

**Discover Hiking in the San Juan Islands**

# Washington **TRAILS**

A Publication of Washington Trails Association | [wta.org](http://wta.org)

## **Harvest Hiking**

**Explore Autumn Trails and Local Flavor in Yakima**

**The Future of Wilderness**  
**Monitoring Olympic Marmots**  
**Camera Essentials for the Trail**

**Sep+Oct 2014**



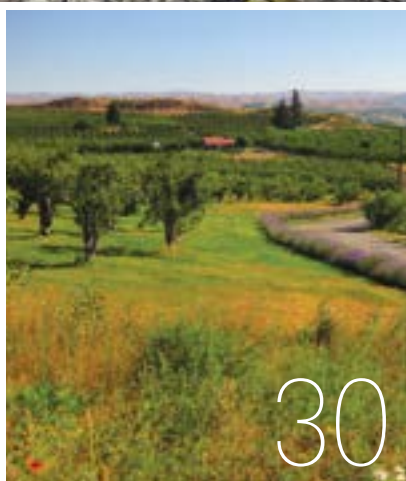




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# Washington's Leading Hiking Resource and the Nation's Largest Volunteer Trail Maintenance Program

**Washington Trails Association** is a volunteer-driven nonprofit membership organization working to preserve, enhance and promote hiking opportunities in Washington state. We engage and mobilize a community of hikers as advocates and stewards for our trails statewide. Through collaborative partnerships and grassroots advocacy, WTA focuses on state and federal issues, including trail funding, hiker safety and wilderness protection. WTA is committed to leaving a rich legacy of trails and wildlands for future generations to enjoy.

*WTA was founded by Louise B. Marshall (1915–2005). Ira Spring (1918–2003) was its primary supporter. Greg Ball (1944–2004) founded the volunteer trail maintenance program. Their spirit continues today through contributions from thousands of WTA members and volunteers.*

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\*Due to a years-old error in the sequencing of Washington Trails, all 2014 issues will be labeled as Volume 49.1 in order to get back on the correct track with Volume 50 in 2015.





## FRONT DESK

Karen Daubert

karen@wta.org

# Leaving a Legacy

I am reminded constantly of the many ways that hikers today benefit from the generosity and foresight of our predecessors. These hikers of yore fought tirelessly for wilderness designations. They helped champion the first environmental protections, and they created a tradition of volunteer stewardship for trails.

I am proud to announce that we now have another way for hikers to leave a lasting legacy that will benefit future generations. A legacy gift to Washington Trails Association—including wills, trusts, retirement plans, real estate and insurance policies—is a powerful and thoughtful way to share your dedication to Washington's trails and wildlands with future generations.

Sylvia Peckham was among the first to include WTA in her estate plans. Sylvia's favorite hikes were within sight of any snow-covered peak. She was known for exclaiming with joy: "Hi mountains, we are back!" This is not so surprising given that Sylvia spent much of her early years in flat, arid places like Texas and Saudi Arabia. When she first arrived in Washington—to work for just one summer—she immediately fell in love with everything related to hiking and decided to make Washington her home.

Although Sylvia hiked in New Zealand, Australia, Scotland and Ireland, she always looked forward to returning home, where she explored most of the trails in Mount Rainier National Park, as well as in the Olympics and Central Cascades. A successful nurse at Group Health, Sylvia was known by all who worked with her for her love of hiking. When she passed away two years ago, we were notified of a gift to WTA on her behalf. Her thoughtful planning has since made a significant impact on WTA's ability to move forward with priority projects that will have a lasting impact for future generations of hikers.

WTA's Legacy Circle was founded this year as a means to celebrate the extremely generous people who have chosen to include our organization in their estate plans, leaving their own everlasting mark on this state through their commitment and contributions to trail preservation. Becoming a member of the Legacy Circle symbolizes an incredible dedication to keeping Washington accessible for future generations to enjoy.

Legacy Circle members are transforming their passion into a lasting legacy for trails. These generous donors are notifying us of their plans to make purposeful, designated planned gifts to support the work of WTA. We are delighted to have the opportunity to thank them and celebrate their generosity.

I am proud to be a member of the Legacy Circle myself and invite you to join me.

*Karen Daubert*

To learn more about leaving a lasting legacy for trails, visit [wta.org/legacy](http://wta.org/legacy) or contact Karen Daubert at (206) 965-8555.



TOP: WTA board and staff thank Craig McKibben (center) for his work with WTA and honor him with a white hardhat—a rare gift given to individuals that have significantly impacted the organization.

MIDDLE: WTA member and volunteer Charley Rosenberry enlisted his llamas—along with friends and family—to pack in gear for two WTA Volunteer Vacation crews this summer.

BOTTOM: Hanna Landherr (left) won our Washington Trails Day Instagram contest with her photo high-fiving two volunteer rangers on the Talapus Lake Trail. Hanna will be receiving a Talus 3 Tent, courtesy of The North Face. Way to go, Hanna!

## EDITOR'S CHOICE

### Highlights from ORSM 2014

Summer is my favorite time of year. Not just for the long, sunny days and countless trails I can hike and check off of my to-do list, but also because it's time for the **Outdoor Retailer Summer Market (ORSM)**. This is the annual mega-show that takes over the Salt Palace Convention Center in Salt Lake City, Utah, where every outdoor gear company you can name—and several hundred you probably can't—come to show off their latest, and what we can look forward to the following year.

Osprey is introducing a brand-new pack design for men, the **Atmos AG**, and women, the **Aura AG** (upper left). The AG stands for "anti-gravity" and refers to an innovative wraparound harness system. Mountain Hardwear's classic Lamina synthetic sleeping bag is getting an upgrade as the new **Hyper Lamina Spark** (upper right), aiming to be the lightest and warmest sleeping bag on the market. Shoe brand KEEN—no stranger to revolutionary styles—is breaking all the rules with the new **UNEK Sandals** (lower right). And Sierra Designs, continuing their progressive brand redesign, is rolling out the new **Tensegrity Tent** (lower left), which redefines the normal weight-to-space ratio.

Look for all of these items—and many more from ORSM—to be reviewed by the *WT* gear team in the months to come.



# SIGNPOST

Eli Boschetto



[editor@wta.org](mailto:editor@wta.org)

## It's Time for Northwest Exposure

Late summer and early fall means juicy huckleberries, bug-free hiking, changing colors and WTA's Northwest Exposure photo contest. It's time to clean your lenses, pop in a fresh memory card and get out on your favorite trails to capture stunning scenics, wonderful wildlife and camp capers that illustrate why Washington is such a great place to live—and hike!

This year we're changing one of the contest categories—Families on Trail is now **Camp Life**—in order to encourage everyone to take photos and show off the good times to be had while camping, from state parks to the alpine backcountry. Your other favorite categories are still here:

**Trailscares:** Show us those gorgeous scenics from trails across the state.

**Hikers in Action:** Photograph hikers doing what they do best—hiking!

**Flora and Fauna:** The birds, the beasts, the flowers and the trees.

**Offbeat:** Everyone's favorite category—get creative or get crazy!

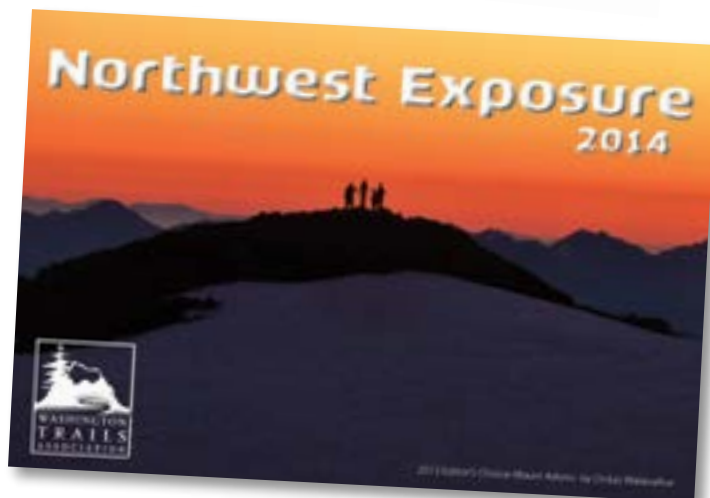
**NEW! Camp Life:** Capture the fun of camping with friends, family and Fido.

You don't have to be a professional photographer to enter your photos in Northwest Exposure. You don't even need to own a fancy DSLR. Shoot with your pocket camera or your smartphone. Last year's grand prize winner, Kristin Elwell, shot her mountain goat photo (see page 41) with a small point-and-shoot; no big lenses, no fancy techniques, just a little creativity and black and white post-processing.

So enter your photos—you could be the next winner. And you want to be a winner, because this year we have great prizes courtesy of **Mountainsmith, Olloclip, Outdoor Research** and **Mountaineers Books**, and a **Nikon DSLR for the grand prize photo**.

For more info, and to enter, visit [wta.org/northwestexposure](http://wta.org/northwestexposure).

Happy photographing!



HIKING TIPS FROM WTA:

### Why Hike in the Fall?

We asked WTA staff, board and team members what is so great about hiking in the fall. Here is what they had to say.

*"Fall hiking in Washington has pretty much everything summer has, minus the bugs and high heat!"*

— Andrea Martin, Youth Programs Coordinator

*"Fall is my favorite time to hike in Washington. The colors bring a warmth to the outdoors, making it feel like both home and a special escape from the daily grind."*

— Kindra Ramos, Engagement Manager

*"Each good fall weather day feels like a bonus because you never know whether there will be another."*

— Bruce Burger, Board Member

*"The cool, crisp air and the crunchy sound of stomping on leaves."*

— Krista Dooley, Youth Programs Manager

*"I'm in better hiking shape at the end of season than at the beginning."*

— Titti Ringstrom, Board Member

*"The crisp autumn air and the progressive silencing of the forest makes you feel solemn and introspective as you bear witness to nature slowing down and shutting off."*

— Kristen Sapowicz, Trail Correspondent

*"I like getting out to the high lonely with crimson-carpeted meadows and watching bears who are focused solely on the huckleberries."*

— Mason White, Board Member



### Facebook Question:

#### What favorite summer trails did you reserve for fall exploration?

**Kim Sharpe Jones** Some of the Mount Baker hikes, like Yellow Aster Butte. So pretty in the fall with the berry bushes turning orange!

**Gabe Purpur** Blue Lake in the North Cascades.

**Lisa D. Homes** Hikes in the Indian Heaven Wilderness are spectacular in the fall—and there are no mosquitoes!

**Kathy Vaughan** I'd like to return to Baker Lake for the fall colors; the maple leaves are amazing! I'd also like to hike around the Ross Lake area in the fall. Autumn is a special time of year on the trails!

**Tom Mulder** I'll be hiking the Boundary Trail thru Mount St. Helens's blast zone!

**Judy Roberts** Mount Rainier's Paradise area hikes are amazing in the fall: gorgeous, gorgeous colors and many trails to pick from.

**Chris Burke** Most trails are best in the fall; bugs are minimal and the colors are spectacular.

**Check out this issue's Hike It** section for some great fall hiking selections.

#### Want to join the Facebook conversation?

Visit [Facebook.com/washingtontrails](https://www.facebook.com/washingtontrails) and get trail news, featured hikes and a chance to chime in on our questions of the week.



### WTA VOLUNTEER PROFILES: Legacy Donors

**Edel Underhill** will tell you with a sparkle in her eye that she was born a hiker. Yet this was far from a foregone conclusion. Growing up in an industrial town outside of Cologne, Germany, she had little access to wild spaces. One day her local school hosted a "Walker Days" event, and from then on she looked for every opportunity to explore nature.

Edel first caught sight of Mount Rainier on a postcard. Never having been to Washington, she assumed the image was an artist's rendering. It was only on her first sunny day, several weeks after moving to Seattle in the spring of 1965, that she was startled to discover the image was real. Her son gave her a Green Trails map of Mount Rainier and she began exploring—in the words of her late husband, doing her best to "wear down the mountain."

As she saw more and more people moving to the Seattle area, Edel recognized the importance of keeping trails open and accessible. In the late 1990s, she read a notice in the local paper about an upcoming Washington Trails Association work party and participated. From that point on, she was hooked. From giving back to trails to the sense of camaraderie with fellow volunteers, Edel continues to find trail work rewarding.

Edel describes including WTA in her estate plans as an easy decision. "It feels wonderful to know I'm contributing to the future of trails," she says. "I am reassured to know that future generations will be able to enjoy them as I have."





*Summer Shared* Highlights from our online photo gallery.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: View of Mount Stuart from Esmarelda Peak, by Erynn; A sooty grouse on Sahale Arm, by Paul Kriloff; Salmonberries along the Middle Fork Snoqualmie, by Cascadesherpa; Exploring Upper Ape Cave, by Albertino.

## Comings and Goings at WTA

Autumn is typically the time when we see staffing changes occur here at WTA. Interns come and go, there are changes to the board and occasionally a seasoned staffer hangs up their hardhat, ready for a new endeavor. This season, we're welcoming a new board president and two new board members while sending off another, introducing a new staff member in the maintenance department and bidding farewell to a long-time team member who has been with WTA for nearly 20 years.

### WTA Board Update

WTA is pleased to announce its new board president, Stephen Tan. Stephen has served on the WTA board since 2008 and has chaired the advocacy committee for the past several years. Stephen is an environmental lawyer and managing partner at Cascadia Law Group, where his practice focuses on environmental litigation. Stephen takes over the helm from Wendy Wheeler Jacobs, who has served as president for the past two years. Wendy will continue to serve as the chair of the upcoming strategic planning process.

New to the WTA board this season are Aaron Theisen and Susan Queary. Aaron is a Spokane-based outdoor and travel writer (you may recognize him as a regular *Washington Trails* correspondent) and is working on his first hiking guidebook. As an active trails advocate in Eastern Washington, and in addition to contributing to WTA, Aaron has worked with Conservation Northwest and the Kettle Range Conservation Group. Aaron believes that stewardship is the purest form of advocacy, and is looking forward to helping advance WTA's mission across the state.

Susan was born and raised near the Adirondack Mountains of upstate New York and became an avid hiker and backpacker at a very early age. She has hiked extensively all over the United States and backpacked much of the Pacific Crest Trail in Washington and Oregon. Professionally, Susan is a principal in a public accounting firm, where she directs the estate and trust services, of which philanthropic planning is a major part. She also works with Children's Hospital Legacy Advisors, a group of professionals that advise clients with philanthropic goals.

As we welcome our new board members, we also bid adieu to another. Craig McKibben joined the board of directors in 2006

and served as president from 2008 to 2010. In 2011, he worked as WTA's interim executive director, selflessly helping to guide the staff through a significant leadership transition. Craig also served as founding member of the youth committee, chair of the board development committee, member of the risk management task force, and long-time member of the executive committee. Despite his departure from the board, Craig will continue to be a model ambassador for WTA as a passionate hiker and family backpacker.

### WTA Staff Update

WTA recently welcomed Elliott Skopin as the volunteer trail maintenance program assistant. Elliott is no stranger to trail work, having coordinated logistics for WTA Volunteer Vacations during the 2012 season, as well as working with volunteers at the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust and the Student Conservation Association. He will be working behind the scenes in the Seattle office to help ensure a positive experience for the more than 3,400 WTA volunteers across some 850 trail work parties each year.

Finally, the WTA office staff bids a tearful farewell to a long-time team member and friend. Susan Elderkin was first introduced to WTA in 1995—a mere month after moving to the Seattle area—when she participated in her first work party. A few years later she joined the WTA board and eventually became president, helping to grow a stronger trail maintenance program and expanding WTA's hiking information platform. In 2006 she volunteered—then in 2007 became a regular staff member—to help redevelop and grow WTA's website.

Over the years, Susan has been a driving force of growth for WTA's website, helping usher in new features and functionality—not to mention authoring hundreds of articles, blogs and trip reports. In 2012, Susan became WTA's communications director, where she continued to develop and grow WTA's online and print platforms. As Susan departs WTA, her new goals are to spend more time with her family and eventually launch a consulting service utilizing her long experience with WTA and other nonprofits.

WTA would like to welcome all of its new board and staff members and offer its sincere thanks to those who have served and are now moving on.



In July of this year, **WTA received a generous \$25,000 grant from REI.** These funds will help WTA engage volunteers in 46,000 hours of trail maintenance at Snoqualmie and Stevens Passes, the Issaquah Alps, and trails near Bellingham, Spokane and Vancouver. From families on dayhikes to ambitious climbers, diverse groups benefit from trail work. But we can't do it with volunteer hours alone!

REI provides grants to select nonprofits that care for outdoor places across the country their customers love. REI recognizes that a financial contribution to WTA is highly leveraged because it supports thousands of volunteer hours.

**Thank you, REI, for investing in trails!**



# Wildfires Rage Across NW; Funding Bill Languishes

WASHINGTON, D.C. – As wildfires raged across Washington this summer, a related bill was debated in the House. The Wildfire Disaster Funding Act of 2014 (HR-3992) would overhaul how Congress funds wildfire fighting.

Currently, under federal law, forest fires are not treated as natural disasters in the same way that earthquakes, hurricanes and tornadoes are, and are therefore ineligible for the multibillion-dollar pool of money that's set aside for such emergencies. Instead, the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and National Park Service must base their wildfire-fighting budgets on a calculated average over the previous decade—which in recent years, that budget has often fallen far short.

