	Aug 12-14	Mount Rainier
July 7	Cape Horn	Aug 12-14	Denny Creek
July 8-9	East Fork Foss	Aug 13-14	Tunnel Creek
July 8-10	Glacier Basin	Aug 13-14	Bird Creek Meadows
July 8-10	Gold Creek	Aug 13-14	Mount Baker
July 9-10	Mount Baker	Aug 16-18	White Chuck Bench
July 9-10	Lena Lake	Aug 17-18	Upper Dungeness
July 12-15	Verlot Area	Aug 18	Cape Horn
July 15-16	Surprise Creek	Aug 19-20	Deception Creek
July 15-17	Glacier Basin	Aug 19-21	Mount Rainier
July 15-17	Granite Mountain / Pratt Lake	Aug 19-21	McClellan Butte
July 16-17	Colville Nat'l Forest	Aug 20-21	Mount Baker
July 16-17	Kloochman Butte	Aug 23-25	White Chuck Bench
July 19-21	White Chuck Bench	Aug 26	King County Parks
July 21	Mount Spokane	Aug 26-27	Mount Rainier
July 21	Cape Horn	Aug 26-28	Mount Rainier
July 22-23	Surprise Creek	Aug 26-28	Pratt River Connector
July 22-24	Glacier Basin	Aug 26-27	Evergreen Lookout
July 22-24	Talapus / Ollalie	Aug 27-28	Mount Baker
July 23-24	Mount Baker	Aug 27-28	Cape Horn
July 26-29	Skookum Flats	Aug 30-31	White Chuck Bench
July 27-28	Mount Townsend		
July 29-31	Glacier Basin		
July 29-31	Talapus / Ollalie		
July 30	Surprise Creek		
July 30-31	Cape Horn		



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Lower Straight Creek Falls. Photo by Kurt Wieland.



6 Quartz Creek

Region: South Cascades

Total Mileage: varies—8, 13, or 21.2 miles round trip

Elevation Gain: 500 to 2,500 feet

Highest Elevation: 2,500 feet or 4,300 feet

Managed By: Gifford Pinchot National Forest

Maps: Green Trails Lone Butte 365

With a starting elevation near 1,800 feet, the lower 2 miles of the Quartz Creek Trail are typically accessible from May to November, but to take in the entire length (10.6 miles) to its junction with the Boundary Trail, the best time to hike it is in late summer, when the volume of water flowing out of Straight Creek (milepost 2) and Snagtooth Creek (milepost 4) has subsided. You may find a fallen tree to aid your way across, but use extreme caution as with any creek crossing.



Along the route, there are several suitable backcountry campsites. The best old growth is found in the 5 miles between Straight Creek and the junction with the Snagtooth Trail 4. A nice camp spot at Straight Creek can serve as a base camp for day trip to the upper Quartz Creek Valley.

Yet another option: For a more intrepid hike, ascend Quartz Creek Trail approximately 6.5 miles to the junction with the Snagtooth Trail 4. Then take on the challenging hike up to Snagtooth Mountain. You'll gain another 2,600 feet in the next 4.8 miles, but you'll be rewarded with excellent views of Mount Adams, Hat Rock, Juniper Ridge and the ancient old-growth valleys drained by French Creek and Quartz Creek.

Ryan Ojerio
Portland, Oregon

Learn more about this trail:

www.wta.org/action/current-issues/dark-divide

For a historical discussion of this area, see page 17.

Overnights »



Spider Meadow— Phelps Basin

Wade Trenbeath

Yes, Spider Meadow can be “crowded.” And why not? At less than five flat miles, the hike is relatively easy. There are ample campsites available, with fresh running water nearby. And the valley that becomes your home away from home for a night? Resplendent. Grand. Enchanting.

So, no, you won't find solitude in Spider Meadow, just raw rocky beauty, a meadow of thigh-high columbine and cascading streams. Marmots squeal as you hike by. It's really not that bad.

And there is actually peace and quiet available near at hand. Hike to the head of the valley, then uphill to reach the less-visited but utterly stunning Phelps Basin. Avalanche debris litters the valley floor. Greenwood and Dumbell loom above. You feel tiny, but in a totally acceptable way. After all, the wildflowers—myriad fat clumps of yellow wildflowers—will still be tinier that you.

