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WASHINGTON TRAILS

July + August 2010 » A Publication of Washington Trails Association

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Classic Backpacks

Call your friends. Pack your tent.
It's time to sleep out under the stars.



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Washington Trails Association is a volunteer-driven nonprofit membership organization working to preserve, enhance and promote hiking opportunities in Washington state through collaboration, education, advocacy and trail maintenance.

Washington Trails Association 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.



WTA has earned Charity Navigator's highest rating three years in a row.



WTA is a member organization of EarthShare Washington.

News+Views

The Front Desk »

Trails Shape Us

Twenty years ago, I set out on a trip that would change my life forever. I didn't expect it at the time. In fact, my entire family and many of my friends had serious doubts about the wisdom of my spending a few months alone in the mountains. That solo traverse of the Sierra Nevada during my junior year of college turned out to be the best thing I could have done for myself, and since then I've managed to explore a few thousand more miles of trails all over North America.

I know I'm not alone in the way trails and wilderness have shaped my life, or alone in having to overcome all sorts of obstacles to make those trips a reality.

When I consider my path to becoming WTA's executive director, I'm struck by the important role that these times on trail have played in bringing me here. You see, it's not simply that I enjoyed hiking. Hiking shaped and tamed my character in a way that nothing else could. I went to the woods and became civilized.

Growing up in a big city, my family went to some front-country mountains just one week a year. Can you imagine? One week a year? When my parents opened the car doors, I disappeared into nature like a bird set free. I've always been interested in nature/nurture questions, and have decided that there must have always been something in me that needed wilderness because once I was exposed, I was hooked. These

childhood experiences are why I will always be so passionate about connecting youth with the outdoors.

In nature, one's character can develop the maturity and emotional intelligence needed to succeed in school and work. On trails, we learn patience, courage, delayed gratification, risk assessment, self awareness and all sorts of other things we later consider indispensable to our personal and professional lives. I don't mean to say we are without form before going backpacking, but I can clearly say that these essential qualities were merely seeds in me until they sprouted and grew on trail.

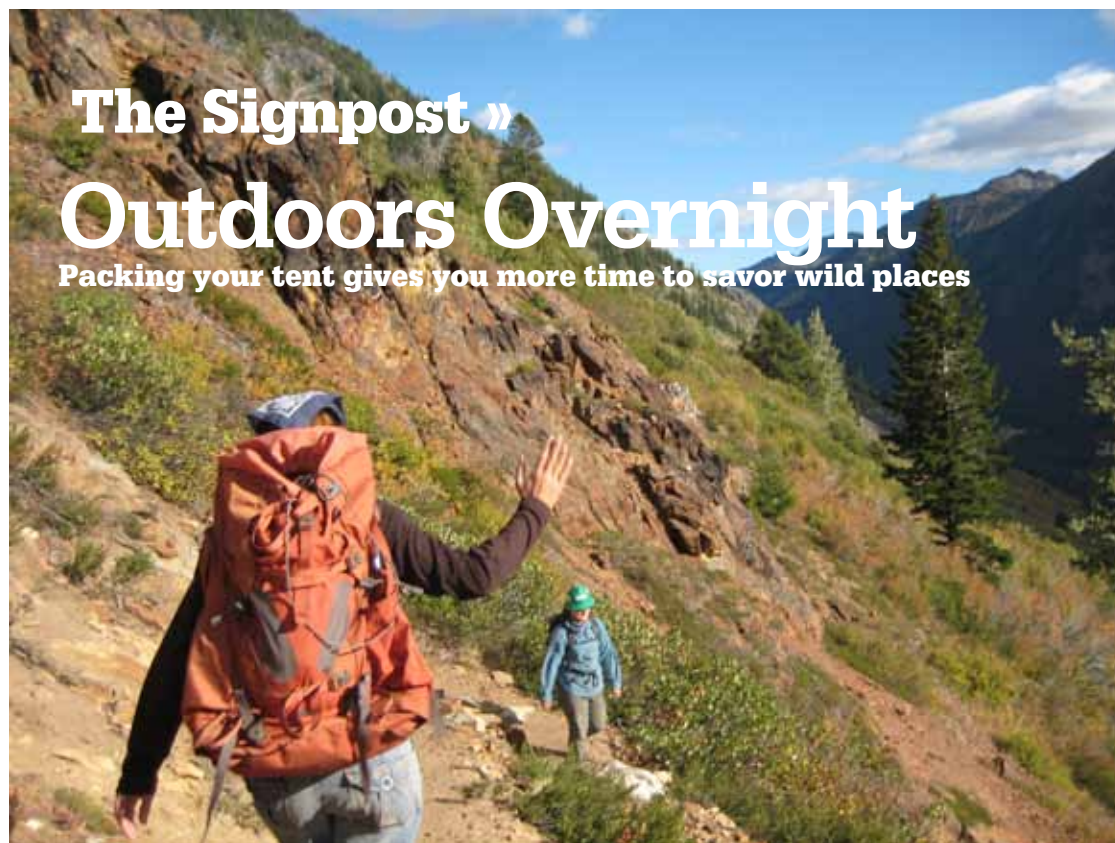
We shape trails, and then trails shape us.

Here at WTA, we strive every day to ensure that trails in Washington are open and safe for all who desire the freedom of the wilds. You never know, but sometimes those hikes can have a transformative effect on people. Hiking has made all the difference in my life, and, with your help, WTA will continue to do everything we can for trails and wild places in the years ahead.



Brian Windrope

Executive Director
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The Signpost » Outdoors Overnight

Packing your tent gives you more time to savor wild places

I'd like to tell you that my first backpacking trip was a storybook success. That I soared to the summit of a grand peak, made it back to base camp in plenty of time to prepare a gourmet meal and capped it all off with a long night of stargazing.

The truth? I struggled with the elevation gain and the weight of my pack. I ruined dinner, and, exhausted and cold, I retreated to my sleeping bag long before the stars came out. Worst of all, I whined. Apparently to the point of asking, "Why can't we just go car camping?"

Clearly, backpackers are made, not born.

I must have enjoyed that trip to ... well, never mind, you'd laugh at how easy the terrain is. Let's just say that I must have enjoyed the scenery and the solitude enough to keep at it. I got into shape, and I figured out what one really needs to bring on a backpacking trip, which, incidentally, does not include a glass French press.

More important than know-how or strength, I developed a keen case of mountain lust. The more terrain I covered on day hikes, the more I wanted to be backpacking instead. Not just to see more wild places, but to see these wild places in different ways: with people, without people, at dawn, in the moonlight, bathed in sun, under clouds.

The folks at the Outdoor Industry Association have actually done studies about this phenomenon, studies which prove that hiking is a "gateway" activity leading to participation in other outdoor activities. As it turns out, 87 percent of hikers participate in more than one outdoor activity. (Maybe your storage room has a bike, a paddle, a pair of trail-running shoes, a fly rod, or a climber's rack in it?)

Don't get me wrong—a nice long day hike has a lot going for it. But there is always that one little drawback, too: just about the time you reach the most beautiful place on earth, it's time to turn around and go home. By allowing you to bring your home with you, backpacking takes care of this downside. Carry your shelter, and your reward is ample time to gawk and lollygag.

In this issue, you'll find backpacking tales from three consummate backpackers, suggestions on wild places to visit with your friends and family, a review of three new tents and a few practical tips on how to pack your bag. Check WTA's website for even more tips, advice and backpacking basics new this month.

See you under the stars!



**Lace
Thornberg**

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Trail Talk » Greatest Hits

This past spring, we asked *Washington Trails* readers to reach deep into their hiking memories and share their "greatest hits" with us.

Through the eyes of our readers, we saw bears and fended off goats and we had mysterious encounters with wolverines, owls and wolves. We went on mother-daughter trips, father-son trips and trips that reunited friends long separated. We lost weight, survived cancer and scattered ashes on summits. When all the entries were read, we had lived five lifetimes—all without leaving the conference room.

We have shared a few of these memorable hiking tales with you here, and we hope that as you read, you, too, will be transported from wherever you are sitting now to a place deep in the wilderness, to a moment, maybe days ago or maybe decades ago, when you stood in awe of nature and felt both small and immense.

“It was the weirdest thing, the way his big black soulful eyes kept studying me as if he knew me.”

—Terry Kottwitz

Most Memorable Wildlife Encounter

When I hiked up to Alpine Lookout a few years ago, I had a memorable close encounter with a big old mountain goat. As I first approached the lookout, I saw the goat only about 20 yards away and thought, “Wow, I’ve never seen one of these guys up close like this.” I started snapping pictures, and as I did so, the goat started approaching me. This seemed strange to me, as most wildlife of any kind tend to shy away from humans.

I’ve never heard of anyone being gored by a mountain goat, but the closer he got, the more I noticed his dangerous-looking horns. When he got within 5 yards, I uneasily started edging around the lookout structure to keep it between me and him. He kept approaching me slowly, and I kept retreating. After he had chased me in slow motion completely around the building, he seemed to lose interest, so I headed off towards some nearby boulders to have lunch.

When I was almost finished eating, I glanced back and saw that the old goat had returned and was standing alarmingly close, looking at me quizzically. It was the weirdest thing, the way his big black soulful eyes kept studying me as if he knew me. I said a few calming words to him and then finished eating. Eventually he gave up and ambled away.

When I got home, I recounted this story to my wife, whose first reaction was, “Hmmm—maybe it was your dad?” She was half-way



kidding, but my father had passed away just a few weeks before, at the ripe old age of ninety-one. I’m not superstitious or a believer in reincarnation, but I still wonder if my dad, the “old goat” who’d introduced me to hiking when I was a kid, had visited me that day from the great beyond.

Terry D Kottwitz
Bothell, Washington

hiking style: day hikes, off the beaten path

Best Day of Giving Back to Nature

My Volunteer Vacation at Holden Village was the realization of two goals: being there and doing trail work. The whole experience left me with so many memories: the trail we built, the people I met, the great meals Tim served us, the throne with amazing views of the surrounding mountains and the possibility of a bear passing by, the hike I didn’t think I could finish, and the ice cream! Thank you, WTA!

Lenore Bailey
Tacoma, Washington
hiking style: slow



Most Exhilarating Summit

Mount Olympus. I did this a few years ago with two friends. We are all above the age of fifty and easily the oldest team on the mountain that day. I have wonderful memories of the entire climb, which includes a 17-mile approach through the Hoh River Valley to the foot of the Blue Glacier. Between the long approach, the glacier travel, and the rock climbing to the summit, I really felt like we'd earned this summit. I've never enjoyed a view so beautiful from the top of a glaciated peak. The fact that Olympus is less than 8,000 feet in elevation, and surrounded by 7,500-foot ridges, makes for a spectacular summit. After spending the night at base camp, the three of us made the whole 17-mile trip back to the car in one day—the longest day of backpacking I've ever done. Made me feel young again!

Douglas Diekema

Kenmore, Washington

hiking style: I hike fast, like to climb, and head for places, on and off trail, where I can photograph beautiful scenery.

Best Backcountry Meal

I think my Thanksgiving meal was the best. It consisted of freeze-dried mashed potatoes, dried cranberries, stuffing mix and chicken from a pouch all mixed together in a quart freezer bag with hot water. Yum!

Teresa Pennington

Port Orchard, Washington

hiking style: It's all about the journey. I like to take time to see everything while I hike.

Your Touchstone Hike

Almost twenty-five years ago I decided to tag along with my husband and his brother as they headed up to Camp Muir. Please note that I had only recently moved here from Ohio, so I was a total newbie-to-hiking, flatlander, couch potato who had no idea what I was getting into. My plan for the day was to hike a little while, grab some lunch with nice views and then wait for the guys. However, as I headed up past Panorama Point the views just kept getting better, and since I was feeling surprisingly good, I decided to follow them. Several hours later I dragged my exhausted self in to Camp Muir—probably dehydrated, definitely hungry, but absolutely grinning from ear-to-ear.

“Did it change my life?”

Absolutely.”

—Nancy Higgins



I've learned so much since then (about the ten essentials, fitness, safety, et cetera), but this was definitely the beginning of my love affair with the mountains. Did it change my life? Absolutely. It's impossible to imagine the person I would be without this magnificent obsession.