To make up the funding difference, these agencies must transfer money from other programs—including recreation and trails—to fight fires. In 2012, Washington's Forest Service districts saw \$40,000 in road and trail restoration and \$90,000 in trail projects either cancelled or deferred. In 2011, more than \$290,000 in trail projects were deferred. With this year's fires, the total will likely be much higher. Nationally, while the Forest Service spent just 14 percent of its annual budget on fighting fires 15 years ago, fire suppression now consumes nearly half of the agency's annual budget of nearly \$5 billion.

To make matters worse, during fire season staff are often diverted to fight fires, leaving trail and other recreation projects postponed or scrapped altogether. Similarly, valuable collaboration and planning efforts with partner organizations can get set back a full year or more.

The recently introduced Wildfire Disaster Funding Act puts forest fires on the same level as other natural disasters. As fire costs continue to rise, and with the national fire season lasting 60 to 80 days longer than just a few decades ago, land agencies can't keep up. Something must change.

Unfortunately as of press time it appears that the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act is likely to languish and die in Congress. Supporters of the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act include Reps. Cathy McMorris Rodgers, Jaime Herrera Beutler, Suzan DelBene, Derek Kilmer, Denny Heck, Dave Reichert and Adam Smith. WTA will continue to press Congress to take action on this important piece of legislation.

The Carlton Complex, one of many fires that burned across Washington this summer. Photo by Jason Kreiss/Wikimedia



MAKE YOUR MILES COUNT



A big **THANK YOU** to everyone who made Hike-a-Thon 2014 a success!

Year after year, we at WTA are blown away by the massive support and enthusiasm that comes out during Hike-a-Thon. By mid-August (just before this issue went to press), 225 participants had signed up to make their miles count and had raised \$55,000 for Washington's trails.

All this success is thanks to you, the amazing supporters of Washington's trails. Whether you raised money yourself, sponsored another hiker, or are one of our generous corporate sponsors, you have helped protect and maintain the trails we all love.



## Greenway Bill Goes to the Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. – On July 15, Sen. Maria Cantwell and co-sponsor Sen. Patty Murray introduced a bill in the U.S. Senate to designate the Mountains to Sound Greenway (stretching from Puget Sound to Ellensburg) as a national heritage area: a large, lived-in area designated by Congress where natural, cultural, historic and recreational resources combine to form a landscape of national distinction. The designation preserves the landscape without affecting private property rights.

The legislation joins Rep. Dave Reichert's companion bill in the U.S. House. The Senate bill will now head to the Committee on Natural Resources for committee review and approval. In the House, the bill has been referred to the Subcommittee on Public Lands and Environmental Regulation for review.

For more information on this WTA-endorsed legislation, visit [wta.org/greenway](http://wta.org/greenway).

## Celebrating the Soon-to-be-Open Suiattle River Road

MT. BAKER-SNOQUALMIE NATIONAL FOREST – At the end of October, after 10 years of closures, the Suiattle River Rd (FR 26)—a primary corridor into Glacier Peak Wilderness hiking—will be opening to great fanfare. It will take years of work to fully restore the area's trails, but the road opening is a first step and it's one worth celebrating. The Rediscover the Suiattle Celebration will take place from noon to 4pm on Saturday, Oct. 25, at the community center in Darrington. Learn more about participating in this historic moment and about the self-guided tours that will be available along the road at [wta.org/suiattlecelebration](http://wta.org/suiattlecelebration).

Out with the old road (center), in with the new (right). Photo by Kim Brown



Lone Peak 2.0



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# Alpine Lakes Expansion Bill Moves Forward

WASHINGTON, D.C. – For the first time in four years, the Alpine Lakes Wilderness and Pratt and Middle Fork Snoqualmie Rivers Protection Act (H.R. 361) was heard—and passed—in the House Natural Resources Committee.

The legislation would expand the popular Alpine Lakes Wilderness by 22,000 acres and protect 10 miles of the Pratt River and 30 miles of the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River.

Only a 30-minute drive from Seattle, the proposed additions offer year-round recreation in the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River area. The bill has been championed by Rep. Dave Reichert and is co-sponsored by Rep. Suzan DelBene.

While the bill passed the House committee, it did so with two boundary adjustment amendments. The most controversial of these is a deletion of hundreds of acres of low-elevation forest land between the recently constructed Pratt Connector Trail and the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River. Additional language was added to the bill relating to military overflights, wildfires and buffer areas.

The bill can now move to the House floor for a vote. The Senate version of the Alpine Lakes Wilderness Additions bill (S-112) passed the Senate in 2013 with the leadership of Sen. Patty Murray.

The Alpine Lakes expansion could add 22,000 acres of new wilderness to this popular hiking destination not far from Seattle. Photo by Teresa Hall



## **PARK UPDATES:**

# Enchanted Valley Chalet IS Moving

OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK – Olympic National Park will be moving the threatened Enchanted Valley Chalet to protect the East Fork of the Quinault River.

Park officials have finished their expedited Environmental Analysis and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) has been signed by the National Park Service Pacific Northwest regional director. The signed FONSI means that the chalet can now be safely moved.

"To avoid immediate environmental harm to the East Fork Quinault River and risks to threatened bull trout and other aquatic resources, it is imperative that the chalet be moved away from the river bank before the fall rains begin," said Olympic National Park Superintendent Sarah Creachbaum in a press statement. "A second and more extensive planning and public review process will begin later this year, and will examine options for long-term disposition of the historic chalet."

How and when the park plans to move the chalet are still to be determined. To learn more about the chalet, visit [wta.org/chalet](http://wta.org/chalet).



Photo by Ben Jensen

## Support Trails Year-Round

**Fall is the season for workplace giving!** By donating to Washington Trails Association through your company's workplace giving campaign, you can support WTA's education, advocacy, youth and trail maintenance programs year-round.

Sign up through your workplace giving campaign and a portion of your total pledge will be automatically deducted each pay period and sent to WTA from your employer. To find out if your employer participates in workplace giving or matching programs, contact your human resources department.

For more information, visit [wta.org/workplace](http://wta.org/workplace)





Photo by Paul Vidal

# Let's Talk TOOLS

## Maintaining WTA's Trail Arsenal

At the end of a WTA work party, tools are piled, dirty and dusty, near the crew leader's truck as you and your fellow volunteers head home to shower and relax. Soon, you'll be refreshed and ready for another day of volunteering. When you rejoin us, the tools will be clean, sharp and ready to use. But how do they get that way? Who washes them, keeps them sharp and tucks them into storage each night? What happens when they break? Here is a behind-the-scenes look at how WTA manages to maintain all those tools.

### **Routine Maintenance Begins as Work Parties End**

If conditions on trail have been particularly messy, assistant crew leaders (ACLs) clear most of the muck off the tools before loading them back into their trucks. Once a week during summer, and more frequently during wetter seasons if necessary, the tools are driven "home" to a cache for more extensive cleaning and repair. WTA's biggest tool cache is at the North Bend Ranger Station, but as our trail maintenance program has grown, additional caches have been added near Bellingham, Vancouver, Spokane and on the Olympic Peninsula. At the cache, crew leaders hose off the tools and stow them neatly in racks, checking for any that may need repair or sharpening.

### **Sharpening Happens Year-Round**

In the Puget Sound area, Bud Silliman and Craig Jackson are instrumental for this job. Both help sharpen all of WTA's tools, but each has his own specialty. Silliman works on our crosscut saws, which require hand sharpening, while Jackson maintains our handsaws using a sharpening method he developed on his own.

"When I started helping maintain the saws, I turned to my training in tool manufacturing and sharpening," Jackson

says. "After testing a few different methods, I tried a small diamond wheel, which requires less maintenance than sharpening stones, and that's the process we use today." The process—dismantling the saw, cleaning, sharpening and setting the teeth, and reassembling the tool—takes just 20 minutes. The effort goes a long way. As Jackson says, "At \$19 a blade, it's more cost effective and less wasteful to re-sharpen them than buy new ones when they get dull."

On the Olympic Peninsula, Jim Scrafford and a few other volunteers help keep the cache in top working condition, which saves WTA time and money transporting the tools to North Bend. Scrafford explains what prompted him to volunteer his time: "On my first work party I noticed that Janice O'Conner had a Pulaski in the back of her rig that did not have a handle on it. When I asked how it would be repaired, she told me she'd take it to North Bend. That seemed like a long way to go for a job I could do, so I offered to fix it. That grew into me taking a few tools at a time and doing what was necessary to get them back on the trail."

### **Tools Need Special Attention Now and Then**

Each spring and fall WTA hosts tool maintenance work parties in North Bend to give them an overhaul before and after the busy summer season. Volunteers help to thoroughly wash the tools. Then they let them dry for two days before reapplying bright red paint to the handles, making the tools easy to find when they're put aside on trail. Heads are sharpened and reset on their handles so the fit is snug, and the tools are ready for another season of use.

### **Tools Sometimes Break, but That's Not the End**

Overzealous digging may result in a snapped shovel handle, but the broken piece can be used to make crosscut



saw handles, while the shovel head can be refitted with a new handle. Handles from other tools are harder to reuse, but the heads can always be refitted and sent back out into the field.

### **With Proper Maintenance, Tools Last for Quite a While**

"There are tools in our cache that have been here longer than I have," says Alan Carter Mortimer, Field Programs Manager. That's more than eighteen years of use! But that's hardly retirement age in tool years. Indeed, the best crosscut saws can be 100 years old, and we have saws in our cache near that age. Tools aren't retired until the heads or teeth have been worn down so far that they can't be sharpened any further, which can take years.

Even after all these years of heavy use, a tool can still be useful. In Spokane, volunteers use old Pulaskis for rock work. The adze end gets very narrow from years of grinding, which works perfectly for more precise digging and rock extraction, while the axe end still fulfills its conventional use.

### **Meticulous Maintenance Allows WTA to Add to Caches**

Thanks in part to our loyal members, WTA can purchase new tools to meet increased demand, supplementing our cache rather than having to replace worn-down equipment. That means you'll always have a clean, sharp and ready-to-use tool every time you join us on a work party—no matter how many other enthusiastic volunteers are with you. ♦

## **Working With Tools**

When you volunteer on a WTA work party, here are a few tips to help preserve our tools for years of service.

- ◆ Listen to the tool talk at the beginning of the work party. Crew leaders and assistant crew leaders review each tool at every work party, so you'll always know which tool is best for the job you're doing.
- ◆ Use brains, not brawn—too much pressure can result in a snapped handle.
- ◆ Be sure to clear dirt or debris well away from anything you're cutting; sharp blades are meant to cut wood, not dirt or rocks.
- ◆ Keep saw sheaths close at hand. They're easy to lose in underbrush and they're crucial to keeping our saws in good condition, so keep them nearby while you're working.
- ◆ Stow tools safely off-trail when you're finished using them—don't just toss them into the dirt.



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By Krista Dooley

## FROM WTA TO MIT

"I would say trail work with WTA the summer before entering high school was one of my first real introductions to engineering, and I really benefitted from those projects and experiences," reflected Sally Miller, a junior mechanical engineering student and outdoor trip leader at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

Miller has been hiking and backpacking with her family nearly her whole life. As a student growing up in Fall City, she was also interested in and drawn to the STEM field (science, technology, engineering and math). She combined her interests in 2008 when she found WTA's Youth Volunteer Vacation program, joining an all-girls' crew at Wallace Falls State Park. From her first and three subsequent week-long trips, Miller gained new technical skills and a greater appreciation for trails. In thinking about her volunteer experience in high school, she says, "My favorite projects were puncheon bridges because they combine engineering with trail work."

Miller's interest in the outdoors and engineering came together again this summer through an internship at Seattle-based outdoor manufacturer Cascade Designs. "Initially I thought it seemed like a company that would really fit my interests because I enjoy being outside so much," she said. Miller worked on testing new bindings for MSR snowshoes. She and the engineering team spent weeks in the lab putting together new binding designs and then went to Mount Rainier to test them. The engineers learned how their designs functioned in the real world and went back to the drawing board to implement everything they'd learned. A few weeks later the team headed back out, this time to Snow Lake Basin, and tested the bindings again. Miller really enjoyed the experience: "It was pretty cool because all of our designs were much better." Recently, she's been designing and building a test rig for a new water filter.



WTA youth program alum, and Cascade Designs intern, Sally Miller, tests her MSR stove on a recent trip to Crescent Lake. Photo by Lydia Petroske.

In the fall, Miller will be back at MIT sharing her interest in STEM and passion for the outdoors. Recently she and a handful of other MIT Outings Club members were awarded a grant from the Outdoor Foundation and National Park Service to lead outdoor trips for high school and college students. They will be leading six trips focused on introducing students to wilderness—many for the first time. One trip with high school students will embrace the MIT culture and be physics-themed: participants will talk about ropes and the physics of rock climbing, as well as use a high-ropes course to experience the real world of physics.

This budding engineer is eager to share her passion for the outdoors and science. Miller's hope is to inspire the next generation of outdoor enthusiasts—much like WTA did for her. "I think it's important to give kids the opportunity to explore the outdoors and see if that's something they are interested in," she said. "Plus it's another opportunity to get outdoors and have fun!" ♦

### *We extend our thanks to WTA's Corporate Partners*

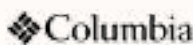
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# Hike One of These WTA-Improved Trails This Fall

WTA volunteers have been hard at work on trails across the state. Check out some of their handiwork this fall on one of these freshly-maintained trails.

## 1. Easy Pass, North Cascades

Golden larches and aptly named Ragged Ridge draw hikers to this North Cascades classic in fall. If you find the name a misnomer, you aren't alone. Two heroic WTA volunteer crews headed here over the summer to keep this challenging route accessible. The first crew restored the trail through several slide areas; the second headed up and over the pass into North Cascades National Park to clear dozens of downed trees and battle heavy brush in Fisher Creek Basin.

Distance: 7 miles, round trip (to Easy Pass)



## 2. Boulder River, Darrington

Towering old-growth trees in an unspoiled river valley with exquisite waterfalls—this is the subtle beauty of Boulder River. It's truly one of the best fall hikes if you're looking for an easy but rewarding day, with two glorious waterfalls just over a mile up the trail. There are so many things to look at and listen to that it's easy to overlook the rough condition of the trail. When the Darrington Ranger District asked WTA for help just a month after the nearby Oso landslide, our volunteers were eager to lend a hand. On several day work parties, volunteers cleared the first section of trail and repaired three heavily eroded and washed-out areas. A Backcountry Response Team spent their Fourth of July weekend continuing the improvements. This extremely popular trail is best visited midweek.

Distance: 8.6 miles, round trip



## 3. Colchuck Lake, Central Cascades

Colchuck Lake offers hikers an unforgettable taste of the famed Enchantments. Some feel this hike's most stunning feature is turquoise Colchuck Lake set against golden larches in fall. Others consider it to be the steep face of Dragontail Peak. Still others think it's the new log footbridge across Mountaineer Creek or the dozens of rock steps and water bars built by WTA youth volunteers this summer—though that contingent is admittedly small in number.

Distance: 8 miles, round trip



## 4. Mount Spokane State Park

Mount Spokane is laced with a 100-mile trail system that attracts hikers, bikers and equestrians in spring, summer and fall, and skiers and snowshoers in winter. On your way to the summit, you can roam through deep pine and cedar forests and open meadows, encountering deer, moose and even the occasional bear along the way. WTA is working with the state park to ensure these trails can withstand the impact of all those feet, tires and hooves. For example, on Trail 100 you'll notice three new footbridges recently installed by WTA volunteers.

Distance: 7 miles, round trip (for Trail 100)



## 5. Ozette Triangle, Olympic Coast

The Capa Alava–Sand Point loop is a coastal classic. You'll be surrounded by beautiful, lush green vegetation as you walk along the boardwalk to this wilderness beach. Once at the beach, set up camp and spend plenty of time exploring. Binoculars will help you spot birds, seals, otters or maybe a whale. Be sure to say thanks to the WTA Volunteer Vacation crew who converted a stretch of notoriously slippery boardwalk on the Sand Point Trail into turnpike this spring—a safer alternative for hikers in this wet coastal environment. (A turnpike is an elevated walkway constructed of two parallel logs or rock walls filled in with rock and mineral soil.)

Distance: 9.4-mile loop





By Andrea Imler

*"We can begin by doing small things at the local level, like planting community gardens or looking out for our neighbors. That is how change takes place in living systems, not from above but from within, from many local actions occurring simultaneously."*

— Grace Lee Boggs

# Bridging the Gap: Trails for the Future

*The relationship between trails and humans—the subject of this three-part series—is complex. Indeed, it has changed significantly over time. In the past, trails helped people reach timber, mining claims and hunting grounds (May+June 2014). Today, we use them to scale tall peaks, bypass fragile wetlands and reach our favorite viewpoints (July+Aug 2014). But what is the future of trails? You get to decide.*

## What Do Trails Mean to You?

Creating a future for trails means first asking an important question: What do trails mean to you? There's not just one answer. For some, trails are a path into wilderness, or a way to connect with their traditions and history. For others, they are an escape from a desk job and the digital world. Trails provide a variety of different experiences for different people, from the parent looking to introduce their child to nature through a city park trail to the hardcore scrambler who wants to reach a distant summit. The list could easily be much longer.

Perhaps John Muir summed it up best: "Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find

out that going to the mountains is going home; that wildness is a necessity; and that mountain parks and reservations are useful not only as fountains of timber and irrigating rivers, but as fountains of life."

Muir penned those words in 1901. Little has changed in a century, and surely the trend of "tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people" will continue as society becomes increasingly plugged into technology and unplugged from the great outdoors. The solution will continue in the same fashion: escape to the mountains.