Every Washington hiker should see this place at least once.

Wade Trenbeath
Seattle, Washington



7 Phelps Creek Trail

Region: Central Cascades

Total Mileage: 13 miles round trip

Elevation Gain: 1,900 feet

Highest Elevation: 5,400 feet

Managed By: Wenatchee National Forest

Maps: Green Trails Holden 113

Directions to Phelps Creek Trailhead From U.S. Highway 2 at Coles Corner, turn north onto State Route 207 (signed for Lake Wenatchee) and proceed 4.2 miles to a Y intersection after crossing the Wenatchee River. Bear right onto the Chiwawa Loop Road, and after 1.3 miles turn left onto the Chiwawa River Road (Forest Road 62). Proceed for 22 miles (the pavement ends at 10.8 miles) to a junction. Bear right onto FR 6211 and proceed for 2.3 very rough miles to the trailhead at the road's end.

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Royal Basin

Regal Royal Basin is simply astonishing. When we hiked there in mid-July, we spent one night in the lower basin and one night and two days at the lake and in the upper basin.

This 7-mile trail begins alongside the Dungeness River and follows it for 1 mile before the confluence with Royal Creek. Walk in old growth dominated by huge old firs and cedars shading the forest floor. That floor is carpeted with moss and vanilla-leaf, as though landscaped by a designer. Evidence of the continental glaciers' impact can be found at every turn, from the sculpted valleys to enormous mossy glacial erratics.

After 2 miles the trail enters Olympic National Park, but it remains a gentle grade until at about 4 miles it begins to climb and switchback through flowers on the path of an avalanche. Here the trees become alpine firs and Alaska cedars.

At 6 miles, you will reach willow meadows and the camps of the lower basin. By this time the roar of Royal Creek will have dwindled to a swift rushing sound. When we set up camp here, we were greeted by one of the resident rabbits. It watched us closely for signs of food, then entertained us by running through the meadow near us until dark.

From the lower basin camp, you have only a few hundred feet left to gain before reaching the upper basin. Prepare yourself for the loveliness of Royal Lake. The lake is guarded by Mount Fricaba, Mount Deception and a range of Needles. The camps with views of the lake were all so tempting it was hard to choose one, but we did.

At this camp, a ruffed grouse came quite close to us and sat quietly on a nearby log. Later we saw a new speckled fawn, immobilized and close to the trail. We also met an Olympic marmot who guarded its lair from a rock. A research team studying these endemic Olympic marmots told us they are in decline, possibly due to predation from coyotes and golden eagles.

To see the upper basin, we hiked under and around a giant boulder, left by the most recent glacier's passage. Avalanche lilies pour like flowery waterfalls on either side of this trail. At the source of Royal Creek, look for a gravel outflow and marshy wetland. This braided streambed reminded us a bit of Denali, except for two tree-covered knolls above the marsh and stream. Glacial moraines surround the high gardens and waterfalls. Above them rises beautiful Mount Deception, and all around the upper basin, you will see marmot dwellings in the talus, and soaring ravens and golden eagles overhead.

Joan Burton
Seattle, Washington

The Needles above Imperial Tarn. Photo by Michael Kowalski.

8 Upper Dungeness Trail

Region: Olympic Peninsula

Total Mileage: 14 miles

Elevation Gain: 2,650 feet

Highest Elevation: 5,100 feet

Managed By: Olympic National Forest

Maps: Green Trails Tyler Peak 136,
Custom Correct Buckhorn Wilderness-



Directions to Upper Dungeness Trailhead : From U.S. Highway 101, turn South onto Palo Alto Road. Follow Palo Alto Rd. for about 5 miles into Olympic National Forest. Drive 0.25 mile beyond Forest Road (FR) 28, then turn onto FR 2880. Follow the sign to Dungeness Forks Campground. About 2 miles beyond the campground you will come to a marked intersection with FR 2870. Turn left onto FR 2870. After another 2 miles you will come to an unmarked junction with FR 2860. Stay to the right going up hill. Follow FR 2870 to Upper Dungeness trailhead, and a bridge over the Dungeness River. (Alternate route available via Taylor Cut-Off Road and Lost Mountain Road.)