Nancy L. Higgins

Bothell, Washington

hiking style: Slow enough to photograph and take in all the details, but fast enough to get home before dark!

Best Bonding Experience

For our second wedding anniversary, my chronically cheap husband decided that we should go backpacking. I didn't object, but simply asked where we were going. “I don't know,” my husband responded. “We will just start driving and decide then.”



Lenore Bailey will never forget the week she spent doing trail work near Holden Village.

Being a slight control freak, I spent the next week panicking, even regretting that I hadn't gotten married later in the year so more trails would be melted out on our anniversaries. Ah, details. By the time we arrived at the trailhead, I was so stressed out I spent the first hour clenching my teeth and resisting the urge to say awful things to my husband.

Soon enough, we reached Waptus River, and my mood had improved dramatically. "This won't be so bad," I assured myself. Then the mosquitoes attacked. Turns out they like all-natural bug spray. I was fighting back a panic attack amidst a cloud of happy mosquitoes, while my husband, bathed in 100 percent DEET, hiked along wondering what all the fuss was about. We eventually reached Waptus Lake and camped for the night.

In the morning, we chose our next destination based on a borrowed hiking guidebook and half of a photocopied map I had found in the car. We forded the Waptus River and started up the trail climbing Pollalie Ridge. It was a hot day and a steep climb, but eventually we reached the meadows at the pass, dropped our packs, and continued to the Pollalie Lookout, where we were treated to stunning views of the jagged Cascades. We camped that night at Pete Lake, where an overly friendly deer walked into our camp, inspected our belongings, and served as a reminder that we'd forgotten to hang our food. We wandered in the dark, shining our headlamps up every tree in search of a sturdy branch. After we found one, our next battle was trying to pitch a rock tied to a rope over a branch that we couldn't really see.

On this morning, we day hiked to Spectacle Lake, which is truly a spectacular lake. It is even more spectacular when you reach it by using "the Staircase" trail, if you can actu-

ally call that thing a trail. (Refer to a Spring and Manning hiking guide for details.) We climbed above the lake to a viewpoint, then ran and skied our way down to snowfields back to the trail junction. Wanting to live to reach our third anniversary, we descended via the normal route on the Pacific Crest Trail instead of the Staircase. Once back at Pete Lake, we retired early in preparation for our journey back to the trailhead.

We awoke with bright spirits the next morning, prepared for an easy stroll along the Cooper River Trail back to our car. It turns out that the trail sees little of the river and instead climbs along a hot and dusty hillside, with the river inaccessible hundreds of feet below. You can't always trust the nice pictures in your guidebook.

When we finally caught a glimpse of the car, I had completely run out of things to whine about, choosing to trudge along in silence. It was then, at this moment of complete misery, that I realized the great thing I have in my marriage to Ryan. I have a man who chooses to go hiking with me, and has seen me at my absolute worst—see passages on whining and mosquitoes. Yet he still loves me.

Though our hike didn't go as smoothly as planned, or unplanned for that matter, Ryan and I shared laughter, tears (okay, just mine), long conversations, and moments of silence and awe, basking in the beauty around us. With blisters on our feet, Ryan and I emerged from the wilderness having conquered over 40 miles and another year of marriage.

Andrea Nesbitt

Ellensburg, Washington

hiking style: optimistic (about how far I can go, or have gone already) and clumsy (looking at everything but the trail)

“Wanting to live to reach our third anniversary, we descended via the normal route on the Pacific Crest Trail instead of the Staircase.”

—Andrea Nesbitt



Hiking News »

Target Shooting in Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie Area Could Be Off-Limits

The comment period is closed and a decision is expected soon

Last summer, the Snoqualmie Ranger District closed 7,000 acres on the south and north sides of Interstate 90 to shooting, in response to complaints filed by hikers, contractors and U.S. Forest Service staff. Hearing reports of near misses by bullets and discovering garbage-strewn informal shooting galleries led the district to take emergency action and institute a temporary closure.

The Snoqualmie Ranger District is now planning to make this shooting closure permanent and to close off an additional swath of land surrounding the Middle Fork Road from just before the Pratt River Trailhead to Dingford Creek. This plan would prevent target shooters from firing guns from the road, unaware that the Middle Fork Trail is in their line of sight.

WTA was supportive of the initial temporary closure, and we also fully support the proposed extension. Few things are more disconcerting for hikers than hearing random gunfire while

enjoying a day in the woods. The Snoqualmie Ranger District and engaged citizens have worked hard to reclaim the Middle Fork for hikers, equestrians and mountain bikers and this closure will further reinforce those efforts.

The district's scoping process comment period recently came to a close on June 24. The District anticipates making a decision by the end of July. ♦



To discuss trail news and issues online, visit the **Signpost Blog** at

www.wta.org/blog/.

New Perry Creek Trailhead

WTA volunteers complete new trail off the Mountain Loop Highway

Hikers looking for the Perry Creek Trail, a popular jaunt off the Mountain Loop Highway, need to go a mile further than they did last summer. The route's new trailhead is adjacent to the Dickerman Trailhead, 16 miles east of the Verlot Public Service Center and about a mile past the Perry Creek Road (Forest Service Road 4063).

Since fall 2007, WTA volunteers have contributed nearly 3,000 hours to this project, completing over a mile of trail to connect the new trailhead to the existing trail. As they work their way toward Perry Creek Falls and Mount Forgotten Meadows, hikers will enjoy near-perfect tread and pleasant views of Big Four Mountain.

Trailhead renovation work completed by the U.S. Forest Service included an expanded the parking lot, an additional toilet and a bulletin board. ♦



WTA volunteers proud of the new Perry Creek Trailhead. Photo by George Winters.

Saving Index's Lower Town Wall

Climbers lead campaign to preserve public access

If you've been to Index, Washington, you know that tall granite walls serve as an austere backdrop for the town. This granite provides not just scenery, but also renowned rock climbing. With a huge concentration of steep, clean cracks and face climbs, Index is one of the premier climbing areas in Western North America.

Several sections of the Index Town Wall, as this climbing crag is known, are already protected as state and national public lands, but other sections are held by private landowners. With the possibility of lost access due to an interest in quarrying, efforts are underway to permanently preserve the area's most famous crag, the Lower Town Wall, by purchasing the land from its current owners and transferring the property over to the Forks of the Sky State Park. Rock climbing is the primary recreational activity within the Forks of the Sky State Park, but hikers also visit for the view from Lookout Point and the top of the Upper Town Wall.

To date, the Washington Climbers Coalition (WCC) has raised more than \$210,000 toward their goal of \$300,000 to preserve the Lower Town Wall. Local and national equipment vendors and manufacturers, climbing gyms, and national organizations including the Access Fund and the American Alpine Club have supported the effort already, and the WCC is

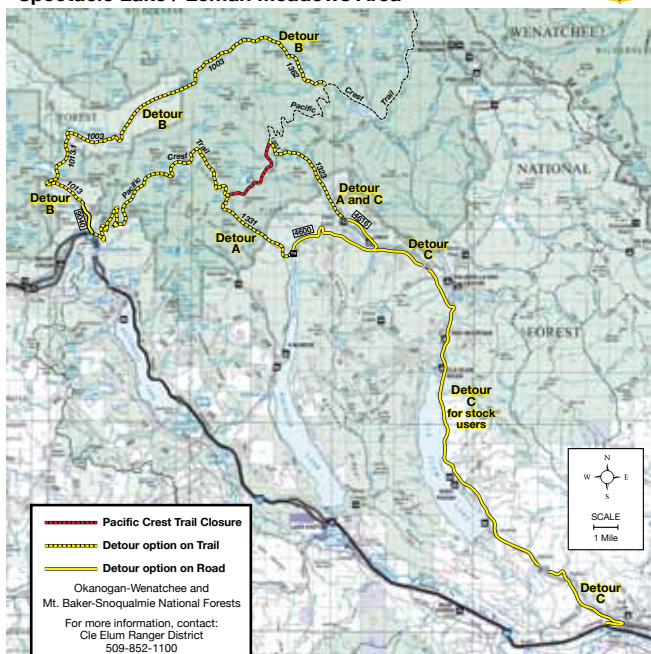


Will the Lower Town Wall be saved for public use? Photo by Ralph Radford.

hoping recreationists will now pitch in.

For more information, visit the Washington Climbers Coalition website at www.washingtonclimbers.org/IndexFund. ♦

Pacific Crest Trail Detours Spectacle Lake / Lemah Meadows Area



Detours for Pacific Crest Hikers

Planning to hike on the Pacific Crest Trail north of Snoqualmie Pass this summer? Be aware that a stretch of this Mexico-to-Canada route is now closed.

Due to damage from the 2009 Lemah Fire, an emergency closure of the Pacific Crest Trail 2000.6 has been issued for public safety until further notice. The Pacific Crest Trail is now closed to public use from the Mineral Creek Trail 1331 to the Lemah Meadows Trail 1323.2. Two detour options exist for hikers, and a third detour route is available for stock users. Repairs will begin in late July 2010.

For detailed descriptions of each of these detour options, please see the WTA website for a blog post published June 15, 2010, or contact the Cle Elum Ranger District. ♦

On the Alert

A bit of advice for encounters with questionable hikers. *By Doug McCall in collaboration with King County sheriff*

The great outdoors offers much in the way of solace from typical urban life, but the attack of a woman on the Tiger Mountain Trail this past spring serves as an unfortunate reminder that hikers must still remain alert. The Tiger Mountain attack was not the first attack against women in the backcountry. In July 2006, two women (Mary Cooper, 56, and Susanna Stodden, 27) hiking near Mount Pilchuck were killed on the Pinnacle Lake Trail. With these and other instances in mind, here are a few tips for anyone traveling in the backcountry.



Max Perrie

1) Don't Hike Alone

Most hiking guides, groups and organizations recommend that people never hike alone. If you are alone and you become injured, it might be difficult to call for help or to treat your injuries. Hiking in a group of three or more would likely deter any would-be attacker.

If you do decide to hike alone, staying on well-traveled trails is recommended. Avoid wearing headphones as they may prevent you from hearing people approaching from behind or off the trail. Always be alert and cautious when you encounter other hikers.

2) Stay Alert and Cautious

In today's environment, the backcountry can no longer be considered immune from crimes such as assaults and robbery that are more commonly associated with urban area. Always listen to your senses. If something doesn't feel right, it probably isn't. Even if your senses aren't sending you warning signals, it's better to keep alert.

3) Stay Uphill of Other Hikers While Stopped on Trail

By staying up-hill, you are in a better position to escape a would-be attacker. Think of an exit strategy and where you might go if another hiker were to attack you. You may want to keep your cell phone close if that is convenient or important to you.

4) Any "Weapon" You Carry Could Be Used Against You

Some hikers will suggest carrying bear spray, trekking poles, an ice axe or rocks to ward off attackers. Keep in mind that more often than not a victim's would-be weapon has been used against them during an attack.

5) Hike with Confident Body Posture and Eye Contact

A person who exudes confidence is less likely to be targeted as a victim. Looking straight ahead and maintaining brief eye contact is better than hiking with slumped shoulders while staring at the trail below.

Backcountry hiking is still a great way to exercise, enjoy nature and visit some truly stunning areas. Enjoy the backcountry with friends, watch out for your fellow hikers and stay on the alert for possible criminal activity. If you do see suspicious hikers, report them to your local law enforcement agency as soon as possible. ♦

Letters »

Volcano Facts and Figures

Congratulations on your wonderful May-June issue! Volcanoes and glaciers have long been part of my heart and soul. In 1953, at the age of ten and wearing denim jeans and jackets, my twin brother, Darvel and I first climbed Mount Adams, Mount Hood and Mount St. Helens. When the 1960 edition of *Mountaineering: Freedom of the Hills* came out, we eagerly learned what our father failed to teach us. Now looking back on countless glacier climbs and stratovolcanoes, their allure is as strong as it has ever been.