While the majority of Muir's travels took place off the beaten path, most people today have the luxury of finding their "fountains of life" via a trail. But unless we maintain the trails we have and build new ones, that might not always be the case.

## Why Build New Trails?

There are thousands of miles of trail in Washington. So why build new trails? With increasingly busy schedules, hikers these days are looking for easy-to-access, stunningly scenic, most-bang-for-your-buck hikes in what we call the frontcountry—trails just off the main thoroughfares. These





trails are already overloaded. Pick almost any trailhead along I-90 or Hwy 2 on a summer weekend, and you could find more than 100 cars parked in the lot.

It's a problem that's only expected to get worse because Washington is growing. By the year 2040, our population is expected to increase by 2 million people (from 6.7 million in 2010). Currently about 8 out of every 10 Washingtonians visited a county, city or state park in the past year. Yet according to the 2013 Washington State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, current facilities, including trails, can only satisfy 30 to 40 percent of the demand for recreation across the state.

That demand will only increase with a growing population. In order to meet it there will need to be new trails built, while keeping our steadfast trails in good shape. It's a delicate balance to strike, especially as funding for trails continues to decrease. The future of hiking in our state is on the line. And your voice and actions matter.

## How Do We Get New Trails?

Even before the first Pulaski hits the ground, there's a lot of work that goes into developing new trails. Generally, a trail is developed in three phases. Hikers are encouraged to be involved every step of the way.

**PLANNING:** This is often a collaborative process with the public; **hikers can provide their thoughts on where a trail might go or what kinds of trails they would like to see in an area.** Land managers scout potential trail locations during this phase, ensuring that trails won't be placed where they severely impact water quality or the natural environment.

**DESIGNING:** During this phase, **land managers may develop a map with trail ideas that hikers can give feedback on.** Trail builders begin scoping out the layout of the trail, identifying sustainable grades and figuring out what kind of tread will work for the location.

**BUILDING AND MAINTAINING: This is where your hands get dirty!** Land managers ask for building help from professional trail builders or fantastic volunteers. But just like climbing a mountain and reaching the summit, building a trail is only half of the journey; maintaining a trail—and making sure it remains open and accessible—takes dedicated work over many years.

## How Can I Help Out?

To be a part of building trails for the future, get involved by attending public meetings, writing comments or taking part in a trail work party. WTA is involved in three projects that could use your help:

### Teanaway Community Forest (Snoqualmie Pass)

The Washington state departments of Natural Resources and Fish and Wildlife, with the help of an advisory committee (WTA is a member), must develop a plan for managing our state's first community forest by next year, including whether or not there should be an official trail system.

### Lake Whatcom (North Cascades)

Last year almost 9,000 acres of forest land around Bellingham's Lake Whatcom were transferred from the Washington State Department of Natural Resources to Whatcom County, creating the state's largest locally managed park. Now the county needs help planning the future of the park, including a robust trail system.

### Gorge Towns to Trails (Columbia Gorge)

An effort to engage the local community in a trails planning process is part of the Gorge Towns to Trails campaign spearheaded by the Friends of the Columbia Gorge.

Washington has a rich trail heritage. To continue that legacy, strong voices and actions for trails must be fostered. With each action taken and each voice multiplied, trails in the future will be a "must" and not a "maybe." ♦

*For the most up-to-date info on this and other policies impacting trails, sign up for WTA's Trail Action Network at [wta.org/action](http://wta.org/action).*





# Island Hiking

**Discovering the San Juans and Gulf Islands**

**By Craig Romano**

It was the autumn of 1989 when I first visited the San Juan Islands. I spent three days camping and hiking at Orcas Island's Moran State Park and instantly fell in love with the region. For this homesick New Englander (I had only just moved to Washington in the summer of the same year), the San Juans reminded me of home—except with much better weather. Their rural charm, postcard-perfect landscapes, small villages, organic family farms and eclectic mix of residents—everything from wealthy retirees to artists, writers and back-to-the-earth hippies—had me convinced I had found New England in the Northwest.

I returned to the islands often after that initial trip, eventually drifting over the international border to explore British Columbia's Gulf Islands as well. I traveled to the islands to hike, bike, paddle and explore historical sites. Every trip and island was an adventure full of discoveries, and I quickly learned just how many trails and preserves were open to the public and inviting exploration. I also learned that one of the best aspects of exploring the islands was that it could be done year-round.

As I continued to explore the San Juans and Gulf Islands I came to realize that, while separated by an international boundary, they are culturally, historically and naturally linked. And yet, while the entire region of the Salish Sea is interwoven, every one of the islands has a unique and distinct culture—some islands are artist and writer havens while others appeal to off-the-grid seekers. Some islands are friendly, some are reclusive, some touristy and some wild. The more time I spent on the islands, the more I grew amazed that so many visitors to, and residents of, this archipelago knew very little about their neighboring islands.

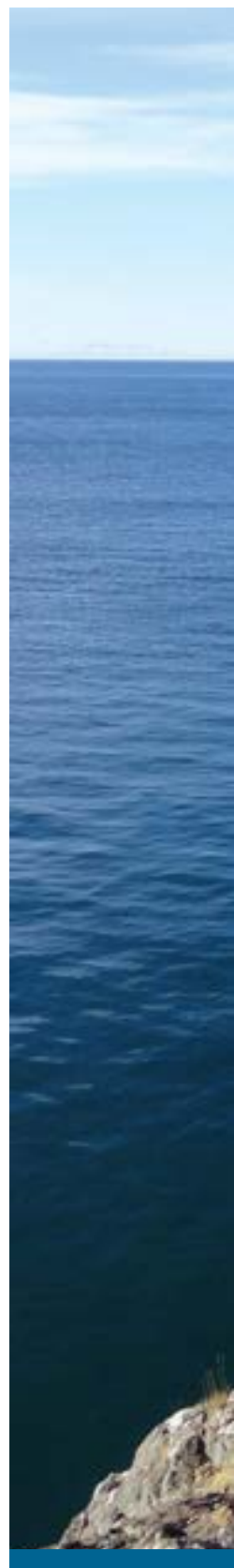
When I decided to write a book on the islands' great hiking opportunities, I thought it would

not only be a great opportunity to showcase the region's wonderful trails, but would also celebrate its natural and cultural history. I wanted to help erase that "island divide," which started in the late 1800s when the international border was established through this archipelago. I knew that a book of this magnitude would present some challenges, mostly logistical—after all, I had 28 islands selected for inclusion. It wasn't easy, but I had help along the way thanks to tourism agencies, generous water taxi owners and a very patient wife, editor and publisher!

## **Why Hike the San Juans and Gulf Islands?**

When it comes to hiking, the islands provide hundreds of miles of trails. Yet most visitors are only familiar with Orcas Island's Moran State Park and its iconic Mount Constitution. But aside from Orcas' sprawling 5,250-acre Moran State Park (with its 30 miles of trail, indeed one of the islands' best hiking spots), there are many other large public land tracts traversed by trails on the islands. The 5,100-acre Cypress Island Natural Resources Conservation Area nearly rivals Moran in size—and its 20-plus miles of trails are nearly empty of hikers. And there's more.

The two units of the 1,200-plus-acre San Juan Island National Historic Park on San Juan Island has excellent coastal and ridge-hugging trails; the new San Juan Island National Monument (spread across several islands including Lopez, Stuart and Patos) offers some of the most dramatic trails within the chain; and British Columbia's more than 9,000-acre Gulf Islands National Park Reserve (spanning 15 islands) presents trails on high ridges and long stretches of undeveloped coastline. There are also numerous state and provincial parks, regional and county parks and land trust preserves on both American and Canadian islands.





A hiker gazes out at Castle Island from Point Colville on Lopez Island, part of the San Juan Islands National Monument. Photo by Craig Romano.



*Every trip and island was an adventure full of discoveries, and I quickly learned just how many trails and preserves were open to the public and inviting exploration. I also learned that one of the best aspects of exploring the islands was that it could be done year-round.*



While land trust preserves are owned and managed by private trusts (on nearly all of the main islands), almost all of these preserves are open to the public. The San Juan Preservation Trust alone has more than 260 properties on 20 islands. Lummi Island, Galiano Island, Gabriola Island and Salt Spring Island all have their own trusts with beautiful preserves open to hiking.

To make the new guide even more comprehensive to the region, I also included the San Juans' and Gulf Islands' gateway communities. These are the places where you board ferries for the islands—Anacortes, Victoria and Tsawwassen—which are also culturally, historically and ecologically linked to the islands. B.C.'s capital of Victoria, popularly known for its gardens, tea houses, museums, artist colonies and laid-back vibe, is also flanked by thousands of acres of parks and miles of trails—some of the finest hiking anywhere, let alone close to a metropolitan area.

## Easier Than You Think

It's surprisingly easy to escape the mainland and discover the islands. You just have to give yourself a little more time. After all, half the fun of hiking at an island destination is the adventure of getting there. The main islands are all accessible by regular ferry sailings, and many of the marine parks can be reached by affordable water taxi service. There's nothing quite like kicking back and gliding across incredibly beautiful waters, watching for orcas, otters and eagles as you head to a trail. While most of the islands will warrant a weekend trip due to the time required to get to them, some of the islands closer to Anacortes and Bellingham (like Lummi, Vendovi, Sinclair, Guemes and Fidalgo) can make great day trips.

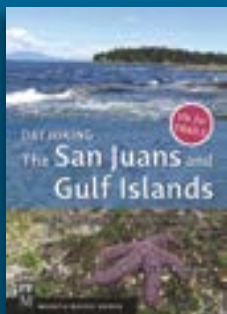
But you probably think that hiking on the islands comes with a premium. In the peak of the summer travel season that can be true, but during the shoulder seasons they can be a bargain. Many accommodations slash their rates then, prime campsites are easy to find, and there are usually no waits to board ferries. And if you want to save money by leaving your car behind, the islands make great bicycling destinations, with bike racks at many of the trailheads.

## Day Hiking the San Juans and Gulf Islands

After two years of island hopping, researching, hiking, discovering and writing, *Day Hiking the San Juans and Gulf Islands* was complete. Working with park rangers and land trust officials, I worked hard to spotlight some of the area's newest trails and preserves—many not featured in any other guidebook. I've also included a list of public campgrounds and some private ones for many of the islands, and tips for navigating the ferry systems. There are even sections that help you choose child- and dog-friendly trails, as well as trails for wildlife watching.

So when you arrive in the islands, boots on and book in hand, you'll find trails to secluded beaches, bays and coves; trails on rugged coastal ledges and bluffs; trails through magnificent old-growth forests that were old even when George Vancouver sailed into the Salish Sea. You'll find trails to nature preserves, historical sites, old homesteads, lighthouses and open bluffs that burst with wildflowers.

So board a ferry and start exploring some of the finest and most unique terrain, not only here in the Pacific Northwest, but in all of North America. ♦



**CRAIG ROMANO** grew up in rural New Hampshire, where he bonded with the natural world. He is the author and co-author of 12 books, including *Day Hiking The San Juans and Gulf Islands*, *Backpacking Washington*, and *Columbia Highlands: Exploring Washington's Last Frontier*, which was recognized in 2010 as a Washington Reads book for its contribution to the state's cultural heritage. He lives with his wife, Heather, and cats Mazie and Giuseppe, in Skagit County. Visit him at [CraigRomano.com](http://CraigRomano.com).







# Island Hikes

## Trails for the Views

### Turtleback Mountain, Orcas Island, WA

Stand atop Turtleback Mountain's open grassy head for one shell of a view. Stare out at San Juan, Shaw, Jones, Spieden and Stuart Islands; BC's Salt Spring, Moresby, Sidney and Vancouver Islands too! Come in spring when brilliant wildflowers make this peak a painted turtle.

**Ferry:** Washington State Ferry from Anacortes

**Trail:** 5.7 miles

### Mount Warburton Pike, Saturna Island, BC

Walk along a lofty grassy ridgeline, feasting on intoxicating panoramic views of the Salish Sea. Saturna Island's highest summit grants some of the best views not only of the Gulf Islands, but of the San Juans as well. Herds of feral goats help keep this peak's southern face a sprawling meadow.

**Ferry:** BC Ferries from Tsawwassen or Swartz Bay on Vancouver Island

**Trail:** 3.4 miles

### Jocelyn Hill, Victoria, BC

From this open summit on the Gowlland Range, enjoy stupendous views overlooking the Saanich Inlet fjord. One of the finest ridge walks on the Saanich Peninsula, the traverse is rife with jaw-dropping views, dazzling wildflowers, and impressive groves of arbutus and Garry oak.

**Ferry:** Washington State Ferry from Anacortes, Black Ball Ferry from Port Angeles, or BC Ferries from Tsawwassen

**Trail:** 8.3 miles

### Mount Erie, Anacortes, WA

Stand above abrupt cliffs on the highest peak on Fidalgo Island and behold the glacially-carved bumpy hills surrounding Deception Pass and the active glaciers on Mount Baker. Watch falcons and paragliders ride thermals above sparkling Campbell Lake.

**Ferry:** None; SR 20 from I-5

**Trail:** 5.2 miles

### Eagle Cliff, Cypress Island, WA

Stand upon a high, grassy, rocky knob rising abruptly above Rosario Strait and gaze out to majestic Mount Constitution and Lummi Peak, the loftiest summits in the San Juans. Admire the deep forests and unscathed hills of Cypress Island—a view Captain Vancouver would recognize.

**Ferry:** Water taxi from Anacortes or Bellingham

**Trail:** 2.8 miles

## Trails for the Beaches

### Upright Channel, Lopez Island, WA

One of the longest beach hikes in the San Juan Islands; walk beneath bluffs of big trees along boat-busy Upright Channel to appropriately named Flat Point. Admire eagles, bobbing buffleheads and darting kingfishers along the way. Look for otters and raccoons in the tidal flats.

**Ferry:** Washington State Ferry from Anacortes

**Trail:** 3.4 miles

### American Camp South Beach, San Juan Island, WA

American Camp offers plenty of natural splendors with its historic relics. Marvel at the snow-capped Olympic Mountains across the glistening Strait of Juan de Fuca while hiking across native prairie and golden bluffs along one of the largest protected shorelines on the San Juans.

**Ferry:** Washington State Ferry from Anacortes

**Trail:** 2.8 miles

### Gray Peninsula, Galiano Island, BC

Amble around a small peninsula jutting into the protected Montague Harbour, and see how many different birds you can identify. Marvel at big firs and gnarled arbutuses. And swoon over a gorgeous snowy-white-shelled midden beach that may have you feeling like you're in the Caribbean.

**Ferry:** BC Ferries from Tsawwassen

**Trail:** 1.5 miles

### Sidney Spit, Sidney Island, BC

Wander along a long, slender sandy spit, one of the finest beach walks in the Gulf Islands. Watch ferries ply the waters and plovers comb the shore. Then roam through stately forest, sprawling fields and back through history to an old brick-making operation.

**Ferry:** Water taxi from Sidney

**Trail:** 3.9 miles

### Witty's Lagoon, Victoria, BC

Containing one of the finest beaches in the Capital Region District, 143-acre Witty's Lagoon Regional Park also encompasses a gorgeous waterfall, a headland that bursts with spring wildflowers, and of course a lagoon—where more than 160 species of birds have been sighted.

**Ferry:** Washington State Ferry from Anacortes, Black Ball Ferry from Port Angeles, or BC Ferries from Tsawwassen

**Trail:** 1.6 miles

The San Juans and Gulf Islands are just waiting to be discovered. Stroll sandy beaches, hike forested trails, visit historic landmarks and every way you turn the views are spectacular. Photos by Craig Romano and Buff Black.

**"IT IS THE COURSE OF WISDOM TO SET ASIDE AN AMPLE PORTION OF OUR  
THUS ENSURING THAT FUTURE GENERATIONS MAY KNOW THE MAJESTY**



# *The Future of* **WILDERNESS...**



# NATURAL RESOURCES AS NATIONAL PARKS AND RESERVES, OF THE EARTH AS WE KNOW IT TODAY. ”

- John F. Kennedy



TOP: Washington's newest wilderness, the Wild Sky, may soon have up to 60 miles of new trails for exploration, most within 30 minutes of Seattle; photo by Marty Witt.

LEFT TO RIGHT: The Mount Skokomish Wilderness is home to the proposed Wild & Scenic Hamma Hamma River; photo by Doug Diekema; The Goat Rocks Wilderness is one of Washington's most picturesque playgrounds; photo by Doug Diekema; The Alpine Lakes, one of Washington's most popular wilderness areas, may soon be growing by more than 22,000 acres; photo by Dale Blair; The remote Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness preserves more than 175,000 acres of the Blue Mountains in both Washington and Oregon; photo by Aaron Theisen.

*Much has changed in the 50 years since President Johnson signed the Wilderness Act. But the Wilderness Act has not. It is that rare piece of legislation that has resisted any significant amendments. Its enduring popularity is a testament to the uniquely American notion of the indomitable spirit of wild and free places: that, in a world of change, some things—in particular, our natural national treasures—should stay the same; that humans and wildlife alike need clear water, clean air and sanctuary from the modern world; that, whether we ever step within its borders or not, wilderness stirs the primordial imagination; that, as our population increases and becomes more urbanized, our remaining backcountry lands become even more valuable as remnants of our once-vast wilderness heritage.*

*We have much to celebrate in the Evergreen State on the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act.* Washington's 31 wilderness areas comprise more than four million acres, the fourth-highest total in the lower 48 states. But here at home our state continues to change. With Washington's population expected to grow by nearly 30 percent by 2040, that means a lot more hikers, joggers, dog-walkers, cyclists and skiers on trails. That's a good thing. As revered guidebook author Harvey Manning would say, we need "boots on the ground" for the protection of public lands. But more boots means we need more ground. And thus, as Washington grows, so too does the need to protect that which makes our state so great.