Nature on Trail »



Krummholz *a.k.a.* those crooked old trees in the alpine zone

On a warm midsummer day, few places are as appealing as an alpine meadow with the sun shining overhead, a gentle breeze, and only the occasional island of small conifers to interrupt a colorful expanse of grasses and flowers. Yet the peacefulness of this meadow scene belies the age-old struggle for survival that these shrubby krummholz trees face when no humans are there to see it.

Krummholz is a German word meaning, literally, “crooked wood.” It describes conifers at the high-altitude edge of their range, where there is persistent winter snowpack. In Washington, krummholz trees are most likely to be subalpine fir, mountain hemlock and yellow cedar.

Far from the lush exuberance that their low-altitude brethren show, these trees are compact, contorted, and often prostrate along the ground, getting some measure of wintertime protection from the cold and dessicating winds. This position also allows them to spread by layering—sprouting roots along the branches that are in contact with the ground. These luxurious flowing skirts of branches and foliage, being dark in color, absorb heat in the spring and accelerate snowmelt, hurrying the start of the growing season and providing a warm and protective microhabitat for seedlings. These seedlings can then grow up alongside their parent trees—one reason that krummholz trees in alpine meadows are often found together in clumps. These “tree islands” often provide shelter and protection for other plants such as alpine blueberry that would otherwise have a hard time gaining a foothold in an exposed meadow.

Krummholz trees offer a perfect example of how plants respond to a harsh environment. This year, if you want to see krummholz trees, you may need to plan your hike for August or later. The very forces that have shaped these trees continue to exert their influence, as the trees wait patiently under many feet of slowly melting winter snow.

—Sylvia Feder

How long have these larches been dueling above Blue Lake? Photo by Kerry Kelley.

Where to find krummholz

Hurricane Ridge. The road to Hurricane Ridge begins at sea level in Port Angeles and ends above 5,000 feet in a sprawling alpine meadow with clumps of classic krummholz trees. This Olympic National Park destination provides a unique combination of short, wheelchair-accessible paths (some less than 0.5 mile) as well as more rugged walks and hikes.

Gothic Basin.

Picture the essential elements of a resplendent alpine basin—tarns ringed by peaks, brazen wildflowers, strewn boulders and gnarled trees—and you’ve got Gothic Basin. You’ll see plenty of krummholz here amidst the classic alpine scenery. This pretty basin may well be the crown jewel of all the hikes off the Mountain Loop Highway.



Cairn atop krumholz in Gothic Basin. Photo by Keith Hoffman.

Blue Lake. Half the fun of hiking this trail is the gorgeous drive on the North Cascades Highway and, of course, the scenery only gets better as you hit the trail. After winding through lowland marsh and forest, you’ll gradually gain elevation and bigger and better views of the northeastern Cascades. From the lakeshore, you’ll enjoy not only krummholz, but also a stellar view of the jagged Early Winters Spires and stately Liberty Bell.

A Walk on the Wild Side »

Trail Magic

It's a thankless stretch of desert that takes the northbound PCT hiker into Wrightwood, California.

On the side trail that carries you down the ridge and into this town, my hiking partner and I discuss our plan of attack: post office, motel, shower, groceries, dinner. Or should we have dinner before getting groceries? Maybe the motel should come first? Finally, I made a declaration. I say, "I'm getting an ice cream sandwich. I'm not even going to discuss the rest until I get an ice cream sandwich."

It had been a hard day. Up before dawn, no water, very little shade. My hiking partner and I had inadvertently taken separate trails, resulting in what turned out to be the first rift of our ultimate separation. Two weeks later, at Sonora Pass, I would give him a three-day head start. He would promise not to slow down, and I would promise not to catch up.

Back in Wrightwood, we were still trying to hold it together. But we must have looked a little frayed. As we approached town, a woman coming out of her house squinted at us and asked if we wanted some water. We stopped in our tracks and nodded. She beckoned us to her front porch and slipped back inside to retrieve a cold pitcher and two tall glasses. We drank our first glass in mere seconds. She asked if we wanted more. I nodded and held out my glass. The woman watched me drink again and gave me a long, hard look. Then she asked, "Would you like an ice cream sandwich?"