I'd like to point out a few errors in Dave Tucker's description of the volcanic activity of Mount Adams. After e-mail exchanges and reference to a 1997 paper by USGS volcanologists and close friends, Wes Hildreth and Judy Fierstein, Dave and I now agree on this: the present-day eruptive volume of Mount Adams is about 48 cubic miles, not "30 cubic miles." Its age is about 520,000 years, instead of "over 220,000 years."

On the big question of when the last eruption on Mount Adams occurred, Wes and I found a thin andesite ash layer deposited about one thousand years ago, but it may not have come from an eruption. More interesting, though, is a half-mile-long lava flow at 8,400 feet on the east face, which may have erupted as recently as a few hundred years ago. The end of the flow (at 7,200 feet) is embedded near the surface of a Little Ice Age moraine alongside Klickitat Glacier. Hildreth and Fierstein wrote, "Because the overlying till is probably no older than a few centuries, the lava could be one of the youngest at Mount Adams."

My source is: Hildreth, W., and Fierstein, J. 1997. Recent Eruptions of Mount Adams, Washington Cascades, USA., *Bulletin of Volcanology*, 58 (6): 472-490.

Darryl Lloyd
Hood River, Oregon



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WTA at Work

Trail Maintenance »



Signature Work

Introducing 10 of WTA's most significant projects for 2010

Last fall, WTA's trail maintenance program identified 10 signature projects to work on in 2010. These are projects that provide new hiking opportunities within the state, or restore or significantly improve access to places that have been hard to reach for a few seasons—or more—after floods, fires, windstorms and your basic garden-variety neglect have taken their toll.

We've already done more than 40,000 hours of work on these trails and many others. For the story behind all those hours, read on.

Working the West Fork of the Foss

It's been years since the West Fork Foss Trail saw any trail maintenance. Badly damaged in the infamous flood of 2006, much of the beginning of the trail was washed away. At the moment this "trail" is a path of ankle-twisting rocks along a dry riverbed, with boot snagging roots just waiting to take hikers down. And that's before you come to the dilapidated footlog or the avalanche debris across the trail. We're about to change that.

May, constructing a reroute to a new bridge location over the West Fork Foss River and rebuilding tread toward Trout Lake. WTA will continue improving this trail through single-day work parties, and we have a Backcountry Response Trip scheduled for July 15 through 17. The U.S. Forest Service plans to replace the 90-foot span across the West Fork Foss River in 2011.

The West Fork Foss Trail accesses the largest concentration of large alpine lakes in the Alpine Lakes Wilderness, starting with Trout Lake at 1.5 miles, a once-popular destination for families out on their first overnight trip. Once the section of trail to Trout Lake has been brought back to par, WTA will start taking a look at work we can do on the trail beyond that point, as it winds toward Malachite, Copper and Big Heart Lakes. We see opportunities to contribute to this area for years to come.

Work on the West Fork Foss has been generously funded through the Spring Family Trust for Trails.

Diane Bedell

Program Development
Manager
diane@wta.org

WTA started working on this trail in late

Ocean-View Brushing

Another signature project WTA has taken on this year is maintaining the South Coast Wilderness Trail in Olympic National Park, our first-ever work on this trail. One of our Backcountry Response Teams spent six days logging out the trail, putting in steps and beating back that beautiful but overzealous Olympic brush. As with any first venture, we've left a little work for the future.

We hope to return to this lovely area in the near future to start tackling some of those infamous mud holes that you tell us about in your trip reports. Watch for your invitation to join us!

Bringing You More Opportunities in the Middle Fork

The Pratt River Connector (also known as the Lower Pratt River Trail) has been on WTA's tick list for years, so we're thrilled to have led more than 30 work parties on it already this summer. With more than 2 miles of trail reconstruction remaining, this is definitely a work in progress, but we are plugging away. WTA volunteers have devoted a great effort to this project, with more than 3,500 hours contributed in May alone!

This trail was on the Forest Service's trail inventory in the 1930s, but over time it faded into near oblivion. With so much demand for additional recreational opportunities in the Middle Fork Snoqualmie drainage, and wanting to provide a safer river crossing to access the Pratt River Trail, the Forest Service completed a lengthy review of the project and has enlisted WTA volunteers to help return this trail to its former condition. A contractor will also work on the trail through the summer, as there is a fair amount of blasting needed to move the trail out of the riparian zone and into a sustainable location.

By summer's end, the reconstructed trail will take folks from the Middle Fork Trailhead to Rainy Creek, where hikers so inclined can follow a fisherman's boot path up to Rainy Lake. Our goal is to continue reconstruction of the trail beyond Rainy Creek, toward the Pratt River next summer. ♦



More Signature Projects

Loowit Trail – Mount St. Helens' round-the-mountain trail

To help commemorate the 30th anniversary of the eruption, WTA is focusing our efforts on the Loowit Trail. Several BCRTs will address some of the of the trail's worst deterioration, and a unique front country Youth Volunteer Vacation (spaces available!) at June Lake will also tackle a section of the Loowit.

Cape Horn Trail – Another signature project in southwest Washington

We'll be helping the Forest Service implement their newly approved trail plan for one of the most breathtaking locations in the Columbia River Gorge. We've started work there with a couple of work parties, but we'll really get going on it come late summer.

Salmo-Priest Loop Trail – A lovely jaunt in the Colville National Forest

One of the few Volunteer Vacations (Aug. 7-14) where we still have space available, the Salmo-Priest Loop boasts some amazing scenery. Tucked in the far northeast corner of the state, the Salmo-Priest Wilderness is home to woodland caribou, moose, wolves and grizzlies. It's also a place that desperately needs some WTA love. Our work party will be removing an old puncheon and replacing it with long-lasting turnpike to help ensure a safer trip into this remote wilderness for stock and hikers alike.

Evergreen Mountain Lookout – A short trip into the Skykomish Ranger District

We have just two days scheduled to work on this trail, but we thought they were noteworthy because of the restored access to the trailhead. We'll be doing some heavy backlog maintenance on this trail in August: brushing, restoring drain dips and working on the tread. If you've never been up to the Evergreen Mountain Lookout, this just might be the summer to give it a try.

Robinson Creek Bridge Replacement – Improved access in the Methow Ranger District

Our crew will be helping to repair this bridge in the Pasayten Wilderness. Used as a major access point, Robinson Creek Trail has been closed to stock users for a couple of years now, and it has become a significant hazard for hikers as well. We have a Volunteer Vacation (Aug. 7-14) and possibly a BCRT on line to replace this significant bridge.

Mildred Lakes – A sojourn in Hood Canal Ranger District

Looking for solitude? You'll find it on this out-of-the-way gem in the Olympic National Forest. You'll also find challenge. Never officially constructed, this trail is little more than a root-strewn climb to the lakes. Our happy band of crosscut sawyers recently spent a long weekend logging-out deadfall that added unnecessarily to the difficulty of this trail. The roots remain, but at least some of the obstacles are gone for now.

Guemes Mountain – Building a new trail on Guemes Island

WTA is helping the Skagit Land Trust and the San Juan Preservation Trust to construct a route up Guemes Mountain. Construction will begin in September and will continue into 2011. Stay tuned for more details about this upcoming project.

WTA will take on repairs en route to Evergreen Mountain Lookout this summer. Photo by Alan Bauer.

Featured Trail Project »



Cape Disappointment

Nobody had paid any attention to the North Head Trail for years. With slick, deteriorating tread, dangerous creek crossings and failing structures, this trail in Cape Disappointment State Park was in dire need of some attention.

WTA started off by leading a few day trips here and there, but it soon became apparent that we would need to provide a serious infusion of volunteer hours in order to make the improvements this project demanded.

In the spring and summer of 2009, WTA's efforts at Cape Disappointment grew to include day trips, weekend trips, one Volunteer Vacation for adults and one for youth. These outstanding crews managed to address all of the highest priority work. After listening to the park rangers' concerns, these dedicated crews set to work, building an amazing boardwalk through a steep and muddy section, creating a vastly improved creek crossing, installing check steps to move users up a steep slope and building more boardwalk through marshy patches. They built turnpikes in muddy areas and installed a couple of reroutes to improve the overall grade. Where the trail veered toward dangerous drop-offs, crews rerouted it in a safer direction. The net effect of this work is a much safer, more pleasant trail, something all hikers can enjoy.

In May 2010, we led another Volunteer Vacation in the park. In a week, our crew built a bridge crossing and a turnpike, along with many more improvements. Working at this great state park has been anything but a disappointment!

—Tim Van Beek

Hike It»

North Head Trail

Cape Disappointment State Park, Southwest Washington

Distance: 4.2 miles round trip. Elevation Gain: 300 feet. Highest Point: 250 feet. Map: USGS Cape Disappointment. More Info: *Day Hiking: Olympic Peninsula* (Craig Romano, The Mountaineers Books).

Join a WTA Trail Work Party

July 6	Lower Dungeness River
July 9	Cougar Mountain
July 9-10	East Fork Foss
July 9-11	Glacier Basin
July 9-11	McClellan Butte
July 10-11	Yellow Aster Butte
July 10-11	Grassy Knoll
July 13-16	Mallardy Ridge
July 14-15	Heather Meadows
July 14-17	West Fork Foss
July 16-18	Glacier Basin
July 16-18	Snow Lake
July 17-18	Damfino Lakes
July 20	Lower Dungeness River
July 20-22	Mallardy Ridge
July 23	Grand Ridge
July 23-24	Iron Goat Trail
July 23-25	Glacier Basin
July 23-25	Snow Lake
July 24-25	Anderson/Watson Lakes
July 24-25	Big Slide Trail
July 27-Aug. 1	Gold Creek
July 28	PCT south from Stevens Pass
July 30-Aug. 1	Glacier Basin
July 30-Aug. 1	West Fork Foss
Aug. 3-8	Gold Creek
Aug. 4-6	West Fork Foss
Aug. 6-8	Glacier Basin
Aug. 7-8	Heliotrope Ridge
Aug. 10-12	Deep Creek
Aug. 13	Grand Ridge
Aug. 13-15	Glacier Basin
Aug. 13-15	Gold Creek
Aug. 17-19	Deep Creek
Aug. 20	Grand Ridge
Aug. 20-21	Surprise Creek
Aug. 20-22	Glacier Basin
Aug. 20-22	Gold Creek
Aug. 21-22	Skyline Divide
Aug. 24-26	Elliot Creek
Aug. 27	Independence Lake
Aug. 27-28	PCT south from Stevens Pass
Aug. 27-29	Glacier Basin
Aug. 27-29	Sunday Lake
Aug. 28-29	Twin Lakes

For a complete schedule visit www.wta.org



Action for Trails »

Endangered Trails

WTA takes threatened trails guide online to promote interaction

From 2002 to 2008, WTA released a guide to threatened hiking trails. Known as the Endangered Trails Guide, this document highlighted trails that delivered an amazing hiking experience but were in danger of slipping away due to a lack of funding, heavy weather events, motorized encroachment or agency neglect. Publishing the Endangered Trails Guide helped us to get more hikers out on these trails and to push elected officials and agency staff to take action and keep them open. We did not publish an Endangered Trails Guide in 2009, taking a year to think about what role we wanted it to play in the future.

This year, we have revived the Endangered Trails Guide as a web-based document, accessible from the WTA website. Not only do we save some trees, but hikers will now have the opportunity to interact with the guide, clicking through for more content and for opportunities to take action immediately to preserve these special wild places. By publishing this guide on the Web, we've been able to provide detailed maps and hike descriptions, complete with links to current trip reports and to Web forms allowing people to write to lawmakers and agency staff. It's an exciting new direction.

The trails in this year's guide highlight the variety of challenges our trails face, from funding shortfalls to fallen trees. These are trails found all across our state, in a variety of different landscapes, but they all have one thing in common: all of these trails can be saved. For these 10 trails, hiker advocacy can make the difference between a closed trail and open one, between a dangerous outing and a pleasant adventure.



Mount Si, managed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR)



Mount Higgins, troubled by shooting



Icicle Gorge, off-limits for now

Here is a look at a few of those trails.

- **Mount Si and Little Si:**

Although these routes have been spared for a season due to the many hikers who called, wrote and visited their legislators, we're still concerned about the future of these routes. The legislature will be dealing with another budget shortfall in the next session, and these DNR-managed trails may show up on the chopping block again.