Congressionally-designated wilderness provides the highest level of safeguards, ensuring that these wild lands remain wild. And Congress passes such laws only because scores of citizens press for their protection.

Although wilderness remains stuck in a legislative logjam—only one wilderness, the Sleeping Bear Dunes in Michigan, has been created in the last five years—wilderness advocates have not been idle. Citizens have worked with the U.S. Forest Service to draft a trails plan for the Wild Sky, Washington's most newly minted wilderness, that includes nearly 60 miles of high-priority new trails. But Forest Service budget woes mean that the public will be instrumental in implementing the plan.



## Mount Skokomish Wilderness

The 13,000-acre Mount Skokomish Wilderness is one of three wilderness areas buffering the east flank of Olympic National Park. While the park hosts as many as 40,000 overnight guests a year, far fewer stop at Mount Skokomish. But hikers who make the trek can admire the old-growth giants at the headwaters of the Hamma Hamma River—a Wild and Scenic River candidate under the Wild Olympics campaign—and the rock-bounding mountain goats on Mount Ellinor, who share one of the best views in the Olympics with a fraction of the visitors to Ellinor's famous neighbors. Established in 1984 as part of the Washington Wilderness Act, Mount Skokomish, like the Tatoosh Wilderness, provides an added layer of protection around one of America's most-visited national parks.

## Tatoosh Wilderness

The 16,000-acre Tatoosh Wilderness, just south of Mount Rainier National Park, may be tiny compared to its neighbor, but it has an outsized abundance of natural assets: wildflower blooms. The north-south Tatoosh Ridge that bisects the wilderness boasts some of the best wildflower walking in the South Cascades, a worthy reward for steep ascents in dense forests of hemlock, cedar and fir. A fire lookout and several tiny lakes also grace Tatoosh Ridge, but most hikers will be too busy with blooms to notice. Established in 1984 as part of the Washington Wilderness Act, the Tatoosh Wilderness provides a buffer—and a beautiful one at that—from development around one of the nation's most cherished national parks.

Advocates have also brought new life to existing wilderness. Thanks to WTA and its allies, the Forest Service expects to reopen the Suiattle River Road this fall after decade-old flood damage closed one of the key access points to the Glacier Peak Wilderness.

And citizens have taken new, and successful, approaches to the protection of wilderness. The David-and-Goliath days of conservationists versus timber companies are, for the most part, past. Today's wilderness advocates work with a diverse group of stakeholders—government agencies, tribal leaders, timber and mining companies, motorized and nonmotorized users—to craft lands packages in which everyone gives up a little to get more, whether it's wilderness protection or motorized access.

The Wild Olympics bill, which would add nearly 130,000 acres of wilderness on the Olympic Peninsula, is currently awaiting hearings in Senate and House committees. And the Alpine Lakes Wilderness expansion, which would protect 22,000 acres adjacent to the beloved Alpine Lakes Wilderness in the Central Cascades, enjoys the blessing of a broad spectrum of recreationists, from bicyclists to backcountry horsemen. Perhaps the model of people putting aside their differences for common values can serve as a reminder for our elected representatives that, no matter the political climate, the idea of wilderness remains inviolate.

Wilderness connects us to shared values of independence, self-reliance and perseverance. It also connects us to a healthy



## Salmo–Priest Wilderness

Tucked in the Selkirk Mountains in the far northeast corner of Washington, the 41,000-acre Salmo–Priest Wilderness is arguably the most wildlife-rich wilderness area in the state. The Selkirks are one of the last remaining refuges for grizzly bears in the lower 48 states and host to the only remaining mountain caribou in the lower 48. Moose and elk are plentiful, and gray wolves have recently reinhabited territory they once roamed. More than 50 inches of precipitation soak the Salmo–Priest—the wettest location in Eastern Washington. In the deep valleys, old-growth western red-cedar and western hemlock dominate a lush understory of devil's club, ferns and mosses, while the high spines of the Salmo–Priest offer huckleberries and far-reaching views. Designated in 1984 as part of the Washington Wilderness Act, the Salmo–Priest is the only wilderness in northeast Washington. However, approximately 200,000 acres of additional potential wilderness in the Colville National Forest have been proposed for protection by the U.S. Forest Service and conservation groups.

## Wild Sky Wilderness

Washington's newest wilderness, Wild Sky—established in 2008—protects nearly 107,000 acres of fog-enshrouded Central Cascades mountains on the edge of the growing Skykomish Valley. Dizzying vertical relief characterizes the peaks here: from Gunn Peak the terrain plummets more than 5,000 feet (to the North Fork Skykomish River) in less than 3 horizontal miles. Nearly 200 inches of precipitation pour off these steep, timbered peaks annually into the North Fork Skykomish River, on the west side of the wilderness; rafters revere this river's thrilling rapids, which are set among a rugged backdrop. On the east side of the wilderness, trails penetrate old-growth timber to reach expansive meadows, and hardy hikers can create multiday loops into the adjacent Henry M. Jackson Wilderness. A trails plan would add more than 60 miles of new trails within a morning's drive of the Puget Sound.

future. We have an opportunity to shape how our wilderness will look for the next 50 years and beyond. Chances are, if you're a WTA member, you already have your boots on the ground. On this, the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act, pledge to do one better: put Pulaski to trail or pen to pad and work for wilderness. ♦

**AARON THEISEN** is a Spokane-based outdoors and travel writer. In addition to being a Washington Trails regional contributor and helming this year's series on the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act, he is currently working on the forthcoming trail guide *Day Hiking Mount St. Helens* for Mountaineers Books. Closer to home, Aaron enjoys exploring the inland Northwest with his wife and 2-year-old son.

# Wilderness Trails

*Washington's 31 wilderness areas can fill several life lists with worthy objectives. In your quest for the best Washington's wilderness has to offer, don't miss these highlights.*

## MOUNT ELLINOR

**WILDERNESS:** Mount Skokomish

**DISTANCE:** 6.2 miles

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 3,200 feet

**ELEVATION PEAK:** 5,940 feet

**MAPS:** Green Trails 167, 168

Hike to wide meadows and unparalleled views of the rugged Olympic mountains.



## TATOOSH RIDGE

**WILDERNESS:** Tatoosh

**DISTANCE:** 8 miles

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 2,600 feet

**ELEVATION PEAK:** 5,400 feet

**MAP:** Green Trails 302

Hike this steep trail for big meadows and bigger views of Mount Rainier and the Goat Rocks.



## JOHNSON RIDGE

**WILDERNESS:** Wild Sky

**DISTANCE:** 9 miles

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 2,650 feet

**ELEVATION PEAK:** 5,540 feet

**MAP:** Green Trails 143

Climb a meadowed ridge to the summit of Scorpion Mountain for solitude and big mountain views.



## SALMO–PRIEST LOOP

**WILDERNESS:** Salmo–Priest

**DISTANCE:** 19 miles

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 3,650 feet

**ELEVATION PEAK:** 6,830 feet

**MAP:** USGS Salmo Mtn, Continental

Spend several days traversing ridgeline meadows and spying wildlife in the remote northeast.



Photos, from top: Karmot, Rock Ranger, Fraz Amador, and Get High. Stay High




# Park Patrol

Citizen Scientists and the Olympic Marmot Monitoring Program

**By Alex Mesick**

Illustration by Lindsay Holladay

Photos by Kelsie Donleycott



*I reached the top of the scree-ridden basin and sat down next to my hiking companion, Lauren. She had found a seat between some red Indian paintbrush and a patch of heather. With binoculars raised, I scanned the basin. To the north, beyond the park, I could see a patch of blue, the Strait of Juan de Fuca. To the south were the snow-hooded Olympics. I reached for my GPS as it swung on its dummy cord. It showed us on the edge of survey unit 47, near Appleton Pass. It was five o'clock in the evening on day three of our four-day excursion. There was not a furry brown dot to be seen, nor a whistle to be heard. I began carefully down the scree with a mission to find evidence of the Olympic marmot.*

An Olympic Marmot Monitoring Program volunteer consults a map while navigating to survey units in Seven Lakes Basin.





When it comes to animals that hikers look forward to seeing on trail, marmots are near the top of the list. It's no surprise; there's a lot about them to love. They're cute and sociable. And they're known to put on quite a show—play fighting, scurrying about or lounging on rocks in the warm sun.

Among marmot populations, the Olympic marmot is somewhat of a celebrity. After all, it is Washington's official endemic mammal, meaning that it's found nowhere else in the world: the animal counts Olympic National Park (ONP) as 90% of its total habitat (the remaining 10% of its population is located on forest land that abuts the park).

In recent years, the Olympic marmot has been in the limelight for another reason: throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, it was on a shocking path to extinction. The population decline was so drastic at the time, according to Dr. Patti Happe (director of the Olympic Marmot Monitoring Program, or OMMP), that scientific models predicted the Olympic marmot would disappear—not just from ONP but from the face of the earth—by 2099.

Something had to be done; the survival of an entire species was on the line. But there was even more at stake. The Olympic marmot was already considered a canary in the coal mine for ONP; if it disappeared, how long would it be before other animals followed suit?



*On the first day of our search for the elusive Olympic marmot, we left the Sol Duc trailhead along the Sol Duc River Trail toward Appleton Pass. Giant evergreens canopied the path before switchbacks catapulted us up 4,000 feet in just 2.5 miles. Just beyond the pass and out of breath, Lauren and I made camp near Oyster Lake as rivulets of sweat fell from our bodies.*

*The next morning I woke up to an animal sniffing and nudging our tent. After trying to make enough noise to frighten it off, I opened the tent door to the sight of two mountain goats prancing through camp and up a game trail. As we ate breakfast beneath a rosy sunrise, I could not help but feel an affinity for the marmot, who calls such a place home.*

*After cleaning up, we headed off to our first survey unit, where we noted collapsed burrows and marked an abandoned burrow. The second survey unit, a half-mile away, was abandoned just the same. Overgrown porches and fallen rocks labeled the units uninhabited. As these were our first two sites, we were still optimistic. But neither of the next two we surveyed yielded any marmot sightings either.*

*Looking among the rubble I began to feel less hopeful, less like a would-be biologist and more like an archeologist. I saw before me the ruins of the vast marmot empire that once thrived in these mountains.*



In 2009, the OMMP was established under the leadership of Dr. Happe. The program equips citizen scientists—amateurs and volunteers who go through a short training program (see sidebar)—to collect data on marmot population distribution throughout randomly targeted areas of the park. That means hiking with a purpose: looking for marmots, listening for their distinctive whistles and watching for active and abandoned burrows. Nearly 100 volunteers participate every August.

It's a win-win situation. According to Happe, "Marmot monitoring lends itself well to volunteers because marmots live where people like to hike." The OMMP offers volunteers (groups of two to six hikers, from novices to beginners) a unique backcountry experience and a basecamp for exploring wilderness. Biologists get much-needed, on-the-ground information about the Olympic marmot and are able to keep tabs on any changes in the population.

Coincidentally, the Olympic marmot population stabilized once the OMMP was started (scientists attribute the stabilization to a few years' worth of heavier snowpack that made for better habitat). But the animal isn't out of the woods yet.

## Applying and Training for the Olympic Marmot Monitoring Program

Getting involved in the OMMP and becoming a citizen scientist is simple. To apply for the program, just fill out and submit an application from the Olympic National Park website. The application asks about the size of your group (two to six), where in the park you would like to survey and what your backcountry skills are.

Once you're approved, the next step is attending a day of training at Peninsula College. In the morning, a workshop covers information on the OMMP and statistics about the Olympic marmot. In the afternoon, newcomers go on an orientation hike and receive training with their surveying equipment: population presence forms, survey unit maps, a GPS, bear canister and park radio (teams of two are required to check in daily). You'll follow a way trail into a grassy basin, armed with a GPS and topographical map of a survey unit, looking for examples of the dirty, sedge-porched burrows that Olympic marmots are known to construct. You'll also learn how to mark waypoints and save a track-log on the GPS. After some independent reading and a day of training, you'll be ready to monitor with confidence.

For more information or to apply, visit [nps.gov/olym/naturescience/olympic-marmot-monitoring.htm](https://nps.gov/olym/naturescience/olympic-marmot-monitoring.htm).





TOP: An Olympic marmot (*Marmota olympus*) suns itself on a rock at Gladys Lake in Olympic National Park's Grand Valley. RIGHT: Without recent sign of occupation, this marmot burrow near Mount Angeles is marked as abandoned.



It continues to be challenged by an increase in non-native coyote populations (the main predator of the Olympic marmot), a rising tree line (which allows predators to sneak up on marmots and prohibits the growth of the herbaceous vegetation that marmots feed on), a high rate of death among adult females, and one of the lowest reproduction rates of any rodent—breeding females produce only one to six offspring every other year. Of the 25 colonies that have been routinely surveyed since the 1950s, more than half are extinct. But scientists are hopeful that the Olympic marmot is on the rebound—one colony that was previously abandoned is inhabited again.



*Everywhere Lauren and I surveyed felt like an Albert Bierstadt painting—just as overwhelmingly beautiful as the Hudson River School painter would have wanted. Throughout the week we were witness to awe-inspiring nature. At one point, we were blocked from our campsite by a standoff between a four-point buck and a mountain goat. Another evening, we watched from our base camp as a black bear ascended our survey trail from earlier in the day. But even the stunning scenery and nature couldn't keep our disappointment at bay. By day four, we still hadn't confirmed a marmot population presence in our survey units.*

*The last night of our trip was much like the others that week. The sun was setting as we hiked out to the unit farthest from our camp. The farther we got off the trail, the more we saw and smelled bear scat—but no marmots. The chatter on our park radio crackled and then cut out as we crested into our last unit. We started down the steep bowl but stopped, fearing that if we got any farther down the loose footing, we might not get back up. Instead of going onward, we sat and listened.*

*From across the natural amphitheater, it drifted toward us—a series of chirps. And while we couldn't understand the language of the*

*Olympic marmot, we knew what the chirps meant—hope, promise, survival. We filled out our survey forms, optimistic and energized at last.*



With the data that ONP collects from citizen scientists, biologists and park officials are continuing to closely monitor the Olympic marmot and develop long-term solutions for its survival. They're also watching other species in the park for rapid declines in population.

With a stable marmot population, no action is necessary yet. But if that changes, there are a variety of options on the table. Ideas include introducing wolves to keep the coyote populations in check, using controlled burns to manage the rising tree line and implementing assisted migration to bolster dwindling colonies.

It is easy to get involved with the OMMP and be part of the solution. It's a rewarding experience that may just inspire you to help save even more animals. After all, it's not every day you get to save a species from extinction. And what could be better than that? ♦



## More Opportunities: Become a Citizen Scientist

### Coastal Observation & Seabird Survey Team (COASST)

A beached-bird survey program from UW offers teaches volunteers how to identify, tag and document dead birds on Washington beaches. A small deposit gets volunteers necessary survey equipment.

» [depts.washington.edu/coasst/](https://depts.washington.edu/coasst/)

### Conservation Northwest

Volunteers assist in working with remote cameras to track large carnivores—bears, wolves, cougars, wolverines—from the Cascades to the Kettle Crest. Assignments are available year-round.

» [conservationnw.org/getinvolved/volunteer](https://conservationnw.org/getinvolved/volunteer)

### Thurston County Stream Team

No experience is necessary for the Stream Team's monitoring surveys of benthic macroinvertebrates, purple martin nest boxes, amphibian egg masses and invasive plants.

» [streamteam.info/getinvolved](https://streamteam.info/getinvolved)

### Washington Conservation Corps

An AmeriCorps-sponsored program through the Washington State Department of Ecology, this job-training program in the environmental field is for 18- to 25-year-olds. Crews, located all over the state, have different sponsors, such as the Department of Natural Resources, Olympic National Park and the Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge.

» [ecy.wa.gov/wcc/index.html](https://ecy.wa.gov/wcc/index.html)

RIGHT: A curious Olympic marmot in the grass near Gladys Lake in Olympic National Park's Grand Valley. BELOW: Marmot monitors enjoying 360-degree views atop the summit of Maiden Peak while surveying units in the Maiden Peak cluster.








# Harvest Hiking

By Cassandra Overby

*In autumn, the golden glow of larches pulls focus to Washington's high country. But in the hidden folds and river canyons of central Washington, another color riot is taking place. Butter yellow, pumpkin orange, rhubarb red: For a few short weeks, the normally dry, hide-colored earth explodes with color and harvest bounty. Ripe apples decorate stout trees; plump grapes weigh down delicate vines. It's a feast in every sense of the word. It's also the ultimate autumn destination: **Yakima Valley.***

Spend an afternoon strolling the colorful grounds of the Yakima Area Arboretum. Photo by David Hagen





**F**all colors and fresh crops aren't the only reasons to visit *Yakima Valley*. The region boasts more than 300 days of sunshine annually and warm temperatures that stretch into October. Even then, when it's cold and rainy west of the mountains, most afternoons are sunny and 80 degrees. Adding to Yakima Valley's appeal are its accessibility (located in the center of the state, it's never more than a four-hour drive away) and its abundance of outdoor recreation opportunities. There are countless canyons to explore, rivers to raft and paths to wander. From color-inspired hikes to farm-fresh produce stands and family-owned vineyards, get ready to experience Yakima Valley like a local.