In thru-hiker parlance, such an encounter is called *trail magic*: an act of kindness bestowed by a stranger, most often at a hiker's darkest, neediest hour. The stranger in question is known as a trail angel, although this term has also come to signify a class of people who have set up shop as permanent Trail Angels, institutionalizing something that is otherwise random and circumstantial.

Not that I'm one to belittle kindness of any sort. But when it's unbidden and unexpected, a simple act of kindness can suddenly transform itself into a small miracle. It's enough to make you believe in the good order of the universe.

Nature, if you let her get going, can be a nonstop magic show. (If you need to be reminded of this, take a hike on the Pacific Crest Trail.) We human beings, on the other hand, tend more towards chaos. We blade the earth for buildings and roads, piss off our neighbors without even trying and choke on the envy of our own dreams. It can be enough to send you running for the wilderness.

And yet, as I traveled northbound from wilderness to wilderness, I met with human kindness more often than I can count. We met a day hiker who stashed water for us in the Mojave desert. A family shared their lakeside cabin with me on a day when I was just about done with hiking. Two backpackers in the Sierra unloaded two days' worth of food on us just as our supply was running out. A teacher we'd never met drove four hours after work on the first day of school to bring us a resupply box—and a picnic dinner. The list goes on.

Hiking northbound on the PCT, I saw a lot of glory in nature. I also learned that, if you stay open to magic, we human beings can be as beautiful and as full of quiet miracles as the wilderness.♦

Elizabeth Lunney

Elizabeth thru-hiked the PCT in 1997. She served as WTA's executive director from 1998 to 2010.





Featured Landscape» Trappers Peak

If the North Cascades are the performance, then the Pickets steal the show

Unlike Baker and Shuksan, who show off their celebrity from the roadside, the Pickets are a reclusive troupe. You won't see them from the North Cascades Highway, Mount Baker Highway or Interstate 5. To see their wild and serrated beauty, you must don your hiking boots and head uphill. And for the best seat in the house, ascend the 3,400 feet to Trappers Peak.

Atop Trappers, a cast of peaks fills every turn of the compass: Triumph and Despair, Jack and Ruby, Colonial and Teebone. But it's the view to the north-northeast—the Picket Range—that's most arresting. Aptly named for a picket fence, this 6-mile-long chain is one of the most rugged mountainscapes on earth.*

The curtain call came at 4 a.m. in the thick darkness of an eerily overcast night. Leaving my comrades to slumber at Thornton Lakes, my head lamp shined the way up the 1,500-foot dewy ascent. Never more awake, I arrived on Trappers' summit at first light. As the light gradually came up, the blue-hued *dramatis personae* of the Pickets made their mythic entrance: Himmelhorn, Twin Needles, the Rake, Mount Terror, Mount Degenhardt, the Pyramid, Inspiration Peak, McMillan Spires. Framed by cloud layers high and low, counterbalanced by cliff and red paintbrush, the scene above posed in the blue hour of that late summer morning. The reverie in solitude was so complete, I whiled away a full four hours on the summit of Trappers Peak.

A passage from Kahlil Gibran's metaphorical prose comes to mind: "The mountain to the climber is clearer from the plain." To see the Pickets clearly, you need not a plain but a mountaintop. And that's why Trappers Peak deserves a thunder of applause.

HIKE IT»

**Thornton Lakes/
Trappers Peak Trail**

North Cascades National Park

Round Trip Distance:

10.5 miles from trailhead; 3 miles from Thornton Lakes

Elevation Gain: 3,364 feet to a 5,964-foot summit

Map(s): Green Trails Marblemount 47

Permits: North Cascades National Park backcountry permit required to camp at the lower Thornton Lakes campground.

READ UP»

Don't Waste Your Time in the North Cascades by Kathy and Craig Copeland
100 Hikes in WA's North Cascades National Park Region by Ira Spring and Harvey Manning
Cascade Alpine Guide 3: Rainy Pass to Fraser River by Fred Beckey

—Story and photograph by Buff Black. See more at www.buffblack.com.

*for a discussion of how ruggedness is calculated, see www.peaklist.org/spire/rug/rugged-ranges.html

ISSN 1534-6366
c/o Washington Trails Association
705 Second Avenue, Suite 300
Seattle, WA 98104

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