- **Mount Higgins:** Like too many trails in Washington, this lovely route has become the site of unsavory activities, including squatting and shooting. The U.S. Forest Service, working with DNR, will have to increase law enforcement to preserve the hiking experience here.

- **Icicle Gorge:** An enticing family hike, the Icicle Gorge loop is currently not accessible due to road damage caused by a debris slide in May 2008. The Icicle Creek Road will need to be rebuilt on higher ground, which is an expensive proposition.

For seven more trails in addition to these, check out our Endangered Trails Guide at www.wta.org/action/endangeredtrails. We've worked hard to provide you with a list of truly fine hikes, and we hope you will take full advantage of this year's report and get out and hike these trails.

When you're back from your hike, take a few moments to register your views with decision makers. That's how we were able to save Mount Si this season, and it's how we'll continue to succeed for trails in the future. ♦



Jonathan Guzzo

WTA Advocacy
Director
jonathan@wta.org

On the Web »



Searching Made Easy

Go from home to trail in no time with WTA's map-based Hike Finder

There is now another reason to visit wta.org! Last month, WTA unveiled a brand new Hike Finder for our popular Hiking Guide.

For years we have heard from our members about how they would love to have more maps. Now you will be able to search more than one 1,000 online Hiking Guide entries (powered by The Mountaineers Books) by map and select the hikes that you are most interested in.

The Hike Finder allows you to zoom and pan around the state, zeroing in on the perfect trail for you based on a whole host of filter criteria, from elevation to geography to family-friendliness and more. You will also be able to search for specific hike names or for key words in the Hiking Guide descriptions.

Clicking on the hiker icons will bring up a summary of the hike, round trip mileage, elevation gain and highlighted features. If you want to know more information, you can bring up the entire Hiking Guide description in a new tab.

Once you've found an interesting hike, you'll definitely want to know about current conditions. Is the trail under snow? Will there be mud or blowdowns to navigate? Are wildflowers blooming yet?

You'll be happy to know that hiker-submitted Trip Reports, loaded with details fresh from the trail, are integrated into the Hike Finder. This will make it easy to ascertain conditions (provided a fellow hiker has recently returned from a trip on that trail and posted a Trip Report). If no Trip Report exists, a quick call to the local ranger station can provide the needed information.

The Hike Finder was built by Jon Baldvieso at Groundwire and WTA volunteer Andrew Gove, who is a member of the Google Maps team. They put many thoughtful hours into building the map search into something useful and user-friendly. REI and WTA members provided the financial support needed to make this wish-list item into a real tool for hikers.

One last note: our Hike Finder is in beta testing, which means there is ample opportunity for you to provide feedback about its usability. Does it behave like you'd expect it to? Are there any glitches? Does it provide the information you are looking for? We do want to hear about it—and we'll be making changes (within reason!) accordingly. Just click on the link on the Hike Finder page and let us know what you think. ♦



Susan Elderkin

Web Content Manager
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Membership News »

Northwest Exposure

Entries due October 17



Don't forget to take your camera out on trail with you this summer! Washington Trails Association's Northwest Exposure photo contest starts mid-August. Categories are *Wild Landscapes*, *Flora and Fauna*, *Hikers in Action*, *Families on Trail*, and *Offbeat*. Hit the trail, take amazing photos and check the WTA website for entry information. Wildflower image from WTA's first Northwest Exposure in 2004 by Eric Owens.

Thanks to WTA's Corporate Partners!

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Meet Our Members!



Aagaard-Corwin Family

For Ellen Aagaard, Matt Corwin and their three kids (Ben, 17; Kirk, 12; Sylvie, 9), hiking is a life-long passion. As Ellen explains, "Walking fosters natural conversation, and it connects you spiritually to the natural world. We need that today; kids need it, and parents need to have these experiences with their kids." Their favorite family hike? Hart Lake in the Glacier Peak Wilderness, near Holden Village.

A few years ago they met a WTA trail crew near Holden. Ellen credits this firsthand experience with inspiring them to become Fireside Circle members: "Our gift is a great investment, leveraged by thousands of volunteer hours." This May, Ellen, Matt and Sylvie took part in a volunteer work party for Fireside Circle members on the Pratt River Connector Trail.

While the family's busy schedule keeps them from doing a lot of trail work, WTA's Trail Action Network has given them other ways to make a difference, from writing letters to elected officials to reporting illegal motorized activity in the backcountry.

—Rebecca Lavigne

To join WTA's Trail Action Network, visit www.wta.org/trail-news-signup.

Hike-a-Thon Turns Miles Into Money



WTA's seventh annual Hike-a-Thon is now underway. To turn your miles on trail into money for trails, you can register to hike as an individual or as a team online at www.wta.org/hikeathon.

If you are wondering if Hike-a-Thon is right for you, here are a few of the reasons that participants have given us for joining in the past.

"I absolutely loved participating in Hike-a-Thon. It was a great way to share stories and photos with people who supported me. Plus it was a great way to make myself and others get outside and see all the beauty Washington has to offer. I can't wait to participate again!"

– Erica, Seattle

"The big reason I have participated in Hike-a-Thon for the past few years is that I need that little extra motivation to get out and hike during the month of August. I love hiking, but when the mercury in Eastern Washington spikes 95 degrees, I need that extra push to grab my daypack, boots, and hit the trails. Every year during Hike-a-Thon I choose a different personal challenge, like trying to find more trails close to my house, while also fundraising for a great organization."

– Todd, Spokane

"Last year was my first Hike-a-Thon, and I hiked more miles in August than I ever have in any one month! This is a great opportunity to get out of the office, and the best excuse for taking time off work!"

– Diana, Everett

"You know you're going to hike plenty in August! Put up a pledge sheet at the office, send an e-mail to friends and family, and publish a note on Facebook with your Hike-A-Thon link—what could be easier? Have fun hiking and raise money for WTA at the same time!"

– Steve, Seattle

"My favorite aspect of Hike-a-Thon is that while trail work is fun, hiking is even better. Only through Hike-a-Thon can I use hiking to help trail work."

– Holly, Spokane

No matter what your reasons, you can join hikers across the state to make your miles count this August! Visit www.wta.org/hikeathon to register for the event, view prizes, or sponsor another Hike-a-Thon participant.

Hike-a-Thon 2010 is presented by Mountain Hardwear — Seattle Store. ♦

How can I make my miles count for trails?

Step 1: Register online at www.wta.org/hikeathon and create your own Hike-a-Thon web page to help you keep in contact with your sponsors and track your fundraising goal.

Step 2: Hike all August long and track your miles.

Step 3: Turn in your mileage log and any pledges by September 10 to the WTA office to win great prizes.

Step 4: Celebrate your success at the Hike-a-Thon September celebration hosted by Ex Officio and plan next year's Hike-a-Thon hikes!



Kara Chin

WTA Membership Manager
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On Trail

Northwest Explorer »

Trips worth sharing in Washington's backcountry

Backpacking Favorites

Backpacking offers a tremendous, hard-to-replicate opportunity: the chance to bask in your companions' undivided attention for 24 hours (or more) at a stretch. When else can you do that? When else would you want to do that?

In this feature, we offer three backpacking tales that are as much about the companions as they are about the terrain, plus 11 more suggestions for where to go on your next overnight adventure.

**Nightfall in the Goat Rocks.
Photo by Paul Raymaker.**



Unlimited Options, Unending Views: Glacier Peak Wilderness



It was the third week of July and I hadn't seen my best friend Ryan since early May. I usually see old "Rye-pye" once or twice a month; however, due to busy schedules, it had suddenly been over three months since we had the opportunity to enjoy each other's company. Time to hit the trail!

Now, Ryan may live in Portland, but he can't help but admit that he loves the mountains in Washington even more than those in his home state of Oregon. He is particularly fond of the lush and open high alpine meadows of the central and northern Cascades. With this in mind, I decided it would be a travesty if I didn't take him into the Glacier Peak Wilderness for a weekend backpacking adventure.

The skies are crystal clear and the summer sun is still quite high overhead when we depart on a Friday afternoon and enter the vast river valley. In our first 4 miles, we gain and lose small amounts of elevation as the Little Wenatchee Trail runs its course parallel to the Little Wenatchee River. It beckons us with unfettered winks as the water of the river gurgles and rushes past us. Birds chirp and chase each other in the head-high brush. Insects



buzz and whirl as we make quick work of the easy terrain. At times, we're traveling through meadows of lush, bright green ferns and purple lupine. At other points, we're hiking in and out of stretches of tall, shaded conifer forests.

"I wonder where Bambi and Flower are?" I joke to Ryan.

This trip has a magical feel, partly because of the twenty-five years of friendship we share, but also because of the sheer beauty that surrounds us. We cross many small streams, gaze at passing waterfalls, and revel in the fact that we're completely alone. We begin to ascend and gradually our trail starts to veer farther and farther away from the Little Wenatchee River. The next 2 miles gain 1,300 feet in elevation, and, as we ascend, the enormity of the valley becomes apparent. We gawk at the ever-increasing mountain views as we look back on the ground we've covered. Soon enough, we find ourselves descending into a beautiful basin, appropriately named Meander Meadow.

The camping in Meander Meadow is fabulous. I quickly notice that a few things have changed since my previous trips here. The original trail that used to hug the west meadow ridge and lead up to the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) junction is now closed; a new trail, hugging the east meadow ridge, has replaced it.

Patrick M. Leahy

Patrick is a frequent backpacker and an instructor with Washington Alpine Club.

With lush valleys, wildflower-filled slopes and stupendous views of Glacier Peak, a backpacking tour of Meander Meadow, Kodak Peak and White Pass is one scenic weekend. Photos by Patrick Leahy.



Apparently, and thankfully so, WTA trail crews have helped to restore the trails in this area. Ryan and I set up camp at a designated site near the south end of the meadow overlooking the valley. We lay out our damp shirts and socks to dry, cook a delicious dinner and try to catch up on life. True to form, as soon as that Pacific Northwest sun drops out of sight, the temperature quickly follows. With a big day ahead of us, we crawl into our bags early for some much-needed sleep.

On Saturday, we are up relatively early, and once again, there is not a cloud to be seen. We eat breakfast quickly and pack up the necessities for the day's mission. We make our way down to the tributary that "meanders" all over the meadow to refill our water. Just pumping water in these surroundings gets your heart absolutely pounding with excitement! As Ryan finishes filling the bladders, I strategically cover a few canned craft beers in the dwindling snow to chill and we head out. It's a quick mile and 650 feet to the ridge crest and the junction with the PCT. Our senses are filled with a definitive energy. We're ready and willing to hike north on the PCT as far as daylight will allow.

This is the amazing part about this hike: for the next 8 miles (or more), your options are unlimited and the views are endless. We start with an easy scramble up Kodak Peak to get the blood flowing. The boot path up the east ridge offers us a crystal-clear, 360-degree photo opportunity of Glacier Peak, Mount Rainier and many other notable Cascade peaks. On our descent, we opt for a winter fix by "foot glissading" down the snowfield on the north face. As we continue on to Indian Pass and Lower White Pass, we're greeted by fields upon fields of sweet-smelling purple, pink and yellow wildflowers. Though climbing Indian Head Peak is extremely tempting, there's not enough time to even ponder the possibility, so we push forth. The grade of the trail is perfect for covering a lot of ground quickly and the views of Glacier Peak keep getting better as it appears and then disappears behind velvety green ridges dressed in vibrant new growth. We wind through high alpine meadows transfixed by the possibility of climbing White Mountain, but if we're going to make it to Red Pass, we need to keep truckin'. We reach White Pass. As we ascend the ridgeline trail to Red Pass, Sloan Peak, Bedal Peak, and row after row

More Backpacking Picks for FRIENDS

The Enchantments, *Leavenworth Ranger District*. 20 miles oneway. 5,400 feet gain. 7,100-foot high point.

Securing a permit months in advance helps to set expectations high for an adventure in the wilderness. When your weekend finally comes and your tents are pitched on slabs of granite, the many mountain goats you'll meet are great for encouraging camaraderie. This sublime setting in the uppermost reaches of the Alpine Lakes Wilderness calls for gourmet backpacking food.