## ► Day 1: Canyon Country

One of the best things about driving to Yakima Valley is the abundance of scenic roads in the area that offer jaw-dropping views, especially in fall. To start your weekend adventure off right, access Yakima Valley from the north along Canyon Rd, which intersects with I-90 near **Ellensburg**. Before you head down into the canyon, fill up with a hearty breakfast from **The Yellow Church Cafe** (1; theyellowchurchcafe.com) on South Pearl St. The popular Ellensburg restaurant is a former church; you'll love the vaulted ceilings and choir loft tables.

Once your appetite is satiated, it's time to start driving. You'll want your camera handy—the **Yakima River Canyon** is about as picturesque as it gets. The road winds alongside the Yakima River for nearly 30 miles and showcases rolling shrub steppe, deep blue water and jutting basalt formations. Not content to just pass by? The road offers several pullouts that are great for taking pictures.

Keep an eye out for anglers—the Yakima River is Washington's only Blue Ribbon trout stream and is popular with fly fishermen.

For a closer look at the river, pull off at one or several of the Bureau of Land Management recreation sites along the way. There are four developed sites to choose from: Umtanum Creek (MP 16), Lmuma Creek (MP 12), Big Pines (MP 10) and Roza (MP 7). The most popular of these is **Umtanum**, where most people put in their inner tubes and rafts for a relaxing float down the river.

**RIVER TIP:** Floating the Yakima River is one of the best ways to explore the canyon. If you already have an inner tube and can leave a car at both ends of your float, put in at Umtanum and take out at Roza. Count on being in the water for 2.5 hours. If you'd like to rent a tube and use a shuttle service, check out Rill Adventures [rilladventures.com].

To stretch your legs and explore the canyon by foot, exit Umtanum via the well-marked wooden footbridge and enter the 105,000-acre **Wenas Wildlife Area**. There are a variety of trails here to choose from; try the 6.5-mile (700-ft elevation gain) **Umtanum Creek Canyon Trail** (2). It shadows Umtanum Creek for several miles, putting shrub-steppe and riparian habitat on display, as well as beautiful golden aspen. It also boasts plenty of wildlife viewing opportunities—keep your eyes open for bighorn sheep, beavers, muskrats and lots of upland birds. (More info on pg 43.)

Once you've explored to your heart's content, it's time for lunch. Continue your drive through the Yakima Canyon to the city of **Yakima** (3) and **Taco El Grande** on East Nob Hill Blvd. This



Float the river or hike a trail in the Yakima River Canyon or the Umtanum Recreation Site. Photo by Cassandra Overby.





Sample the Topcutter IPA at Bale Breaker Brewing Co; Satisfy your post-hike hunger with a Mountaineer pizza at Snipes Mountain Brewery; See an explosion of color at the Yakima Area Arboretum; Combine wine tasting and gorgeous views at The Tasting Room. Photos by Cassandra Overby.

food truck is known far and wide for offering the best Mexican food in the area. Try a *huarache*—it's the house specialty. Just don't forget cash.

By now you've driven through Yakima, but you haven't gotten to know the city. Spend some time in the afternoon wandering around town. A great first stop is the **Yakima Visitor Information Center** on North Fair Ave, where you can gather pamphlets on the area's attractions to your heart's content. Ask for a self-guided walking tour map of historic downtown Yakima. The map also includes interesting snippets and stories on different buildings you'll pass by. On your walk, grab dinner at **Barrel House** on North First St and try their selection of local craft beer.

**URBAN HIKE:** For a beautiful sunset stroll, walk the Yakima Greenway. The paved trail runs for 10 miles and has access points at several places, including the Yakima Area Arboretum, the Oxford Suites Yakima and Sarg Hubbard Park.

When you're ready to call it a night, it's time to settle into your home for the weekend. There are several notable options. For camping, head over to **Yakima Sportsman State Park** (4; parks.wa.gov). With 30 tent spaces and 30 utility spaces—as well as 140 species of birds—it's a great spot that offers a touch of nature near the city. Reservations are required. For an indoor stay, check in to **Oxford Suites Yakima** (oxfordsuitesyakima.com). This comfortable hotel offers its guests suites that overlook the beautiful Yakima Greenway, as well as free drink tickets, free soup and salad in the evenings, and a free breakfast buffet. To go more upscale (and quirky), book a stay at the **Cherry Wood Bed Breakfast and Barn** (cherrywoodbbandb.com) in Zillah. Sleep in a Ralph Lauren-decorated teepee, bathe under the stars in an outdoor bathtub or go wine tasting by horse. Proceeds help support a horse rescue program.

## ➤ Day 2: Discover Downtown

Start the next morning off right with a trip to **North Town Coffeehouse** (northtowncoffee.com) on North Front St. This space used to be a train depot; the building was recently renovated but its old-time charm and architecture were left intact. Dine in the coffeehouse or take your breakfast to go. You're off to the **Yakima Area Arboretum** (4; ahtrees.org) for a morning stroll.

The arboretum, home to more than 1,000 specimens of trees, grasses and shrubs on 46 acres, is a fantastic place to view fall colors. Wander through the grounds on the many gravel and dirt paths, bird watch at the pond behind the interpretive center or test your map skills with a self-guided orienteering course (available from the interpretive center during business hours or online at the Yakima Area Arboretum's website). For a lengthier stroll, hop on the Greenway trail, which runs through the back of the arboretum property.

After you've warmed up your legs, it's time to explore Yakima Valley's agricultural past and present. If you enjoy museums, visit the **Central Washington Agricultural Museum** (5; centralwaagmuseum.org) in Union Gap. It's huge—the museum offers multiple living history exhibits, 29 covered buildings and 15 acres of displays. To sample the fruits (and vegetables) of local agriculture, hop in the car for a tour of **Yakima Valley farm stands**. For a printable produce map and harvest schedule, check out the map section of visityakima.com. Two farm stands not to miss: **Barrett Orchards** and **Johnson Orchards**.

**LOCAL TREATS:** For great caramels and pies, check out the Little Bake Shop at family-owned [for 110 years!] Johnson Orchards. The main produce stand [located next door] also offers u-pick.

You may have been snacking on fresh produce all morning, but when you're ready for lunch, head to the **historic soda fountain** at the **Yakima Valley Museum** (3; yakimavalleymuseum.org). It was recently voted one of the West Coast's top 10 old-fashioned soda fountains by *Sunset* magazine. Then pop into the museum for a spot of afternoon entertainment: *Sasquatch Revealed*. This exhibit explores ancient Sasquatch legends, as well as recent sightings and evidence. There's a Yakima connection too. Roger Patterson and Bob Gimlin of the famous 1967 Patterson-Gimlin film (which contained footage of an alleged Bigfoot) were from Yakima. Although Patterson



passed away in 1972, Gimlin is a frequent visitor to the museum. If you'd like to try spotting Sasquatch for yourself, rumor has it Bumping Lake is the place to go.

After looking at the evidence for Bigfoot, you may just need a drink. Try **Bale Breaker Brewing Company** (balebreaker.com) in Moxee for hand-crafted ales and a look at a commercial hop farm. Little-known fact: Yakima produces 77% of the nation's hops. When you're ready to switch from beer to food, head to **Taj Palace** on West Nob Hill Blvd for amazing Indian food that rivals anything you'll find in Washington.

## ➤ Day 3: A Taste of Yakima

On your final day in the area, it's time to go a little farther and explore the rest of Yakima Valley. You'll also learn why the region is called the Napa Valley of the north. After a big breakfast at much-loved family-owned **Papa Baird's Restaurant** on Terrace Heights Dr, drop by the **Yakima Farmers' Market** on South Third St to gather goodies for a picnic lunch. The market runs from 9am to 2pm every Sunday from May to October and features everything from local goat cheese to artisan bread to fresh produce.

Your picnic will come in handy as you head to the **Cowiche Canyon Winery Trail** (6; cowichecanyon.org) for a refreshing morning hike that winds through a gorgeous canyon replete with fall foliage—and ends at a winery. The best place to access the trail is off Weikel Rd. Take Summitview Rd 9 miles west of Yakima and turn right onto N Weikel Rd. In half a mile you'll find the parking lot and trailhead on the right. Your hike starts on the Cowiche Canyon Trail, a great 6-mile hike. Just prior to bridge 8 (in approximately 1.5 miles) you'll see the winery trail branch off to the north. Take this side trail and climb to the canyon rim. The 0.8-mile section has several switchbacks and is pretty steep, but the climb is worth it. At the top, you'll find a path to **The Tasting Room** (tastingroomyakima.com), one of the most charming, cozy and picturesque wineries in the area. Spread out a blanket, eat your picnic lunch and soak in the peace and calm that permeate the grounds.

After lunch, get ready for a mini road trip. The rest of your afternoon will be spent wine tasting in Zillah. Although nearly every road in town leads to a winery, get a bird's-eye view of the area from **Rattlesnake Hills** (3; rattlesnakehills.com). If everyone in your party will be tasting, there are many shuttle services that will take you from winery to winery. In some areas, you can even walk.

**TOUR BY BIKE:** If you'd like to see several wineries by bike, ask at the Yakima Visitor Information Center for the "Bicycling in Washington Wine Country" guide. It offers suggestions for short, medium and long rides.

After sampling some of the great wines in Zillah, you may never want to leave Yakima Valley. But there's more to taste—and see. Yakima Valley has more than 100 award-winning wineries in total. You won't have time to see them all, but a sunset drive through Yakima Valley to **Sunnyside** (7; approximately 15 miles SE) will give you a better idea of the scope of the valley—and give you great ideas about where to visit on your next trip. Avoid the interstate and go for the **Yakima Valley Hwy** instead; it's much more scenic. Don't forget to stop for pictures—the orchards and vineyards you'll see along the way will be drenched in color. If you time it right, you'll even be able to capture the magical glow that blankets the fields as the sun dips down.

Once you reach Sunnyside, take the last stop of your journey at **Snipes Mountain Brewery and Restaurant** (snipessmountain.com) on the Yakima Valley Hwy. It's a great place to sit in front of a roaring fire and reflect on your trip. The house beer is made on site (you can see into the area where it's made), and the wood-fired pizza is delicious. Can't decide which pizza to order? Try the Mountaineer—it's a perfect blend of sweet barbeque sauce, tangy meat and homemade crust.

Your time in Yakima Valley is coming to a close, but there's good news: You can come back any time. After all, it is just a short drive away. You never know—Yakima Valley might just become your go-to Northwest weekend destination. ♦



## Yakima Fall Festivals and Events

Sept 19-28: Central Washington State Fair

Sept 26-28: Great Prosser Balloon Rally

Sept 27-28: Wine Country Bicycle Trek

Oct 4: Pirate Plunder Adventure Race

Oct 4: Fresh Hop Ale Festival

Oct 4: Wapato Tamale Festival

By Paul Raymaker

# Trail Gear

*If you match the profile of a typical Pacific Northwest hiker, you are likely at least moderately interested in the latest gear to take out on trail: lightweight packs, fuel-efficient stoves and lightweight rain gear (see page 37 for more on that).*

*But if you're a hiker AND a photographer, you are probably obsessed with gear! Although we believe that it's the photographer who actually captures the good photos, photography wouldn't exist without the gear. And there is so much cool gear out there! Because there are just as many camera system preferences—from smartphones to full-size DSLRs—as there are hiking trails, we'll examine some of the latest gear with universal photographer appeal: photo backpacks, tripods and other essentials to help you capture those great shots.*



For a minimalist tripod, the Manfrotto Pocket Support (left) can stay attached to your camera, while the flexible Joby GorillaPod (middle; with optional ballhead) lets you position your camera on any surface. \$30 & \$110

## Keep It Steady

To the casual photographer, strapping a weighty tripod onto your already-overloaded pack seems just ridiculous. For many, this may be true. But for more serious photographers, taking a tripod into the wilderness is a necessary evil. Having a sturdy tripod in tow is what's going to let you get those tack-sharp macro photos of wildflowers; shoot wispy, veiled cascades and waterfalls; and utilize your long exposure to capture star trails.

Luckily, with compact models and lightweight materials like carbon fiber becoming commonplace—including some really creative solutions—tripods don't have to weigh you down anymore. When shopping for a tripod, choose a model that will work well with your camera and its weight. You don't need an expensive, oversized tripod to photograph with a pocket-sized point-and-shoot. Consider also the head attachment options; ballheads are good for positioning your camera at just about any angle, while panheads give you steadier control, especially when shooting video.

**LIGHT & FAST** For a lightweight tripod solution that will fit in any pack, **Joby's GorillaPod Focus** is one of the most versatile camera support systems available. While this device can be used in the same way as a traditional tripod, albeit a little shorter than most, the GorillaPod can stand on top of, or attached to, just about anything. Set it up on a boulder, wrap it around a tree branch or strap it to a hiking pole. The 1.1-pound Focus model is built to support full-size DSLRs with professional lenses. If you're an ultralight alpinist who breaks your toothbrush in half to save weight, try the **Manfrotto Pocket Support**. This tiny little tripod—weighing only 2.5 ounces!—attaches to your camera and never needs to come off. Three small, rubberized legs fold out for setting your camera on practically any surface. The Pocket Support will keep your camera steady for long exposures at sunset or selfies on the trail. When you are done, just fold the legs up under the camera body, and keep the tripod connected to your camera without adding extra bulk.

**HEAVY DUTY** When you're serious about your photography, a compact tripod might not do the trick. Carbon fiber tripods are much lighter than cheaper aluminum tripods and are extremely strong. The **Manfrotto 055 Carbon Fibre** 4-section tripod is one of the most versatile professional-grade tripods available, giving you ultimate flexibility to position your camera perfectly. With independently moving legs, a bubble level and a center column that quickly and easily switches from vertical to 90-degrees horizontal, it can be set up exactly how you want for macro and landscape shots. Weighing in at 3.6 pounds (not including head mount), this tripod folds up small enough to easily lash onto your pack. For the ultimate in camera stability, the pricey **Gitzo Systematic** series is the way to go. These tough-as-nails, no-frills tripods are rock solid and can support up to 50 pounds for carrying large lenses or video gear into the field. (My own Gitzo still looks practically brand-new after five years of dragging it over mountains and into the ocean!)



# r for Photos



The Mountainsmith Descent (left) and LowePro Toploader Zoom (center right) are ideal for your camera and basic accessories, while the LowePro ProTrekker AW (center left) and MindShift Rotation180° Panorama (right) will carry your camera gear and accessories, as well as your hiking essentials. \$45–\$260

## Comfort Carry

Your camera is only as useful on trail as it is accessible while you're hiking; a camera buried in your backpack just guarantees missed photo opportunities and becomes added weight to lug around. Thankfully, there are plenty of photo-centric bags and backpacks available to help you keep your camera and gear at the ready—whether you're carrying a compact camera or a full-sized DSLR.

In addition to keeping your camera accessible, a specialized camera bag or pack can provide extra protection from trail debris and the elements, extra padding against being bumped around, and a multitude of organization options for your camera, lenses and accessories. When choosing a photo bag or backpack, look for a combination of easy accessibility to your gear, durability, and extra features like battery and memory card pockets, rain guards and tripod holders. In the same way you shop for a backpack, choose a camera bag or pack for the gear you have, not the gear you want—this way you'll avoid potentially overloading yourself on trail.

**IN THE BAG** For a fast and light camera bag with just the right amount of storage space, **LowePro's Toploader Zoom 45** shoulder bag is an easy choice. The padded interior will accommodate most bridge cameras and small DSLRs, keeping them ready for use at your side, while the large front pocket holds spare batteries, memory cards and a polarizing filter. It even features an integrated rain cover for when the weather goes south. Best of all, with the rear-positioned D-rings, you can discard the shoulder strap and easily attach the bag directly to your pack's waist belt. For carrying more than just the essentials, the **Mountainsmith Descent** provides quick access to your camera while providing lots of storage space for gear. The single shoulder-strap design (awkward at first) keeps the bag securely on, while allowing you to swing the bag around for instant access to your camera—really handy when you run into unexpected wildlife on the trail. There is plenty of room for a large DSLR, some accessories and even a 70–200mm lens.

**PACK IT UP** When a little extra room is needed for combining your camera gear with your Ten Essentials, a photo backpack is the way to go. The **MindShift Rotation180° Panorama** is one the coolest packs available, with its simple, yet incredibly innovative quick-access design. When the hip strap is connected around your waist, a hatch on the side of the pack opens up, allowing the photo storage cube to be rotated around your waist to your front for access to your gear. If that wasn't enough, this pack also features a hydration sack, tripod storage and a top compartment for all your other trail essentials. For true photo gear junkies—and when you want to be prepared for any photo opportunity—the **LowePro ProTrekker AW** is the king of photo packs. With enough storage for an arsenal of lenses, multiple camera bodies and flashes, you won't have to choose which equipment you take on the trail. Plus, it has plenty of room for your Ten Essentials, a laptop, a tripod and a barrage of accessories—all in one of the toughest packs available.

# TRAIL MIX

## Gear Closet



No serious photographer should be without a remote trigger and a quality B+W polarizer. Keep your memory cards safe and sound with a bombproof card case from Pelican. And The North Face lets you keep your gloves on while shooting with touch-sensitive materials. \$15–\$180

## Trail Essentials

There are as many photo accessories as there are trees in Washington, but it's not recommended to keep all of them in your bag. It is generally a good idea to keep the gear you take on the trail to a minimum. A few no-brainer accessories that should always be in your camera bag or pack include extra batteries and memory cards and a lens cleaning cloth or kit.