The Hoh River Trail to Glacier Meadows, *Olympic National Park*. 37 miles round trip. 3,700 feet gain. 4,200-foot high point.

Need to catch up on happenings or want to relive the past? This straightforward trail, rolling along at an easy grade for miles and miles, is a great place to have a long, lazy chat. Pick a rendezvous point at the start of each day so that everyone in the group can just hike along at their own pace until they come to that predetermined site. This plan will keep both faster and slower parties happy.

Ipsut Creek-Spray Park Loop, *Mount Rainier National Park*. 15 mile loop. 1,500 feet gain. 6,400-foot high point.

Nervous about keeping everyone in the group happy on a backpacking trip? Distract them with amazing scenery. This loop trip in Mount Rainier National Park offers masses of wildflowers and dramatic glacier views, and, if that's not good enough, there are also plenty of oh-so-cute marmots. Be sure your party is comfortable with navigation, as a cloudy day here can leave you without a line of sight.

Ice Lakes, *Entiat Ranger District*. 28 miles round trip. 4,200 feet elevation. 6,900-foot high point.

With a trailhead off the Entiat River Road, this backpacking trip is less popular than our other picks here, but just as beautiful. You'll spend a day or two hiking through ponderosa pines until you reach an alpine dreamscape made of pumice. If you've got time, Upper Ice Lake is another mile and 400 feet higher than Lower Ice Lake. If you've really got time, two of Washington's 100 highest peaks, South Spectacle Butte and Mount Maude, are both in the neighborhood.



A field of fawn lilies in the foreground, with Glacier Peak in the background

of jagged mountains stare us down to the west.

It's hard not to stop every 50 feet to capture more memories, but when we reach Red Pass we realize that pushing on was definitely worth it. Glacier Peak is so close, but the view is slightly obstructed by the ridge between Portal Peak and White Chuck Cinder Cone. Clearly, the only acceptable thing to do is scramble up 6,999-foot Portal Peak. Not even ten minutes tick by and we're both standing atop Portal and there it is, unobstructed, in all its glory, Glacier Peak! (Or "Glah-see-air Pique" if you're inclined to pronounce it in a very thick French accent as we were.) Exhausted and quite hungry, we drop our packs, rest and refuel. The energy in the air is intoxicating, and we soak up our fill in preparation for the return.

There aren't too many three-day backcountry weekends that can beat this one. When you return after 16-plus miles of day hiking (if you go all the way to Red Pass and back), you still

have your solid spot from the night before. When you leave the following day to go home, you have an entirely different and unexplored route to take. You still ascend out of the meadow basin to the PCT, but now you take it south-southwest (instead of north-northeast) for 8.5 miles—over Sauk Pass—through Dishpan Gap—and eventually onto Cady Ridge which is covered in glorious alpine flower gardens.

If you want to make the trip home a little longer, don't take Cady Ridge, but go up and over Cady Pass and then descend to follow Cady Creek back. The choice is really a personal preference because you can't go wrong on this hike. Apparently Ryan shares my feelings. A few months after our trip, he told me that this trip to the Glacier Peak Wilderness had been the best weekend of the summer.

Cheers to that, old friend—cheers to that! ♦

Hike It»

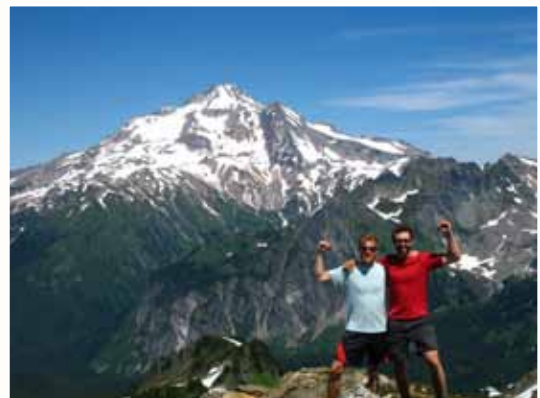
Meander Meadow/Kodak Peak/White Pass Loop

Glacier Peak Wilderness, Wenatchee National Forest

Distance: 24 miles round trip.* **Elevation Gain:** 3,600 feet in, 500 feet out.

Highest Point: 6,121 feet. **Map(s):** Green Trails 144, 112. **More Info:** *100 Classic Hikes in Washington* (Ira Spring and Harvey Manning, The Mountaineers Books).

Permit: Northwest Forest Pass required. *Add 3.6 miles if you include Red Pass.



Reach Into the Goat Rocks

All the guidebooks will tell you to allow two days to hike into Goat Lake. It took me thirty years, but it was worth it.

This story really begins in the late 1970s when my dad took us kids camping at Walupt Lake on the southern edge of the Goat Rocks Wilderness. In the evening, I cast a line for trout while gazing at the lonely mountains in the distance, mountains that called out to be explored.

Over the campfire, my dad and I talked about buying backpacks and exploring those lonely peaks, but once the weekend was over, the pressures of climbing the corporate ladder and raising a family put our wilderness-backpacking dream on the back burner, where it eventually dried up and faded away.

Fast forward to the present. Now, I have a family of my own and some hard-earned wisdom—if you don't make time for your dreams, they'll pass you by. Fortunately I could still hear the call of the Goat Rocks. It was time to answer the call.

The first step to planning a grand adventure is to find someone to go with you. My hiking buddy, Noel, and my son, AJ, were both easy sells, and soon we had a weekend marked on the calendar for late August. We made a simple plan: wake up very early on Saturday morning, make the three-hour-plus drive to the trailhead at Chambers Lake, hike to Goat Lake on the Goat Ridge Trail and spend the night. Sunday, we'd hike out via Snowgrass Flat Trail.

As we plotted out the best driving route to the trailhead from the main highway, my wife, Cheryl, casually suggested I check and make sure the roads were open. Sure enough, the most direct route, Forest Road 21 between Packwood and the Chambers Lake Trailhead, was closed due to flood damage. We found a different route via Forest Road 23 at Randle. At the trailhead, we learned from another hiking group that it was a nearly three-hour detour if you found out about the road washout the hard way. Thank you, Cheryl!

Goat Lake is a popular overnight hike, especially on the weekends, and the parking lot at the trailhead was nearly full when we arrived a little before ten in the morning. However, once we got on the trail we saw very few people.

Dave Kilhefner

Dave is an award-winning outdoors writer and photographer and the past president of the Northwest Outdoor Writers Association. Ultralight backpacking with his children is his latest outdoor pursuit.



Like most hikes into the high country, the trail started out with a long climb. The first 2 miles went steadily up through old-growth forest with occasional breaks that offered views of the distant foothills. It took two solid hours to cover the first 2 miles, so I was glad we had left early. An easy, steady pace is the best way to begin; wear yourself out early and the altitude will get you later!

At the top of Goat Ridge, we enjoyed our first view of the Goat Rocks in the distance. We soon found a shady spot with some fallen trees to rest our bones and take a well-deserved lunch break featuring panini that my wife had made special for our trip. As Noel and I munched away, we tried to check on AJ, who is just eleven years old, to ask him how he felt after that long climb carrying his pack. He didn't respond to any of our questions. We started to get a little worried. Finally, he looked up and said, "I'm so into this sandwich I can't think straight." That gave us a chuckle, and we knew all was well.

Along Goat Ridge, the trail alternately passed through patches of evergreen trees and wildflower meadows. The trail continued like this for another mile until we popped out into a beautiful open valley.

Jordan Creek Valley has the classic glacial U-shape, featuring open hillsides covered in green grass and wildflowers, with craggy peaks along the skyline. This is what we came to see! Halfway up the valley, we stopped at the first tiny creek, refilled our water supply, ate granola bars and took in the scenery. The trail traversed the south wall, every step in scenic beauty, to the end of the valley, where a short rocky scramble past a tiny waterfall put us into the bowl-shaped Jordan Basin. A cinnamon bear and her cub were out enjoying the summer sunshine a safe distance away. The last campground before Goat Lake is here.

The climb out of the basin to the saddle above does not look difficult, but we had started the day almost at sea level and were now at 6,000 feet. I was beginning to lag and feel the altitude, so I was again glad for our early start as we could hike at an easy pace for this final climb.

The highest point on this hike is the saddle at the top of this basin at 6,800 feet. Reaching this point, we had a "wow moment." The Goat Rocks suddenly came into view, the steep-sided valley colored with wildflowers as Goat

Creek plunged downward to meander among trees on the valley floor. Mount Adams stood as a sentinel at the end of the valley in the south. I was tired but satisfied. Life was very good.

I could have taken in that view for hours, but it was time to make the final push to Goat Lake. Only then could I take off this pack, set up camp and rest. The last section of trail circled gently down the end of the valley with scenery so beautiful I had to stop every hundred feet or so and take a picture. As the trail suddenly turned left, we got our first view of Goat Lake.

Situated at 6,500 feet, Goat Lake is a grand cirque walled on three sides by steep peaks. Even on this warm afternoon, its aqua-green hue was the color of cold. Ice floated along the far shore, and there were still snow patches here and there. High above, four snow-white goats showed their surefooted grace, moving easily among the cliffs.

We soon found a campsite by the outlet, meaning we found some flat, high ground with rocks to sit on. Goat Lake has very few trees to speak of. Fires are not allowed. As the weather was clear and I love to see the night stars, we opted to set up a bivouac camp, weighting down our sleeping bags with rocks so a gust of wind wouldn't blow them away. AJ sauntered off to explore the creek, and Noel and I decided to put together a happy hour, enjoying a well-earned cigar and a cocktail.

After happy hour AJ took us to the waterfall he had found. The creek flows out of the lake through broken rock substrate for a couple hundred yards then suddenly plunges off a cliff, forming a 100-foot waterfall. AJ found a good place to stand in a grove of gnarled trees just where the creek plunges over the cliff. We watched the water make its way down the valley for some time before we walked back to camp. Our dinner was a simple affair: more panini and the backpacker's staple, Top Ramen.

Darkness fell around eight thirty and we turned in early. Off and on during the night we woke and were treated to the most vivid display of stars, meteors and the Milky Way I will likely ever see.

Late at night, the wind came up and the temperature dropped. I later learned from a friend who regularly hikes in this area that a cold mountain wind almost always blows here at night. The top of the valley is a natural wind funnel. Looking back, I'll admit our campsite was too exposed. If it had rained we would have had a miserable night, but fortunately, it did not.

Wildflower-bordered creeks were common along the trail. Photos by Dave Kilhefner.





AJ taking a much-needed break after a long hard climb.

When we awoke at 6 a.m., it was 35 degrees and blowing hard. We packed up fast and hiked down the valley to the shelter of the trees to eat breakfast. On a gradually descending trail, we made good time. After about a mile we found a nice grove of trees with a creek nearby and had a hot oatmeal breakfast.

As we continued down the trail, we kept looking back over our shoulders to see the rugged beauty of the canyon retreating behind us. Along the way we stopped at a muddy watering hole to look for tracks, finding that coyote, cougar and deer had drunk here recently.

Our next major landmark, Snowgrass Flats, lay just ahead. This meadow is famous for its wildflowers. They had bloomed earlier in the summer and were now gone, but the view of Mount Adams was still grand. After this point, the trail descended rapidly, and we were back in the woods with the sound of rushing water from Snowgrass Creek.

At the bottom of the valley the trail passed through a marsh. I had my head net within easy reach, but amazingly, no bugs bothered us. We broke for an early lunch at a cool footbridge that crosses Goat Creek, then finished the last 1.5 miles in the tired silence that usually accompanies the end of a backpacking weekend.

I saw our pickup truck in the parking lot. At the same time, my mind held a lingering image of the lonely mountains beyond the end of Walupt Lake that had called me to the Goat Rocks as a child. I'm glad I finally answered that call. ♦



Bivouac camp at Goat Lake

More Backpacking Picks for FAMILIES

Hole-in-the-Wall, *Olympic National Park*.

2 miles round trip. No elevation gain. Rating: Easy.

Kids of all ages will love this hike along the rocks and sandy beach as they explore the driftwood strewn about, admire the sea stacks and discover the natural sea arch known as the Hole-in-the-Wall. Remember to take a tide chart.

Anderson and Watson Lakes, *Mount Baker Ranger District*. 6 miles round trip. 800 feet elevation gain. Rating: Difficult.

Beautiful meadows, peaceful lakes and majestic mountain-peak views are great rewards for this hike. Kids will be astounded at the star-filled sky at night. Keep in mind that these are very popular lakes, so most likely you will not be the only hikers on trail.

Hyas Lake and Upper Hyas Lake, *Cle Elum Ranger District*. 3 miles and 5 miles round trip. Elevation: 50 feet gain. Rating: Easy.

Discover the pleasure of waking up to the sound of songbirds as you camp near these two tranquil lakes and enjoy the magnificent view of Cathedral Rock. Kids will have fun swimming and looking for frogs in the swampy area spread between Hyas and Upper Hyas lake.

Junction Lake, *Mount Adams Ranger District*. 5 miles round trip. 700 feet elevation gain. Rating: Moderate.

Young hikers will love the warm water of shallow Junction Lake. Once camp is set up, relax and enjoy the surrounding subalpine meadows or walk a little farther and step onto the Pacific Crest Trail.

Hike It»

Goat Lake *Goat Rocks Wilderness*

Distance: 12 miles round trip. **Elevation Gain:** 2,000 feet gain, 400 feet loss. **Map(s):** Green Trails 302, 303, 304 and 335. **Best Season:** Mid-August through mid-September. **More Info:** *Day Hiking: South Cascades* (Dan Nelson and Alan Bauer, The Mountaineers Books). **Permit:** Northwest Forest Pass required.

Explore the Enchanted Valley



Old growth, a verdant understory and a mysterious chalet are just a few of the charms found in the Enchanted Valley. Photos by Eli Boschetto.

Eli Boschetto

Portland-based Eli enjoys frequent outings in the Olympics.

It happened by fluke late one spring that we came across a guidebook entry for Olympic National Park's Enchanted Valley. At the time, my wife, Mitzi, and I were fairly new to the Northwest so were researching backpacking destinations. We read the description: rainforest, river trail, valley meadow, high cliffs with streaming waterfalls. Best of all, only 1,200 feet of elevation and early season access! It all sounded perfect for a late-spring getaway.

Early on a Friday evening, after cheeseburgers at the Lake Quinalt Diner and a long, bumpy ride over an 11-mile gravel road to the Graves Creek Trailhead, we unloaded our gear and began prepping for the hike in. First step: liberally applying bug repellent, as the little suckers were out in force that evening. Shouldering our packs, we set off, the sun slowly sinking in the western sky. The trail into the Enchanted Valley is an undulating 12.5 miles up the East Fork Quinalt River; our plan was to hike 3 to 4 miles before dark, camp, then finish the route into the valley the following morning.

As the daylight faded and the puffy clouds took on sunset hues, we were ready to drop our gear and call it a day. We crossed Pony Bridge to the north side of the East Fork, and shortly after happened upon a primitive campsite with water access and a fire ring. Nearby, earlier campers had built a very inventive privy into the remains of a hollowed-out red cedar trunk—complete with paper holder and ornamental deer skull atop. With dinner already in our bellies, we propped up our tent, built a small fire and watched the stars begin to come out. Not a bad way to start a weekend.

The next morning we broke camp early. Long stretches by forest of fir, cedar and hemlock kept the views in check, and we enjoyed only occasional peeks of the river below. We passed additional camps on the way up, most near tributary streams crossing the trail. Beyond Pyrite Creek, the trail began passing through small pocket meadows between dense sections of forest. Upon entering one of the larger meadows, I stopped dead in my tracks, a dark movement to my right catching my attention. An adolescent black bear sat atop a fallen log, casually munching, about 30 yards off. I signaled to Mitzi to approach quietly. Our first bear in the wild!

We stood there for long seconds just watching. The bear looked up at us once and, completely disinterested, resumed munching. It was then that I remembered my camera. As quietly as I could, I opened the flap to get out my camera, but the ripping Velcro broke the silence like a gunshot. The bear decided that was enough of the human gawkers and scampered off into the bushes. We still didn't move or speak for several minutes, both of us standing there with big, silly grins on our faces. (I have since replaced that camera bag with one that has a quieter clip closure.)



Nearing the head of the valley, the forest took on a fantastical appearance: carpets of fern, lichens and mosses clinging to towering cedar and hemlock. We crossed the high, single-rail bridge over the East Fork and arrived in the valley meadow shortly after noon under a bright, sunny sky. The scene before us was breathtaking. The valley was walled in by sheer, towering cliffs, numerous waterfalls and cascades streaming down. The head of the valley was dominated by Mount Anderson with a view of the Anderson Glacier. Gorgeous!

Passing the old chalet at the foot of the meadow, we settled for a camp spot underneath a couple of large trees, pitched our tent, and took our lunch down to the riverside. Following lunch, Mitzi opted for a nap on a fallen log, perfectly contoured like a recliner, while I wandered the riverside and valley floor snapping photos of waterfalls and wildflowers. A bit later, we headed uptrail toward Anderson Pass. We didn't get far before encountering hikers coming down the trail with soggy, wet pants talking of deep snows still clinging to the pass. Sounded like a good reason to head back to camp, make dinner and call it a day.

In the morning, we woke up in another place. The surrounding valley had disappeared in a blanket of thick, wet fog, dark shapes of trees and peaks looming in the mist. With a long hike out and a five-hour drive home ahead, we quickly got to work breaking down and packing up. We passed the old chalet again, leaving the valley meadow and reentering forest. The fog swirled and eddied through the trees and ferns, creating a mystical atmosphere. Approaching the area we had nicknamed "bear meadow," we kept vigilant for another sighting of our furry friend, but it wasn't to happen a second time.

The miles out ticked off quickly. By midmorning, the clouds and fog started to break, and we could make out wisps of blue sky and the sun trying to make an appearance. With the warming day, we shed our layers, ate snacks, and kept recalling our extremely fortunate bear sighting. Before we knew it, we found ourselves back at the trailhead, loading our packs into the car. We drove away that Sunday afternoon tired but refreshed, and completely enchanted with the Olympics. ♦

Hike It»

Enchanted Valley *Olympic National Park*

Trails: Graves Creek, Quinault River. **Distance:** 27 miles round trip. **Elevation Gain:** 1,050 feet. **Map(s):** Custom Correct Enchanted Valley-Skokomish, Green Trails 166. **More Info:** *Olympic Mountains Trail Guide* (Robert Wood, The Mountaineers Books). **Permit:** Olympic National Park Pass required.

See more photos by Eli Boschetto at <http://boscomountainphoto.com>.

More Backpacking Picks for COUPLES

Pacific Crest Trail, *Length and gain vary based on itinerary.*

A couple that can thru-hike together is a couple with staying power. Dream about your future together on a multiday backpacking trip along the crest of the Cascade Mountains.

Klapatche Park, *Mount Rainier National Park*. 21 miles. 2,700 feet elevation gain in, 200 feet elevation gain out. 5,500-foot high point.

After hiking along on an abandoned road, you'll leave the forest and enter an open parkland encircling Aurora Lake. Here, the Mountain provides a dramatic—and totally romantic—backdrop. Be sure to make the side trip (through wildflowers, past big views) to Saint Andrews Lake at 6,000 feet.

Little Beaver-Big Beaver Loop, **Marblemount Ranger District*. 34 miles. 3,500 feet gain. 3,620-foot high point.

Whisper and kiss amidst the immense trees that line this route: ancient red cedars one thousand years old. Skirt through marshes teeming with plant and animal life. Spend a night at Luna Camp (lovely!), before you reach the forested saddle at Beaver Pass. From here, you can head up to Whatcom Pass for close-up views of the Pickets or start heading downhill to Ross Lake.

*There are no connecting trails between the Little Beaver landing and Big Beaver landing on Ross Lake. You make this trail into a "loop" by arranging a boat taxi ride (romantic!) from Little Beaver landing back to your starting point.

See WTA's website for many more backpacking suggestions.

MAY 8 -

TIGER MOUNTAIN

SUNNY, WARM - MID 60's

SPRING IS HERE!

SUNRISE = 5:41 AM

SUNSET = 8:31 PM

ALMOST 15 HOURS DAYLIGHT NOW!



DOUGLAS FIR



Nurturing the Naturalist Within

By Chris Wall

Illustrations by Nicole Sherey

Do you ever notice the small changes in the forest while hiking? Like when one plant replaces another as you get closer to a stream? Or when a chickadee's call changes as a hawk flies overhead? Maybe you notice larger changes like different trees in the forest canopy or when the wind and clouds predict rain? Do you take a notebook along and chronicle what you see during your trip? If you do these types of things or would like to, perhaps it's time to nurture your inner naturalist.



TRILLIUM

In case you are unfamiliar with the term, a naturalist is someone who studies the natural world through firsthand observation and research. A naturalist takes a generalist approach to the natural sciences and through direct experience gathers information about a place's flora and fauna, geology, weather and cultural history. So if you find naturalism intriguing, here are a few things to consider.

First and foremost, heighten your senses and awareness. As humans, we have weaker senses compared to many other animals. For most of us, eyesight is our dominant sense, and when we "turn off" that sense, our other diminished senses begin to compensate in surprising ways. A good exercise is to wear a blindfold while you sit in the forest. You'll notice textures, sounds, smells and even tastes will become more intense. If you'd like to go further, you could even get down on your hands and knees and use your senses to explore what's around you.

Second, you may have to change your approach to life and subsequently your hiking style. Are you the type of hiker that barely stops to breathe on the epic quest for the summit? Or are you more childlike, meandering from a flower to a slug to a tree and on to the next interesting thing? Yes, peak baggers can be naturalists, but it's the slower pace and attention to details that hone the naturalist's observational skills.

Lastly, you must develop a "sense of place." To me, a sense of place is the firsthand knowledge of the identity of a landscape. It's noticing and understanding the interactions of an area's natural environment, including those of the plants, animals and humans that live there. It's knowing what existed before the houses and strip malls and what forces created the hills and forest near your home. It's knowing your watershed, climate, and who lived on the land before you. Gaining this understanding won't happen overnight. The naturalists who possess a deep, penetrating sense of place usually have lived in one spot for most of their lives.

To start, keep a nature journal, as it can be a wonderful tool to record your experiences. In the forest or in your backyard, try these activities:

1. Sit-Spot - Sit outdoors silently without moving for twenty minutes. Using your journal, describe what is happening around you in as many details as possible. Use any form

or style of writing you like. Count how many times you hear and see a creature do something, and draw symbols representing the directions and type of sounds. Focus your attention on one square foot of ground and write about the minute details you see.

2. Animal Tracking - Look for tracks in sand, mud or snow. See what prints and scat you find and describe them in your journal. Afterward use a field guide to help identify the tracks.

3. Nature Observations - While outdoors, pay special attention to weather, animal signs, changes in vegetation, topography, etc. Use your journal to make drawings, sketches, stories and poems to record what you see. Write down any questions that come up, and try to answer them through observation before using other resources.

Becoming a good naturalist will take patience and time. You will have to pay attention, remain curious and ask good questions about what you observe. Over time your naturalist skills and sense of place will deepen. You will be surprised that you'll actually begin to discover the real stories of a place, and then it will be up to you to share them.



Naturalist Literature:

COYOTE'S GUIDE TO CONNECTING WITH NATURE, by J. Young, E. Haas and E. McGown
KEEPING A NATURE JOURNAL, by Clare Leslie and Charles Roth
TOM BROWN'S FIELD GUIDE TO NATURE OBSERVATION AND TRACKING, by Tom Brown, Jr.

Naturalist Organizations:

Acorn Naturalists -- www.acornnaturalists.com
North Cascades Institute - www.ncascades.org
Wild and Scenic Institute - www.wildandscenic.org
Wilderness Awareness School - www.wildernessawareness.org



MOUNTAIN GOAT

9-12 YR LIFE SPAN

100-300 LBS.