Other items you carry will depend largely on what kind of camera you're using. Usually, the more advanced your camera, the more options there are for additions—from lens filters and hoods to flashes and specialty lenses. In the interest of minimizing weight in your bag or pack—and potential damage to expensive photo gear—try to carry along only the accessories for the kind of photography that you know you'll be shooting on trail. For example, if you're going to be out hiking during midday with lots of sun, you can probably leave your remote flash at home. However, there are a few items that every photographer—no matter their camera of choice—should have in their bag.

**ACCESSORIZE** For DSLR users, employing lens filters is a matter of preference—but one you should not be without is a polarizer. A quality polarizer can make a big difference in your photos in ways that can't be mimicked in post-processing: it removes glare from water and enriches color. But you don't want to put poorly made glass in front of an expensive, high-quality lens. Some of the best filters available are by the German-made B+W brand. The **B+W Kaesemann Circular Polarizer** is made of top-notch glass that won't degrade the quality of your images and has special coatings to reduce lens flare and water spots.

Regardless of whether you're using a point-and-shoot or a DSLR, a remote trigger can be utilized for everything from capturing epic selfies and group shots to long exposures on a tripod. There are a variety of options available, from traditional cable-release triggers to remote-controlled triggers. Some newer cameras even have remote triggers available as smartphone apps. For Nikon

## Keep It Clean

Camera gear is expensive, and it is important to take good care of it to ensure that it works when you need it. Keep these items in your collection to keep your camera clicking.

### Silica Desiccants, Rice & Ziploc Bags

Wet camera gear can lead to electrical shorts and even lens fungus. To battle this, keep those little desiccant packs (silica gel) that come with clothing or shoes. These little packs suck up moisture, keeping your stuff dry. If your camera gets really wet, zip it up in a Ziploc bag filled with rice.

**Lens Cleaning Kit** Every photographer should have a basic lens cleaning kit to take care of those pesky dust and water spots or fingerprints. Giottos' standard kit comes with cleaning solution, wipes, lens cloth and a dust blower for cleaning your sensor.

**Lens Hood** While many photographers put on cheap UV filters to protect their lenses, using a lens hood actually does a better job of preventing the front element from dinging into rocks or trees—plus, it avoids adding an extra layer of glass that can degrade the quality of your photos.

**Cotton Bandana** A simple cotton bandana can be extremely useful for many applications: drying your camera off after shooting near a misty waterfall, cleaning an annoying smudge off the front of your lens, covering your camera in a pinch during a light sprinkle of rain or a dusty breeze.

users, the **ML-L3 Wireless Remote Control** is an invaluable accessory to have at your side. This simple infrared device lets you take photos from up to 16 feet away with a simple press of the button—no smartphone or WiFi required. Similar remotes are available for Canon, Olympus and other camera brands.

Not all camera accessories necessarily go on your camera. **The North Face Etip Gloves** are made with a specialized material for touch screens. When the temperatures dip these gloves are warm yet thin, allowing you to maintain dexterity with your camera so you don't have to take them off to change your camera's settings or operate your touch-screen. In addition, the silicone gripper palm helps ensure that you don't fumble your device. And finally, protect your precious memories and prize-winning photos by storing your memory cards in a **Pelican SD Card Case**. This pocket-sized, dustproof, waterproof—and practically indestructible—case holds up to 24 SD, Mini SD and Micro SD cards, ensuring that your photos stay safe.



# When it Rains...

TRAIL MIX

Gear Shop

*As hikers in the Northwest, we're no strangers to wet weather. But we don't let it deter us from getting out and enjoying our favorite trails in the rainy spring and fall. If we did, we would miss all those gushing waterfalls, blooming wildflowers and vivid fall colors. We just throw on the rain gear, lace up our boots and head out. But the rain gear you choose will determine how enjoyable your experience is—whether you'll stay dry and comfortable or wet and soggy. The gear reviewers here at WT have tested some of the latest rain gear offerings to help keep you dry on trail this fall.*

Select your rain gear for the type of hiking or backpacking you normally do, considering these factors:

- ▶▶ **Weight:** If you are dayhiking or trail running, select gear that is lightweight and breathable; if you are backpacking or climbing, choose gear that is heavier and more durable.
- ▶▶ **Fit:** Choose gear that will allow you to layer up or down as temperature and conditions change. Technical wear often has a trimmer fit and may require you to size up.
- ▶▶ **Vents & Seams:** For staying comfortable and dry, choose gear with zip or pocket vents for regulating your temperature; taped seams keep the jacket from seeping.

## EDITOR'S CHOICE Sierra Designs Stretch Rain

You wouldn't think there was much farther to go with rain shell innovation, but Sierra Designs has discovered the way—and it's so obvious you'll wonder why it's never been done before: backpack hipbelt accommodation. The Stretch Rain jacket (1) features zippered sides that allow you to buckle your pack's hipbelt *under* the front of the jacket, eliminating that annoying bulking we're all too familiar with. On top of that, the stretchy fabric—which sheds moisture like nobody's business—is buttery-soft and flexible. There's more: add in a lay-flat hood, die-cut vents and large pockets for a practically perfect rain shell. \$200

Score: 4.5/5

Bonus Points: Attractive tailored design for men and women.



## ECONOMY Sierra Designs Microlight 2

If you're after a light rain jacket that's as effective and packable as it is affordable, look no further than the Microlight 2 (2). This was my go-to jacket for every adventure this summer, from hiking to biking to boating. It probably won't keep you dry in a full-on cloudburst—look to one of the heavy-duty selections for that—but it is perfect for keeping dry in light rain and as a shoulder season shell layer. It even doubles nicely as a windbreaker. \$49!

Score: 4/5

Bonus Points: Small enough for any backpack or purse.

## ULTRALIGHT Mountain Hardwear Super Light Plasmic

First there came the Plasmic jacket, Mountain Hardwear's no-frills rain shell. Lightweight, breathable and at an attractive price, there wasn't much to improve upon. But wait—now there's the Super Light Plasmic jacket (3). Just as dependable as its previous incarnation, the Super Light weighs in at a scant 7.7 ounces! The comfortable standard cut lets you layer up underneath without bulking, eliminating the need for a heavier hard shell. \$200

Score: 4.1/5

Bonus Points: All you need, nothing you don't.



## HEAVY-DUTY Outdoor Research (OR) Clairvoyant

OR has accomplished what many gear companies are still struggling with: a women's rain jacket that's as feminine as it is hard-core. The Clairvoyant (4) offers beautiful colors and a soft-to-the-touch feel—on top of being incredibly good at repelling moisture. I stayed dry even in complete downpours. Other great features: a ponytail-friendly moldable brim and cinchable hood, a roomier fit that makes layering a breeze and non-slip zipper pulls. \$325

Score: 4.4/5

Bonus Points: So cute it can be worn on trail or around town.

## DON'T FORGET YOUR LOWER HALF Rain Pants

**The North Face Venture Pants** are an affordable, dependable pair that feature leg zips for easy on and off, and a stash pocket for quick packing. \$80

For minimizing pack weight and still being prepared for anything, the **Outdoor Research Helium Pants** are just 5.9 ounces of Pertex Shield+ protection. \$120

A heavy-duty rain shell that feels more like a casual garment, the **Helly Hansen Loke Pants** offer great flexibility and a mesh liner for the ultimate in comfort. \$80

By Tami Asars

*Northwest forests are teeming with life—much of which may go overlooked or unseen. On your next hike, look out for the little things and discover something new on your favorite trails.*

### BIRD: Red-Winged Blackbird

Next time you're hiking near marshlands, along waterways or by moist pasturelands, listen for the unmistakable shrill call of this black-eyed beauty. If you hear a loud avian voice tweeting "conk-el-ree, conk-el-ree," then get out the binoculars to see if you can find the culprit, most likely a red-winged blackbird. The males are easiest to spot with their glossy black sheen and red and yellow markings on their shoulders; the females are brownish with a white eyebrow and usually blend in with their surroundings more than their male counterparts. Interestingly, the size and colorations vary by subspecies and locations of the roosting groups. A recent study indicated that this is a result of environment rather than genetics. Males are fiercely territorial during breeding season and are often observed spending a good deal of daylight hours chasing away other males and possible nest predators. To observe red-winged blackbirds, visit trails near water, such as the Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, the Methow Valley Wildlife Area and Sun Lakes State Park near Coulee City.



### BEAST: Western Rattlesnake

The beautiful yet feared pit viper, otherwise known as the *Crotalus viridis*, or western rattlesnake, slithers around the central and eastern parts of Washington state favoring the scrublands, rocky hillsides and desert landscapes where it can bask in the heat of the day. Generally, when disturbed they respond with fear, rattling their tails with a "sch, sch, sch, sch" noise, sounding deceptively similar to an oscillating sprinkler, grasshoppers or dried grass. Their diet consists of a wide variety of prey, such as ground squirrels, nesting birds and small rodents. Thankfully, hikers are not on their menu. In fact, they are just as wary of us as we are of them. In the morning and evening hours, rattlesnakes are less active than in the heat of the day. For a shot at seeing a rattlesnake, pick a warm day and head over to Yakima's Skyline Trail or Cowiche Canyon, Frenchman's Coulee in Vantage, or trails near Icicle Creek Canyon near Leavenworth. As with all wildlife—but especially with rattlesnakes—be sure to observe from a distance. A wicked snake bite is definitely a trail buzz-kill.



### BLOOM: Columbia Lily

When hiking through light-filled forest, in woodland openings or amongst ferns and shrubs, you might be surprised to see this spectacular flower, which almost looks like it deserves to be in a bridal bouquet! Instead, it grows proudly for all who pass it to enjoy. The Columbia lily has long, shiny green leaves and numerous showy, orange-petaled flowers with a hanging seed pod. Years ago, Native Americans harvested the bitter, peppery-tasting bulb as a food source. While they usually bloom in early summer, those growing in high elevations or shady cool forests may bloom well into the middle of the season. Look for the Columbia lily on trails like Melakwa Lake, Marmot Pass and Indian Henry's Hunting Ground.



**TAMI ASARS** is a writer, photographer and career hiker. She has spent her lifetime exploring the trails and backcountry in Washington, from the Olympic Coast to the Okanogan. Tami is the author of Mountaineers Books' *Hiking the Wonderland Trail*, and the new *Day Hiking Mount Adams and the Goat Rocks*. You can follow the latest with Tami at [tamiasars.com](http://tamiasars.com).

Photos by Tami Asars



By Cassandra Overby

# Changing the Face of the Outdoors

Q&A with author James Edward Mills

James Edward Mills is an outdoors journalist, the creator/producer of The Joy Trip Project ([joytripproject.com](http://joytripproject.com)) and the author of *The Adventure Gap*, a new book set to be released by Mountaineers Books in October 2014. In it, Mills chronicles Expedition Denali, the first all-African-American summit attempt on Alaska's Mount Denali and creates a compelling case for all Americans to embrace their place in the great outdoors. We spoke with Mills about the book; below is a short selection from that conversation. To read more from the conversation, visit [wta.org/adventuregap](http://wta.org/adventuregap).

**Q: What is the adventure gap?**

**A:** We've often heard of the education gap, the prosperity gap and the technology gap. But one of the things I realized through the course of my personal experience, as well as my career, is that there is a very comparable divide when it comes to people of color and participation in outdoor recreation. I call that the adventure gap.

**Q: Why is the issue of underexposure to the outdoors one that affects us all?**

**A:** By 2042, it's predicted that the majority of the U.S. population will be non-white. If nothing happens to change the disparity between those who spend time in nature and those who don't, we'll have a constituency of voters in this country that have little or no relationship with the outdoors. Long term, that means when it comes time to allocate funding or cast votes for environmental preservation, there will be very few people who will work to protect wilderness.

**Q: When it comes to closing the adventure gap, how can everyday people be part of the solution?**

**A:** I think it's important that people are aware of the difficulties and limitations that other people have. We all need to do whatever we can to support one another, and stop telling others (and ourselves) that there are things we can't do—especially when it comes to very impressionable people at young ages. It speaks to the concept of vocational training. We need guides. We need environmental scientists. We need foresters. We need people whose job it is to spend time in nature. And I think we should stop telling each other that that career path is a dead end.

**Q: If people could walk away from your book with one thing, what would you want it to be?**

**A:** More than anything else, I want people to understand that this isn't exclusively an issue of race. This is a conversation about everyone's adventure gap and getting more people outside. We all deal with some type of barrier. For some, it's institutionalized racism. For others, it's a disability. Oftentimes, it's just us telling ourselves that we can't do something. I want people to break down those barriers.

**Recommendation:**  
4/5



“By 2042, it's predicted that the majority of the U.S. population will be non-white. If nothing happens to change the disparity between those who spend time in nature and those who don't, we'll have a constituency of voters in this country that have little or no relationship with the outdoors.”



## An American Ascent

To experience the drama and adventure of Expedition Denali on film—with video diaries, breathtaking views of Denali and one-on-one interviews—check out *An American Ascent*. The documentary is co-produced by James Edward Mills (author of *The Adventure Gap*) and is expected to debut on the adventure film circuit in November. Public screenings and distribution of the film will follow. Watch the trailer at [vimeo.com/84572192](http://vimeo.com/84572192).



Photo by Hudson Henry

By Paul Raymaker

When I snapped this photo of a Snowy Owl on the Damon Point Trail, I was sure to keep my distance so as to not disturb the owl. I also tried to capture an image of the bird in its natural surroundings.



# Photographing Wildlife

*Photographing wildlife can be one of the most exciting and rewarding types of photography. And while Washington may not boast the sheer density of megafauna found in places like Yellowstone or Glacier national parks, there are plenty of great opportunities to photograph wild animals on trails and in parks all over the state.*

Most people think that the key to getting good wildlife photos is having a giant, heavy telephoto lens that can zoom in so close you can see the fleas on the animal's back, but expensive, specialized lenses aren't a necessity. A zoomed-out image of an animal in its natural habitat, depicting its natural behaviors, is often more powerful and pleasing than a headshot.

But before you run out, camera in hand with a twitchy shutter finger, consider a few of the best practices of wildlife photography, and always follow the golden rule of wildlife photography: never compromise the safety and well-being of yourself or the animal in order to get a photograph.

## The Right Way

The key to successful wildlife photography is being prepared, knowing your subject and having patience. Wildlife photography is fun because you never know what is going to happen. If you're lucky enough to stumble upon a wild animal at a safe distance, such as an elk, mountain goat or black bear, it probably won't stick around long to pose for you.

**DO: Be Prepared** Have your camera in hand or quickly accessible by using a quick-access backpack or shoulder bag. Make sure your camera is set for potentially fast-moving wildlife; tweak your pre-sets to track focus on your subject quickly and shoot rapidly.

**DO: Know Your Subject** If you're looking for specific types of wildlife, research the habits of the animal before setting out on the trail. Try to find out when and where the animal is most active, what they eat and where and when that food is available.

**DO: Have Patience** You might have the best luck finding a spot the animal frequents near the trail and hunkering down for a good ol' fashioned stake out. Wait patiently—and quietly—until the animal feels safe enough to move through the area.

## The Wrong Way

Of course, sitting in one spot waiting—hoping—for an animal to come strolling by can be time-consuming and tedious. But you should never be influenced to encourage an encounter.

**DON'T: Approach or Antagonize** Animals are often easily stressed by disturbances in their environment—this means people. Maintain a quiet, respectable distance from animals, indicating that you are not a threat. If the animal appears agitated back off slowly.

**DON'T: Bait Animals** You should never, ever, try to bait an animal with food in hopes of attracting it or getting it to come closer for you to photograph. The animal may become habituated to bait or human food and become aggressive in its attempts to get more.

**DON'T: Approach Babies** While baby animals are some of the most adorable things in the world, there are often overprotective parents nearby who may become aggressive if they feel their young are being threatened by an intruder. Keep your distance.

When you're ready to give it a shot, try the 3.5-mile Mount Finlayson hike on San Juan Island where foxes, birds, deer, and even orcas abound; find the resident Roosevelt elk on the 10.6-mile Hoh River-Five-Mile Island trail; or try the 9-mile hike to Lake Ingalls where you're likely to encounter mountain goats. If you just come prepared, practice patience and exercise proper wildlife ethics, you're bound to find the animal you're looking for and get a shot you'll be happy with. Good luck! ♦



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# Northwest Exposure

## 2014

### Attention Photographers!

It's time to dust off your lenses, recharge your batteries and grab extra memory cards—WTA's 12th annual Northwest Exposure Photo Contest is on!

We have five fun categories sure to suit all photographic styles, interests and abilities:

- TRAILSCAPES
- FLORA & FAUNA
- HIKERS IN ACTION
- CAMP LIFE
- OFFBEAT

This year's prizes come from **Mountainsmith, Olloclip, Outdoor Research, and Mountaineers Books**—and a special grand prize from **Nikon**! Plus, winners will have a chance to be presented in the **2015 Washington Trails calendar**!

So grab your camera and show us why Washington's trails are second to none. Happy shooting!



Enter your photos by **October 19** for a chance to win great prizes and to be featured in the 2015 *Washington Trails* calendar!