3 1/2 FT TALL AT SHOULDER



BEAR GRASS

APRIL 20 - 9am

BAINBRIDGE ISLAND

WATCHED 3 ROBINS EATING WORMS
IN MEADOW. ROBINS SCATTERED

WITH A "PEEK! TUT TUT TUT TUT"

CALL WHEN A COOPER'S HAWK FLEW BY

Where the Wildflowers Are



Skyline Divide

Location: Mount Baker area
Round trip: 9 miles
High point: 6,563 feet
Elevation gain: 2,500 feet
Map: Green Trails Mt. Baker 13

You want flowers? A hike along Skyline Divide in the Mount Baker Wilderness will satisfy even the most insatiable wildflower lust.

From the trailhead you'll climb through shadow-dappled forest for 2.25 miles (the better to prepare your retinas for the Mardi Gras of color at the top) and then suddenly burst out above the trees into the riotous meadows. The trail meanders south along the undulating divide through miles of blossoming splendor—the rich colors of the flowers are extra-intense against the backdrop of Mount Baker's ice and snow. In early season, glacier lilies blanket the slopes. By midsummer, the deep purples and magentas of lupine dazzle the senses. Come early, come late, come often! Try to come midweek!

Once the snow melts on the ridge, drinking water is in short supply—if you hike 5+ miles to the base of the Chowder Ridge wall, you can (probably) find a small tarn at the saddle.

—John D'Onofrio



Scorpion Mountain

Location: Central Cascades
Round trip: 8.6 miles
High point: 5,540 feet
Elevation gain: 2,300 feet
Map: Green Trails Benchmark 144

For beautiful alpine flowers, Scorpion Mountain is hard to beat.

Take Forest Service Road 6520 off the Beckler River Road (just past Skykomish), which climbs steep and narrow up to a small parking lot. From there it is a gentle ridge hike through beautiful forests for 2.5 miles to the summit of Sunrise Mountain. Then the ridge opens up to pretty meadows of wildflowers and breaks in the trees to mountain peaks beyond. But you ain't seen nothing yet!

The ridge turns toward Scorpion Mountain and becomes very narrow. Steep slopes on both sides are bare of trees and loaded with every alpine flower in the guidebook. The color is stunning. Walk waist-high in blossoms where the trail dips below the ridge or sit on top and take in the whole panorama. The dome of Scorpion begs for a picnic on its grassy lawn, while Lake Joan, some 300 feet below, calls for a swim.

—Janice Van Cleave



Marmot Pass

Location: Eastern Olympic Peninsula
Distance: 10.6 miles round trip
Elevation: 3,500 feet gain to 6,000-foot high point
Maps: Green Trails Tyler Peak 136; Custom Correct Buckhorn Wilderness

You know the Olympics are covered with moss and shaded by enormous trees. Well, they have plenty of wildflowers, too.

Hikers heading above tree line in the Olympics will find a color riot on the Marmot Pass Trail. Enormous fields of wildflowers line this trail leading up to Buckhorn Mountain and Iron Peak.

The main show is found on the open slopes one traverses below Camp Mystery, just over 3 miles in from the trailhead, gaining about 3,000 feet. Contrary to Harvey Manning's dire hike book description, this hike is quite enjoyable. The flowers will force a slow pace as one marvels at the variety and color of the scene. When the exhibition is in full force in July and August, you can expect to see lupine, paintbrush, mountain bistort, thistle, golden aster and many more.

—Carl Clark

Backcountry

The Gear Closet »

Pitch These Tents

When gear designers excel, you sleep well

They say that innovation is often incremental. This spring, I was pleased to discover a number of lighter tents on the market that sounded suspiciously comfortable. How did they do that? By pointing a critical eye to these three-season, two-person, less-than-4-pound tents, I found the answer. The magic lies in small details: lighter denier fabrics where possible, welded seams and innovative hardware.



Mountain Hardwear's Lightpath 2 serves up excellent value, though in a compact package.

Mountain Hardwear Lightpath 2
\$175; 3 pounds, 13 ounces

Lightening up your gear usually comes at a high price, but at just \$175, this tent allows budget-conscious hikers to get in on the game. Though not freestanding, the Lightpath does set up pretty easily, with a pair of parallel precurved poles providing support. This style is best pitched with



Allison Woods

WTA Gear Editor
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two sets of hands in order to stake out evenly. The cleverly designed rain fly door can be opened via a pair of zippers running up the sides, allowing the entire front to be open. In foul weather, the fly door window is a nice touch. Welded seams save weight and give a touch of “wow.”

As the door in the tent body is a little skimpy, and the interior space tapers down considerably at the feet, I'd call this one a good tent for sleeping, one I'd rather not be in while waiting out a storm. Very large mesh pockets are a welcome consideration. The tent is advertised at 80 inches, but I measured the sample to be 84 inches, so it should accommodate hikers up to around 5 foot, 10 inches.

Sierra Designs Vapor Light 2 XL
\$320; 3 pounds, 14 ounces

Sierra Designs' long-standing partnership with tent pole manufacturer DAC has brought forward some outstanding innovations in how poles and fabric come together. Here we see “Jake's Foot,” a weight-saving refinement to bring tent, fly and pole together. I struggled with it at first, but with a little practice the system is simple and effective. Do play with this tent at home—the pole setup is not intuitive and I had to look at the directions a time or two. I also had trouble getting this one put together in the wind, but the resulting sturdy tent was worth the wait. DAC's aluminum “V” stakes are not only quite strong, but also lighter than the “Y” stakes I typically recommend. Unfortunately, the Vapor Light only comes with six of them, just enough for a basic setup. For a bad weather scenario, you'll need two more.

For a freestanding tent under 4 pounds, this one has monstrous interior space. A 93-inch length will accommodate even the tallest hikers. Palatial interior and a fully mesh body to mitigate condensation? Sounds like a tent that's custom made for wet Washington high-country trips. The vestibule is only decent, but with so much interior space, who's complaining?

Gear Tip

Stake without stakes

Are you ever tempted to go without stakes when pitching your freestanding tent? No need for stakes if it's not convenient, right?

Sorry! Wrong! Freestanding tents are designed to be staked and they are much less likely to blow away when they are. If your campsite is a slab of rock, try “staking” the corners with large stones. What about snow? Simple. Fill stuff sacks or plastic grocery bags with snow, attach these to the corners of the tent and bury the bags in snow. When your tent is pitched tight, it will perform better in both wet and windy weather.

—A.W.

The innovative “Jake's Foot” corner design is lightweight and simple to assemble—once you get the hang of it.



For tall people who want ultralight tents, Sierra Designs' new Vapor Light 2 XL really delivers.

MontBell Thunder Dome 2

\$299; 3 pounds, 7 ounces

At a shade under 3.5 pounds, the Thunder Dome is the lightest of the three tents reviewed in this issue. Its classic dome design is dead simple to pitch. Four poles come together at a hub and can be simply dropped in with no finding which way makes a rectangle. This tent goes up easily in the wind, with the fly attaching securely with Fastex buckles. The vestibule is serviceable, though the vestibule door has a one-way zipper. A single side door makes for easy access, but some may object to this layout, as it requires the “inside” hiker to crawl over the “outside” hiker to get in or out of the tent.

Initially, I thought that MontBell should upgrade the Thunder Dome with lighter findings, but on second thought, these somewhat larger and burlier findings will be much easier to manage in wind or after dark. The interior space of the tent is quite roomy, and the side walls are steep. The Thunder Dome is plenty wide, but at a mere 85 inches long, it is best suited to hikers less than 6 feet tall. ♦

The Thunder Dome's classic design makes it a no-brainer to set up in the dark.



Gear Debate

Are you a stuffer or a folder?

Here's an age-old campground debate: is it better to stuff your tent into its stuff sack, or fold and roll? Most experts agree on the stuffing method, as repeated folding can create weaknesses in the fabric's waterproof coating.

If you're really adventurous, try packing your tent into your backpack with no stuff sack at all. It can conform to fit all of the empty spots between your other pieces of gear if it's packed that way. Just be careful not to pack it near sharp objects that could damage your tent's fragile fabrics.

—A.W.

How to Do It » Pack Confidently

Backpacking is fun, or at least it should be, but an improperly loaded pack that doesn't carry well can wash the fun out of your trip faster than a mountain thunderstorm. Follow these packing tips to properly load your pack, keep your gear organized and help lighten your load.

Most how-to-pack a backpack advice starts at the same point: put your sleeping bag on the bottom, load your heavier items in the middle and finish with the lighter items on the top. That's good advice. Do that.

Avoid carrying a bunch of loose clutter. Get organized with ditty bags. My favorite is the 9-by-13 inch (2-liter) size. It's a good size for a pillow, and I find it easier to locate items when they are in this bag than when I have things jam-packed into a smaller size. The food and shelter bags are heaviest and go in the middle of the pack on top of the sleeping bag. Clothing is the lightest and goes on top.

As you pack, list every item on a piece of paper. When you're done packing, fold the list so it will fit into a sandwich bag and store it in the top of your pack. Out on the trail, list the items you wish you had brought along and, more importantly, draw a line through the items that you don't use. After about three trips, you'll have your own perfect packing list. I cut my pack weight from 40 pounds to under 25 pounds using this approach, yet I'm 100 percent confident that everything I need to enjoy my hike is in my pack.

Finally, no matter how tempting it may be, do not keep jamming stuff into your pack until it is completely full. Just because you have a little extra space does not automatically mean you should fill it. Use your list, pack what you need and leave behind what you don't. Keep items you want easy access to in the top compartment (map, energy bars) or lash them to the outside (raingear, mosquito head net).

—Dave Kilhefner

Trail Eats » Summertime Faves Deep in the Backcountry



Be the most popular person in camp with this backcountry ice cream recipe tucked away in your pack.

Photos by Kirk Kirkconnell.



Asian Chicken Slaw Wraps

Ingredients:

- 1 7-ounce pouch chicken (cooked)
- 4 soft-taco-size flour tortillas
- 2 cups broccoli slaw
- 1/3 cup natural chunky-style peanut butter
- 1/4 cup rice vinegar
- 2 Tbsp. lower-sodium soy sauce
- 2 tsp. sesame oil
- 1/2 tsp. diced dried garlic
- 1/4 tsp. red pepper flakes

At Home:

Pack the tortillas in a gallon-size freezer bag. (They'll fit perfectly at the bottom of bear canister.) Pack the slaw mix in a quart freezer bag. Mix the dressing (peanut butter through red pepper above) till well blended. Carefully put it into a sandwich bag or a plastic container.

In Camp:

Open the chicken pouch up and add it to the peanut sauce, stirring in.

Pour the sauce over the slaw in the slaw bag. Seal tightly and shake the bag to distribute the sauce. Let sit for 15 to 30 minutes for the flavors to meld, then stir well.

Divvy up on the tortillas, wrap up and enjoy.

Makes 4 tortillas; serves 2.

Notes:

A mix of broccoli, purple cabbage and carrots, broccoli slaw holds up well on the trail for days. You can substitute shredded coleslaw mix.

The dressing carries well and is shelf-stable. We recommend a natural peanut butter such as Adam's.

Ice Cream in a Bag!

Ingredients and Tools:

- 1 gallon-size freezer bag
- 1 or 2 quart freezer bags
- 3/4 cup rock salt
- 1/3 cup dry milk
- 2 Tbsp. sugar

Flavorings:

- 2 packets of jam or preserves (2 Tbsp.) or
- 1 tsp. extract of choice (vanilla, coconut, almond, maple, etc.)

For any "add-in" items, such as mini chocolate chips, coconut, berries, etc., a tablespoon or two works well.

At Home:

Pack the rock salt into the gallon freezer bag and seal tightly. In a quart freezer bag, pack the dry milk and sugar and any dry add-ins if you are using them. Seal bag tightly. Pack jam or liquid extract separately.

In Camp:

Add 1 cup very cold water (think snow-fed stream) to the dry milk bag and gently shake to dissolve. Add flavoring or jam. If using add-ins, put those in now. Push the air out of the bag and seal tightly. If you are worried about any chance of the bag opening, double-bag it in a second quart freezer bag.