**[wta.org/northwestexposure](http://wta.org/northwestexposure)**



# HIKE: Navaho Pass

Teanaway

*Hike through a sun-streaked forest and colorful meadows before cresting this high-country pass boasting stunning views of the Stuart Range.*

In the spring, this trail beckons hikers with its lively wildflower meadows. But after summer has come and gone, Navaho Pass offers an equally colorful display of vivid fall color.

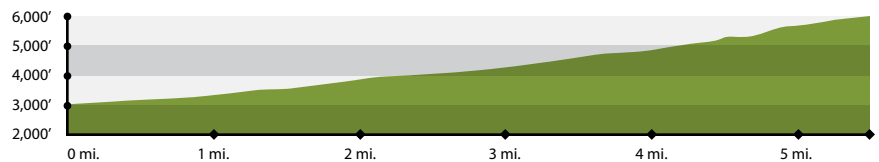
From the trailhead just past Stafford Creek, grab your camera and enter an evergreen forest filled with pine, spruce, hemlock and old-growth Douglas-fir. Look for glimpses of color in the changing leaves of scattered deciduous trees. The path leads steadily upward along the east side of the creek. At 4 miles, arrive at the junction and turn right. This is a great place to pump water or let your dog cool off in the stream. From here you'll huff and puff for another mile on switchbacks that weave up the valley to a large meadow flush with autumn color: deep-hued wildflowers, berry bushes, vine maples, cottonwoods, alders and golden larches.

Take in the colorful views of the meadow and continue on—you're almost there! Just a half-mile past the meadows, crest Navaho Pass at approximately 6,000 feet. To the north, the shimmering granite of the Stuart Range is spread out before you, while to the south you can catch views of Mount Rainier and Mount Adams. You can even peer into the southeastern boundary of the Alpine Lakes Wilderness with views of Little Annapurna and McClellan Peak.

**Go Higher:** If you feel like continuing your hike, there are plenty of other paths for exploring, including a side trip to the summit of 7,223-foot Navaho Peak.



Photos by David Hagen



## NAVAHO PASS

**DISTANCE:** 11 miles, round trip

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 3,000 feet

**ELEVATION PEAK:** 6,000 feet

**PERMIT:** NW Forest Pass

**DOGS:** Leashed

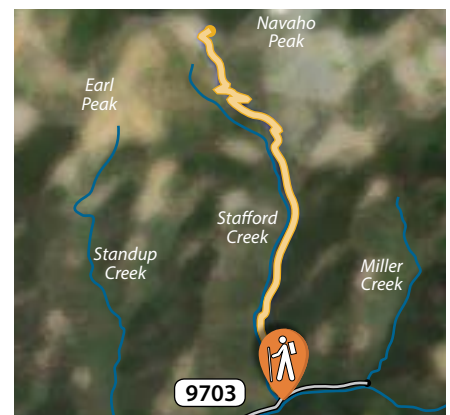
**MAP:** Green Trails 209: Mount Stuart

## TRAILHEAD

**DIRECTIONS:** From Cle Elum, take SR 970 east over the Teanaway River Bridge. In 1 mile, turn left on Teanaway Rd. Continue another 1.3 miles and turn right onto Stafford Creek Rd. Continue another 2.5 miles to the trailhead.

**INFO:** [wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/navaho-pass](http://wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/navaho-pass)

**POST-HIKE:** Drop into the Caboose Bar & Grill in Cle Elum for tasty after-trail eats.



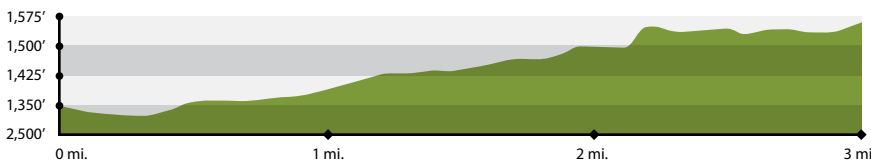
Hike by  
Brittany Manwill





# HIKE: Umtanum Creek

Yakima



*Take a pleasant hike up a spectacular canyon filled with brilliant fall color and a chance to see bighorn sheep.*

It's fall. The color is fading and the mountains are filling up with snow. Now is the perfect time to head for the east side of the Cascades, where the lush deciduous streamside vegetation is serving up a kaleidoscope of color. And one of the most dramatic places to see it all is Umtanum Creek Canyon.

From the parking area, take the swinging bridge across the Yakima River and follow the trail under the railroad tracks and into the canyon. Almost immediately a trail goes off to the left, but continue straight ahead. As you walk, watch for bighorn sheep on the cliffs above and for old apple and walnut trees in the canyon, remnants of an old homestead. After about 0.75 mile the trail splits, just past a boulder in a field. Take the right fork, which will lead you to a crossing of the creek. Look upstream here for a magnificent beaver dam.

The trail continues up the canyon, mostly through open fields, but at one point passing through a dense grove of young aspen. After about a mile, come to another fork in the trail. Take the left trail, dropping down to another crossing of the creek and a very nice campsite. From here the trail is more in the trees, with cliffs towering overhead, and after about 3 miles becomes more difficult. For wider views, try scrambling to the top of one of the many buttresses for sweeping views up and down the canyon. When you're ready to head home, return the way you came.

**Hunting Season:** This time of year is hunting season. Show your presence as a hiker and wear brightly-colored clothing. Fido too!



## UMTANUM CREEK

**DISTANCE:** 4–6 miles, round trip

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 500 feet

**ELEVATION PEAK:** 1,800 feet

**PERMIT:** Interagency Pass

**DOGS:** Leashed

**MAP:** USGS Quads: Wymer, The Cottonwoods

## TRAILHEAD

**DIRECTIONS:** From Ellensburg, take Canyon Rd (SR 821) south about 8 miles to the Umtanum Recreation Site between mileposts 16 & 17. From I-82 in Selah take Canyon Rd north for 17 miles to the recreation site.

**INFO:** [wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/umtanum-creek-canyon](http://wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/umtanum-creek-canyon)

**CAMP HERE:** Big Pines CG in Yakima Canyon.

Hike and photos by  
David Hagen



# HIKE: Church Mountain

## Mount Baker

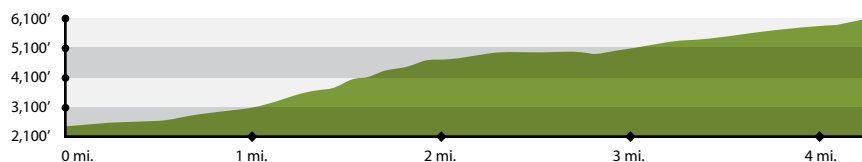
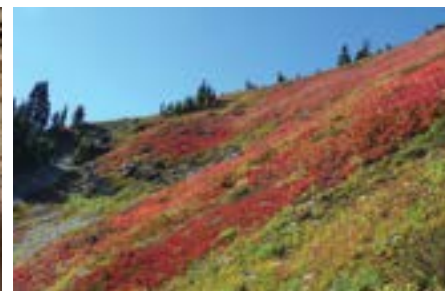
*The rewards for this strenuous hike are a bouquet of fall colors and a vast panorama of North Cascades mountains.*

From the trailhead, the route up Church Mountain starts deceptively easy with a 0.5-mile stroll up an old forest road. Then it gets right down to business with lots of switchbacks winding up and around the west side of the mountain. The trees are fairly dense, which you'll actually appreciate on warmer days, though they obstruct any big views until later—look for the occasional peek of Mount Baker above or the North Fork Nooksack River below as you continue to climb.

At 3 miles, the trail finally eases its grade and opens up into sprawling meadows. This is your first chance to glance back at the spectacular view of Mount Baker. As you meander through the meadow, you will not see any of those notable golden larch trees, but the vibrant fall colors brought out by the abundance of huckleberry bushes that blanket the meadow and the ridge above in hues of green, red, purple and gold.

From the meadow, the last 1.2 miles of the climb get steeper, but the trail takes you directly through a large huckleberry patch for some possible late-season treats. The last 200 feet are a scramble up loose rock. Take advantage of the cable to hold on to going up this last section. From the peak, you will get a fantastic 360-degree view of Mount Baker, Mount Shuksan, Damfino Lakes, Border Line Peaks, Goat Mountain, Excelsior Pass and Skyline Ridge in the background.

**Summit Tip:** Consider bringing a pair of leather gloves for handling the cable ascending to the top of the mountain.



## CHURCH MOUNTAIN

**DISTANCE:** 8.5 miles, round trip

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 3,750 feet

**ELEVATION PEAK:** 6,100 feet

**PERMIT:** NW Forest Pass

**DOGS:** Leashed

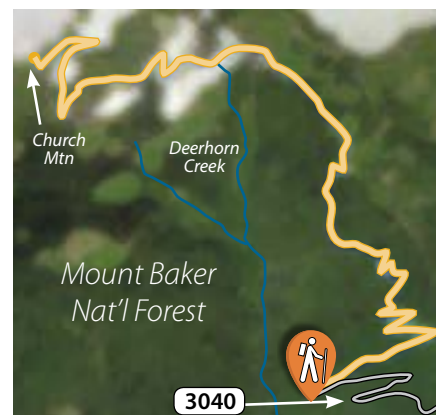
**MAP:** Green Trails 13: Mount Baker

## TRAILHEAD

**DIRECTIONS:** From Bellingham, drive 34 miles east on Hwy 542 toward to the town of Glacier. Continue another 5.4 miles and turn left on East Church Mountain Rd (FR 3040) for 2.7 miles to trailhead parking.

**INFO:** [wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/church-mountain](http://wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/church-mountain)

**EAT HERE:** Satisfy your post-hike hunger at Graham's Restaurant in Glacier.



Hike and photos by  
Mike Morrison



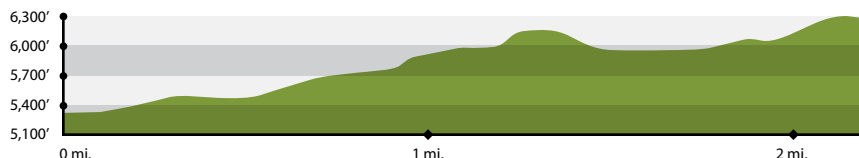


# HIKE: Blue Lake

North Cascades



Photos by Mike Morrison



*This pleasant trail offers plenty of views as it makes its way toward excellent lakeside viewing of the Early Winters Spires rising from placid, azure waters.*

Tucked beneath the imposing granite face of the Early Winters Spires lies tranquil Blue Lake, the ideal location for a family-friendly outing. Come autumn, the stark granite backdrop contrasts beautifully with the golden yellow larches reflected in the still waters of the lake. To get to this splendid scene, first follow the forested trail as it parallels the roadway.

Soon enough the trail turns away from the highway, gently climbing toward the lake and alternating between dense wooded areas and open clearings, thick with wildflowers in the summer months, offering splendid views of the surrounding peaks. Chief among them is the precipitous Liberty Bell Mountain with its sheer, nearly vertical slopes. At the second clearing, a rough trail diverts left from the main trail, leading climbers to Liberty's granite climbing routes.

Continuing its gradual ascent, the trail quickly reaches the outlet stream of Blue Lake. Though the stream is not bridged, it can easily be crossed with dry feet. Dropping slightly into the lake basin, the trail ends at the lakeshore, where there's plenty of space to spread out and take in the stunning autumnal vista. The serene blue waters of the lake are ringed with a forested mosaic of deep green conifers and brilliant golden larches, and a barren talus slope at the far end of the lake gives way to the striking rock face of the Early Winters Spires, often dusted in crisp, white snow.

**Planning Tip:** Peruse WTA's trip reports to find out when the larches are at their peak.



## BLUE LAKE

**DISTANCE:** 4.4 miles, round trip

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 1,050 feet

**ELEVATION PEAK:** 6,250 feet

**PERMIT:** None

**DOGS:** Not permitted

**MAP:** Green Trails 50: Washington Pass

Hike by  
Lindsay Leffelman

## TRAILHEAD

**DIRECTIONS:** From Burlington, drive east on the North Cascades Hwy 20. The trailhead is located on the south side of the road between mileposts 161 and 162.

**INFO:** [wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/blue-lake](http://wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/blue-lake)

**CAMP HERE:** Pitch your tent at the Lone Fir Campground and take in some of the area's other trails, like Heather and Maple Pass.



# HIKE: Kloshe Nanitch

## Olympics North

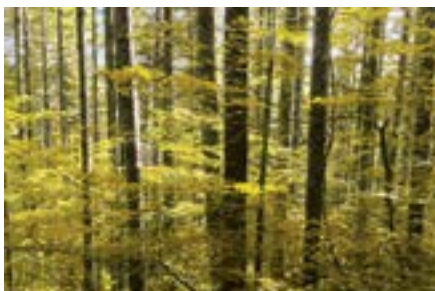
Once the site of a historic lookout, this craggy, ridgetop perch serves up excellent views of Lake Crescent, Mount Olympus and the Sol Duc River Valley.

Start by following an abandoned section of Highway 101 that parallels the Sol Duc River. Several access points allow close-up views of the river. In fall, the many vine maples lining the path put on a colorful show. At 0.2 mile, take the signed trail toward Kloshe Nanitch. Cross a bridge at 0.5 mile, and start the ascent of Snider Ridge by way of switchbacks.

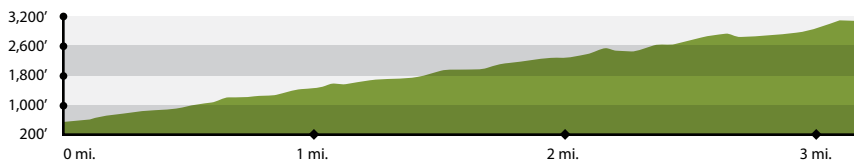
Continue through dense second-growth Douglas-fir and an understory of greenery, including salal, ferns, mosses and liverworts. The trail crosses several drainages while steadily climbing 1,700 feet in about 2 miles. Briefly, the grade eases and travels through a stand of hemlocks before climbing a series of tight switchbacks to a small ledge.

At 3 miles, the trail passes beneath cliffs and arrives at a junction; the right fork continues along Snider Ridge for 3 miles where it connects with the Mount Muller Loop. Follow the left fork, through a meadow beneath the site of the historic lookout. Arrive at the viewpoint after a final steep climb.

Kloshe Nanitch—Chinook jargon for “take care” or “look out”—served as the site of a fire watch for many years. Originally built in 1917, the lookout was abandoned and destroyed in 1963. A replica of the historic building was built in 1996, only to be removed once again in October 2012. On clear days, views extend beyond the surrounding peaks, all the way to the Pacific Ocean and James Island.



TRAIL KEY	
	Fall Color
	Summits
	Viewpoints
	Wildlife
	Family Friendly
	Dog Friendly
	Camping Available
	WTA Worked Here



### KLOSHE NANITCH

**DISTANCE:** 6.4 miles, round trip

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 2,200 feet

**ELEVATION PEAK:** 3,160 feet

**PERMIT:** Discover Pass

**DOGS:** Leashed

**MAP:** USGS Quad: Snyder Peak

### TRAILHEAD

**DIRECTIONS:** From Port Angeles, follow Hwy 101 for 37 miles to the Klahowya Campground. Continue 0.5 mile beyond and turn right onto West Snider Rd. Proceed 1 mile, past the USFS Work Center, to the trailhead at road's end.

**INFO:** [wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/kloshe-nanitch](http://wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/kloshe-nanitch)

**CAMP HERE:** Set up camp at the Fairholme Campground.



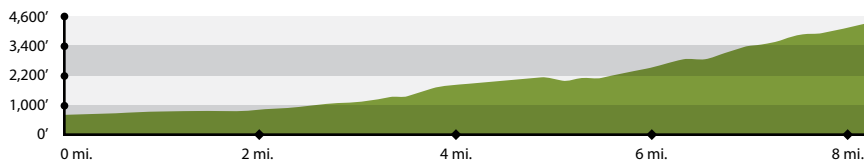
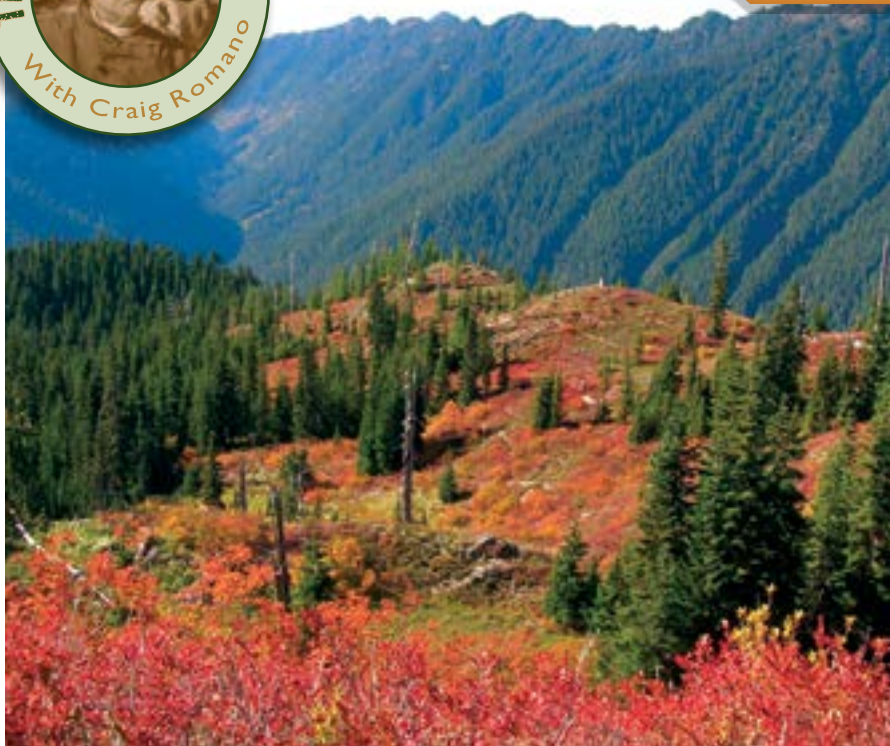
Hike by  
Kelsie Donleycott





# HIKE: Black & White Lakes

Olympics East



**C**radled in an old burn zone carpeted in berry bushes and mountain ash, the Black and White Lakes are surrounded in vivid color come autumn.

The Black and White Lakes are a great alternative to the nearby and extremely popular Flapjack Lakes. Strong hikers can do this trip in a day. Follow the wide and well-groomed North Fork Skokomish River Trail, crossing pretty side creeks and traveling through a luxurious bottomland of big cedars, Douglas-firs and moss-cloaked bigleaf maples.

At 3.7 miles, reach a junction just before Spike Camp. You'll be returning left, so head right, slowly climbing out of the valley. After crossing Madeline Creek on a sturdy bridge, the way becomes steeper and rockier. At 7.4 miles, reach a junction where the crowds continue straight to the Flapjacks. You want to go left.

Steeply climb to a ridge blanketed in berry bushes and mountain ash. After passing the log foundation of an old cabin, come to a junction with the Black and White way trail, your return for a loop. For the lakes, continue straight another 0.2 mile to an unmarked junction, then right 0.1 mile to reach the Black and White Lakes in an open area with sweeping views of the surrounding wilderness. In autumn, the basin transforms to a landscape of dazzling reds, oranges and yellows.

To return, retrace your steps 0.3 mile to the way trail and descend 2.2 incredibly steep miles, first through burn, then through cool mature forest. The way trail ends at the North Fork Skokomish Trail at riverside Big Log Camp. Turn left and follow the North Fork Trail 5.4 miles back to the trailhead.



## BLACK & WHITE LAKES

**DISTANCE:** 16.4 miles, round trip

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 3,600 feet

**ELEVATION PEAK:** 4,475 feet

**PERMIT:** National park entry fee

**DOGS:** Not permitted

**MAP:** Green Trails 168S: Olympic Mtns East

## TRAILHEAD

**DIRECTIONS:** From Hoodsport, drive SR 119 for 11 miles. Continue on gravel FR 24 for 3.7 miles. Bear right for 1.2 miles to the trailhead and Staircase Ranger Station.

**INFO:** *Backpacking Washington*, by Craig Romano

**BASECAMP:** The Staircase Campground on the North Fork Skokomish River makes a great pre- or post-hiking rest in the woods.

Hike and photos by  
Craig Romano



# HIKE: Evergreen Lookout

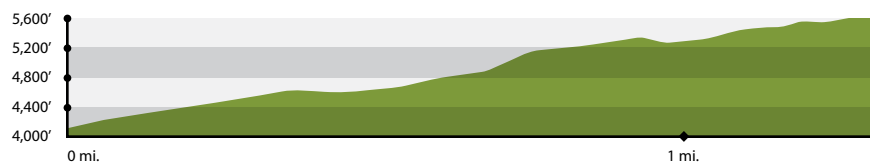
## Stevens Pass

*Climb a mountainside bursting with fall color to a fire lookout and commanding views of Central Cascades peaks.*

Despite the roughly 20 miles of forest roads that must be navigated to reach the trailhead, the spectacular views offer a big reward for the effort and draw plenty of hikers every year.

The Evergreen Mountain Trail begins from the forest road and climbs quickly through meadows and past the charred and bleached reminders of the 1967 burn. As you climb, keep an eye out for the huckleberry and mountain blueberry that are plentiful along the route. The narrow trail wastes little time ascending the ridge toward mature stands of hemlock and fir. In 0.6 mile, enter the Wild Sky Wilderness, where the trail begins to level out. Continue through the trees to large alpine meadows filled with wildflowers in season. From here you can see your destination perched in the distance. Push up the last few switchbacks and soon find yourself on Evergreen Lookout's front porch.

The 360-degree views are vast. To the north, Glacier Peak rises above the surrounding mountains. Pick out Columbia, Kyes and Sloan Peaks to the left of Glacier. Continue turning west to pick out first Del Campo Peak and Big Four Mountain, followed by Gunn and Merchant Peak, then Baring Mountain. As you turn south, find Mount Rainier dominating the skyline, rising over nearby Beckler Peak and Alpine Baldy. To the east are Mount Daniel and Mount Fernow, followed by Mount Stuart and finally the rolling mountains of the Henry M. Jackson Wilderness, including nearby Scrabble Mountain and Grizzly Peak. Settle in and see how many more you can pick out.



## EVERGREEN LOOKOUT

**DISTANCE:** 2.6 miles, round trip

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 1,425 feet

**ELEVATION PEAK:** 5,600 feet

**PERMIT:** None

**DOGS:** Leashed

**MAP:** Green Trails 143: Monte Cristo

## TRAILHEAD

**DIRECTIONS:** Drive Hwy 2 east just beyond Skykomish to milepost 50. Turn left onto FR 65 for 7 miles to an intersection. Veer left and continue 0.7 mile to FR 6550; veer right and continue 4.3 miles to FR 6554. Hook right and take FR 6554 for 8 miles to the trailhead at road's end.

**INFO:** [wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/evergreen-mountain-lookout](http://wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/evergreen-mountain-lookout)



Hike and photos by  
Nate & Jer Barnes

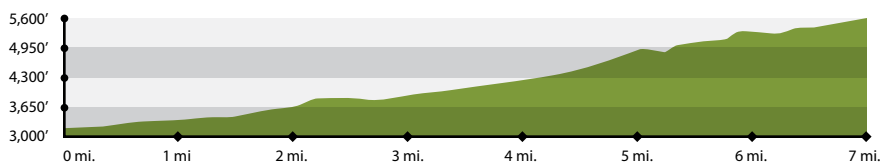


# HIKE: Gunsight Pass

Colville



\* Top photo by Derrick Knowles



*The aspen groves and golden larch are a sight to behold on this remote hike through a seldom-seen corner of the Colville National Forest.*

From the trailhead at the south end of the campground at Silver Creek, follow the South Fork Silver Creek Trail through the deep, dark forest. Don't believe the trailhead sign stating 3.8 miles to Gunsight Pass; the trail was rerouted in 1995, making the grade more gentle—and at the same time longer. Initially an old roadbed, the newer trail crosses South Fork Silver Creek twice before it narrows to singletrack and leaves the creek behind as it ascends Windy Ridge.

Approximately 6 miles into the hike, there is an optional spur trail that leads about 0.25 mile to a scenic overlook of the Silver Creek drainage below and toward nearby Sherlock Mountain. This is the best vantage point to absorb the full array of fall color on the surrounding slopes.

After drinking in the scenery, continue approximately 1 mile to the end of the trail at Gunsight Pass, between Sherlock Mountain and Mount Linton. The adventurous may wish to try the off-trail route to the summit of Mount Linton, described in *50 Hikes: Eastern Washington's Highest Mountains* (#45). Be sure to carry a map and compass with you. Otherwise, retrace the route to return to the trailhead in the valley far below.

**Hike More:** Take advantage of the great trailhead campground at road's end and hike the North Fork Silver Creek Trail the next day.



## GUNSIGHT PASS

**DISTANCE:** 14 miles, round trip

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 2,370 feet

**ELEVATION PEAK:** 5,600 feet

**PERMIT:** None

**DOGS:** Leashed

**MAP:** USGS Quads: Abercrombie, Leadpoint

Hike and photos\* by  
Holly Weiler

## TRAILHEAD

**DIRECTIONS:** From Colville, go east on Hwy 20 for 1.2 miles. Turn north on Aladdin Rd for 25.4 miles to a Y-intersection; bear right and drive 7.3 miles. Turn east on Silver Creek Rd for 0.6 mile, then left at the intersection marked "Gladstone." Continue 1.5 miles onto FR 7078. At 1.9 miles, bear right onto FR 70 to the trailhead.

**INFO:** [wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/south-fork-silver-creek-trail-123](http://wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/south-fork-silver-creek-trail-123)







# Know Boundary

By Charles Hickenbottom | Photos by Marc Dilley

## Hiking the Boundary Trail

(BT) is an adventure on many a hiker's bucket list. The trail spans the width of the Pasayten Wilderness and is part of the much larger Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail. The combination of stunning scenery and lack of crowds is one of the BT's most enticing aspects—especially in autumn, when colors are changing, temperatures are cooling and bugs are gone. A number of places along the trail are so special that you'll have the images etched into your memory for years to come.

**The Trail:** Starting at the Irongate trailhead west of Loomis—and doing the trip east to west—means reaching the hallowed meadows of Horseshoe Basin on the first day of your trip. You'll reach the portal of 7,200-ft Sunny Pass at 5.2 miles, and the view of the vast meadows will be but an introduction to the scenic feast ahead. Camping is available at several places in the basin, but in late season Loudon Lake may be the only available water. From Horseshoe Basin, the Canadian border is just a mile away via easy cross-country travel. Continuing westward over mostly open terrain with views, the Tungsten Mine is reached at 21 miles. Several rusty mining relics can be found near the trail. When you reach Apex Pass a few miles farther on, you're presented with your first views of craggy Cathedral Peak, unlike anything else in the Pasayten.

At 26 miles you'll reach 7,600-ft Cathedral Pass, then head down to upper Cathedral Lake near the base of the impressive 8,360-ft Amphitheater Mountain. Camping is good here, and you'll want time to savor the ambiance. If you've built in a layover day or have a few hours to spare, consider the extra few miles for the unmarked trail up the south side of Amphitheater Mountain. This horse trail goes nearly to the top, and the views include most of the Pasayten Wilderness.

Leaving the Cathedral Lakes behind, the views continue as you hike west, with bulky 8,685-ft Rimmel Mountain being front and center. This is followed by a long descent to the log crossing over the Ashnola River at 38 miles. Across the river is a 2,000-ft climb to more big meadows near 6,900-ft Peeve Pass at 42 miles.

Following the pass, trail conditions begin to deteriorate before it climbs right over the top of 7,240-ft Bunker Hill. Stop for lunch here before descending a bit more than 3,000 feet to the Pasayten River. Ford the river—a detour downstream may be necessary—then hike upstream for 7 miles to the site of the old Three Forks Cabin. Here is a pivotal trail junction where three streams of the Pasayten come together. Hiking out via the mostly forested Middle Fork Pasayten River is the shortest way out to the Slate Pass trailhead (Harts Pass area, 80 hiking miles from Irongate).

**Logistics:** To hike the BT in its entirety, you'll need to consider the logistics to accomplish this 80-plus-mile one-way hike. There are several possibilities for arranging transportation—find a friend to assist with shuttling, or do a key swap with another hiker going the opposite direction. Classic Mountain Cabby in Twisp can assist with transportation to the Irongate trailhead. ♦

## EXPLORE MORE:

If you like to get off the trail and scramble easy summits, the Boundary Trail was made for you. Armstrong Mountain (8,100 ft) is a long mile from Horseshoe Basin and takes you right to the U.S.–Canadian border. Haig Mountain is higher, but Teapot Dome (7,610 ft) is just a half mile from the Boundary Trail. Apex Mountain (8,300 ft) is almost mandatory, given the legendary views of Cathedral Peak. Bald Mountain (7,930 ft) from the 7,100-foot pass east of the Ashnola River and Sheep Mountain (8,275 ft) from Peeve Pass will each take at least a few hours of your time.



# BITS & PIECES

Despite the Boundary Trail's remote location, it is still possible to experience a portion of the trail as a dayhike or weekend overnight. Be careful—you'll be tempted to do more.



## HIKE: HORSESHOE BASIN

**DISTANCE:** 12 miles **ELEVATION GAIN:** 1,500 ft.

Horseshoe Basin is the only portion of the Boundary Trail accessible to dayhikers. Due to the Ironton trailhead's remote location, it is best to plan for at least a couple of days to hike this one. The route begins with a nice 5-mile hike to 7,200-foot Sunny Pass, the portal into Horseshoe Basin. Along the way you'll hike through some pleasant forest and also dead timber from the Tripod Fire. You'll want to continue at least another flat mile to Horseshoe Pass to put yourself in the midst of the immense flowery meadows. By autumn, most of the annoying insects will be gone, but in the summer season be prepared for mosquitoes.



## BACKPACK: CATHEDRAL PASS

**DISTANCE:** 44 miles **ELEVATION GAIN:** 4,000+ ft.

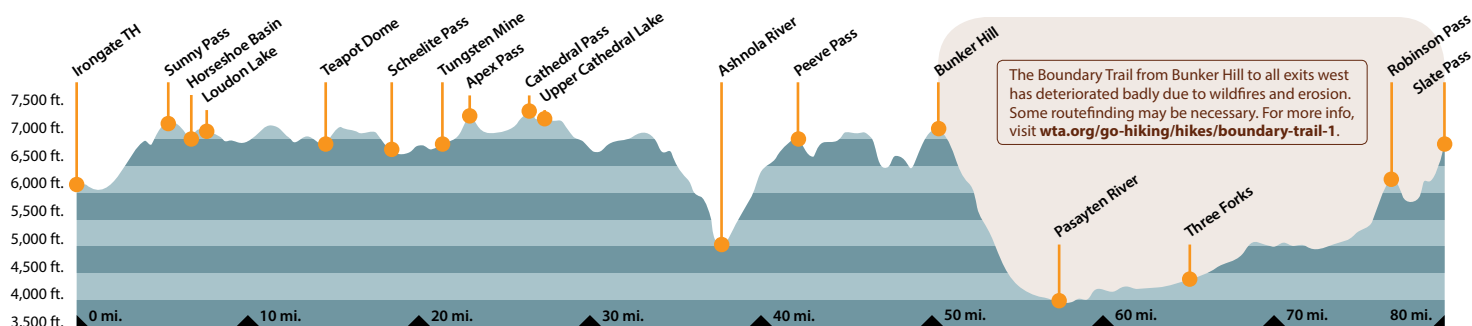
The 44-mile loop through Cathedral Pass offers some of the best scenery that the Boundary Trail has to offer. Start at the 30-Mile trailhead on the Chewuch River out of Winthrop. Hike 10 easy miles along the river, then make the climb to 6,870-ft Rimmel Lake and many camps. Views of surrounding peaks will keep you entranced. Continue 6 more miles to circle Amphitheater Mountain, passing upper Cathedral Lake to 7,600-ft Cathedral Pass. Hike 5 miles east in mostly open terrain to Tungsten Mine, then close the loop by hiking 6 miles down the Tungsten Trail, then finish back down the Chewuch River.



## TREK: BOUNDARY TRAIL

**DISTANCE:** 80+ miles **ELEVATION GAIN:** 9,000 ft.

One of the biggest challenges of hiking the entire 80-plus-mile Boundary Trail is where to exit. The "official" ending descends to Ross Lake via the Castle Pass and Lightning Creek trails. However, this section receives little maintenance and is not recommended. From Three Forks Junction, one option heads south up the Middle Fork Pasayten Trail to exit via Slate Pass. Hiking out via the West Fork Pasayten Trail exits near Slate Peak. Two other options provide access to the Pacific Crest Trail via either Woody Pass or Holman Pass. From Holman Pass, longer options exist to hike over Devils Dome to Ross Lake or McMillan Park to Hwy 20.



## Boundary Trail Stats

**DISTANCE:** 80+ miles, depending on exit route

**HIGHEST POINT:** Apex Pass at 7,800 ft.

**LOWEST POINT:** Pasayten River at 3,900 ft.

**TRIP TIME:** 7 to 10 days

**BEST SEASON:** Mid-July through October

**MAPS:** Green Trails 18, 19, 20, 21, 50

**PERMITS:** NW Forest Pass for trailhead parking

**INFORMATION:** [www.fs.usda.gov/activity/okawen/recreation/hiking](http://www.fs.usda.gov/activity/okawen/recreation/hiking)

**CLIMATE:** Summer days are typically warm to hot; thunderstorms can be common, so pack your rain gear. Fall days begin to cool off. Evenings can get cool to cold. Snow can occur at any time of year.

**WILDLIFE:** Watch for the usual mountain dwellers: deer, mountain goats, marmots, squirrels and pikas. Elk and moose are occasionally spotted in the area, but bear sightings are infrequent.

**GUIDEBOOK:** *Backpacking Washington* by Douglas Lorain details the Boundary Trail in two portions, the east side and the west side.



## We celebrate trails every day at WTA.

But on September 27—**National Public Lands Day**—we join 175,000 volunteers across the country to give back to the public lands we love. Be part of the celebration on one of these special work parties.

**Pitch in** on September 27 and volunteer with WTA on a trail near you. No prior experience is necessary.

- ▶ Heather Meadows @ Mount Baker
- ▶ Pacific Crest Trail @ Stevens Pass
- ▶ Franklin Falls @ Snoqualmie Pass
- ▶ Paradise Meadows @ Mount Rainier NP
- ▶ Lake Christine @ Gifford Pinchot NF
- ▶ Mount Townsend @ Hood Canal
- ▶ Pyramid Peak @ Olympic NP



# NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY

Show your support for public lands and join WTA on Sept. 27 on a trail near you!

Sign up at [wta.org/volunteer](http://wta.org/volunteer)

Tushar Sharma