Open the gallon freezer bag and fill the bag at least halfway with snow. Dense icy snow is best. Toss in the milk bag, seal tightly and find a small child or a bored campmate to shake the bag back and forth for 10 minutes.

Open up the outer bag and take the ice cream bag out. Pour some cold water over the outside of the bag to rinse the salt off, open up, stir and dig in!

Serves 1 to 2 or more if you share.

Notes:

For a more decadent treat, use NIDO full fat dry milk, found at many grocery stores, Wal-Mart and Hispanic grocery stores. Most dry milk is nonfat.

For a wide variety of single serving packets of jam and preserves, visit www.minimus.biz or save extras from breakfast out. You can also pack jam into a small container or snack-size zip-top bag for carrying.

Sarah Kirkconnell

Sarah is the creative culinary force behind the blog Trailcooking.com.

Youth & Families »

Taking Art Outside

Encouraging observation and imagination in kids

Children love to use their imagination, and they cherish opportunities to share their unique perspective of the world.

As kids explore the place they call home, they become familiar with the plants, animals, birds and bugs that live alongside us in nature. While hiking, children often notice events and details overlooked by adults. One great way to capture those moments in nature and to encourage your child to hone his or her observation skills is to make time for art on your next hike.

Your kids will love putting their creativity to work outside and, you will be amazed at what your children can create, when given the chance to use their imagination. These moments of observation and exploration can make a long-lasting impression on your child, influencing how they relate to the natural world in the future.

The next time you are on your way out for a family hike, make the experience even more meaningful by encouraging your child to have a creative connection to nature. You can focus on any one of the ideas listed below, or take a mixed-media approach and try them all.

Drawing

Your child may want to take natural objects home at the end of a hike. Bring along a sketch pad and pens, and that shell or crab or wildflower that she wants so badly to take home can become a still life instead. Drawing encourages keen observation: counting leaves and petals, looking at positive and negative space and making comparisons between different aspects like shapes, proportions and texture.

Journaling

Make or pack a notebook just for your child to document his or her experience throughout the hike. You might try mapping the various features along the route or drawing animals seen from the trail. If you have more than one child, each hiker should carry his or her own notebook.



Watercolor Painting

With a little watercolor paper and a paint set, kids transform into landscape artists. Encourage your child to notice the rainbow of colors nature provides. As a bonus, watercolor paint dries fairly quickly and is easy to clean up.

Photography

Through the camera lens, young hikers are empowered to focus on their point of view in nature and capture moments of their hiking adventures. Photography allows kids to explore composition and see the contrast of shadow and light. Collect your child's photographs and create a photo essay about nature or the places trails have lead your family or any other theme, the options are left to your imagination.

Writing

Children's words can be so honest about their feelings of an experience in nature. It's easy to take some time and provide moments to write about a hike. With paper and a pen or pencil, encourage your child to look closely at a plant and describe what he sees. Imagine who lives in the hole in the trunk of a tree or create a haiku about the creatures in a tidepool. ♦

You can't take a real slug home with you, but you can bring back an illustration drawn on site. Photo by Wade Johnson.

Krista Dooley

As WTA's youth program coordinator, Krista leads guided hikes, gives clinics and arranges work parties for teens.

“ There is a battle being waged in old growth forests across the Pacific Northwest, and the spotted owl is, once again, at the heart of the conflict. ”

Nature on Trail »

A Battle Between Owls

You are walking through a needle-carpeted trail in an old-growth forest in Olympic National Park when a slight movement catches your eye. Perched above you, camouflaged against a backdrop of branches, is a beautifully patterned owl, about the size of a guinea pig, watching you curiously with dark round eyes.

Ten years ago, the bird most likely to be watching you would have been a northern spotted owl, the living symbol of mature conifer forests. Not so today. In fact, there is a battle being waged in old-growth forests across the Pacific Northwest, and the spotted owl is, once again, at the heart of the conflict.

Longtime Washingtonians will remember that the spotted owl leapt from relative obscurity to the front page when it was listed as a threatened species in 1990. More than a description, the term “threatened” was a formal designation under the federal Endangered Species Act, mandating action to help preserve the species. As a result, over the next few years, logging in old-growth forests—the owl’s natural habitat—was greatly curtailed. Many Northwest residents have vivid memories of bitter protests and dying logging towns.

The Northwest Forest Plan, the legislation addressing the needs of old-growth forests, was developed to protect many more species than just the northern spotted owl. Nevertheless, the owl remained the symbol for those on both sides of the issue.

With large tracts of old-growth forest protected from logging, one might assume that the spotted owl populations would have increased or at least stabilized. Unfortunately, recent studies have shown that the populations are continuing to fall. Speculators have proposed any number of reasons: decreasing habitat in spite of the legislation, climate change altering the ecology of the old forests, a genetic bottleneck restricting diversity. Valid as these reasons may be, the effect of another culprit may be more important.

Today, when you are walking on that trail in the Olympics, the owl that catches your eye is



Barred owl at home. Photo by Sylvia Feder.

most likely to be a barred owl, not a northern spotted. Barred owls are nonnative invaders from the East Coast. They are a forest-dwelling species, so historically the Great Plains prevented their dispersal west. Some scientists think that the warming climate allowed them to extend their range north into Canada and then move westward through Canada’s forests.

The barred owl is closely related to the spotted—slightly larger, but otherwise very similar at first glance. A closer look reveals a different pattern of spots and bars, and a good field guide is your best bet for telling the two apart. Unfortunately for the spotted owl, the barred owl turns out to be versatile and aggressive competitor. Living in the same terrain as the spotted owl, it eats a wider variety of food, breeds more frequently, produces more young, and on occasion even preys on its smaller cousin. When barred owls invade an area populated by spotted owls, the spotted generally disappears. Some studies in the Olympics suggest that their numbers may be decreasing by 3 or 4 percent per year.

This owl competition leaves biologists and wildlife managers in a difficult position. Should they allow nature to take its course, with the possible extermination of the spotted owl, or should they intervene? Studies and recommendations will undoubtedly be forthcoming. In the meantime, observant hikers have a front-row seat to this ecological drama unfolding in our old-growth forests. ♦

Sylvia Feder

Sylvia is a WTA member who enjoys listening to owls outside her home in Covington.

How to Do It »

Backpacking with Babies

Ten essential tips for taking the little ones into the woods

Preparation

Set up your tent indoors or out so your child can help put it up and get used to crawling in and out. Take a nap in the tent. Make a “pretend campfire” with a flashlight and colored tissue paper; eat lunch by this fire.

Safety

The most dangerous part of your backpacking trip is the drive to and from the trailhead. Use the proper car seat. Don't pile supplies around or behind the child that could crash into him or her in a sudden deceleration.

A safe place for your toddler to play, while you cook or do other camp chores, is inside your zipped-up tent.

Transportation

On the trail, a safe child carrier, either front or back, should be comfortable for both parent and child. Check often to be sure your child is not too warm or cold, legs not pinched, neck not cramped.

Wear both a back and a front carrier. Small babies ride in the front carrier; when he or she graduates to a backpack, fill the front carrier with baby's supplies.

Toddlers may want to walk part of the way; allow time for them.

Nutrition

Backpacking is not a good time to introduce new foods to young children. Pack their favorites, including some special treats that don't appear often at home.

Hydration

Especially if it's hot, make sure everyone drinks lots of fluids. Water from home is safest;

next is boiled or filtered water. Iodine-treated water may not be safe for youngsters.

Lactation

Nursing mothers need be especially vigilant about staying hydrated, but a nursing baby is the easiest child to take camping.

Shelter

Use a tent with sides and a closable door, not a fly; be sure it is rainproof. Some children feel safer when they are enclosed. Some are night wanderers.

Sanitation

Take plenty of clean-up materials and diapers, and carry the used ones out along with your other garbage.

Carry spare clothing in case your child gets wet, but otherwise relax your standards for cleanliness, except for clean hands for eating.



Testing the carrier at home before taking it into the wilderness. Photo by Jacky Kennedy.

Weatherization

Your child in the carrier should be prepared for both good and bad weather. If the carrier doesn't have a shield to keep sun, rain and wind away, improvise with a snap-on patio umbrella or draped shawl.

Carry and use sun hats and sunscreen.

Attitude

This is perhaps the most essential of the essentials—don't expect the same experience of adventure or distances covered that you had BBC (Backpacking Before Children). Adjust your expectations, be flexible, and enjoy your child's company. ♦

Goldie Silverman

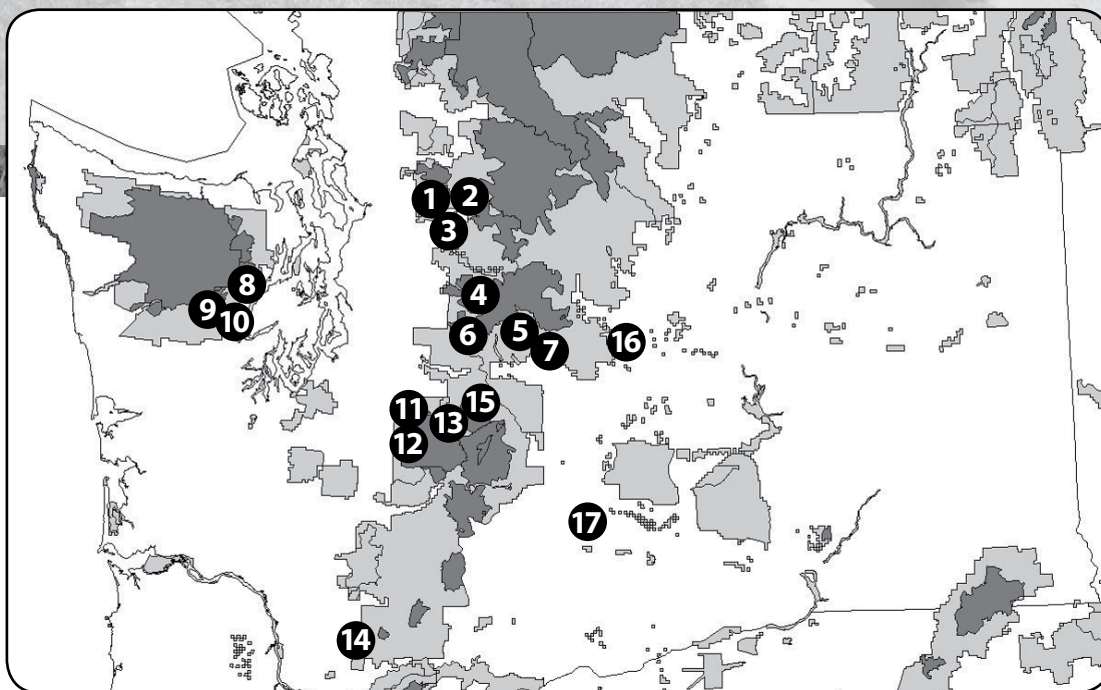
Goldie is a wilderness grandparent and the author of *Backpacking With Babies and Small Children* and *Camping With Kids*.

Reports for Hikers »

Take a Hike!

Photo by
Dale Blair

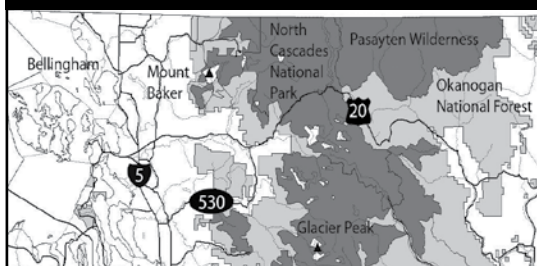
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North Cascades



① Lake Twentytwo

Green Trails 109, 110

June 7, 2010 by Lyssa

This is my favorite rainy day hike! We arrived at the trailhead at 10 a.m., and there was only one other car in the parking lot! We had the trail to ourselves. The water is running fast and high and does cross the trail in several places, but the waterfalls are fantastic. It is possible to walk easily around the whole lake and we picnicked on far side of the lake. A great day out and we had the trail to ourselves!

② Mount Dickerman

Green Trails Sloan Peak 111

June 5, 2010 by Doug

I wanted to provide some follow-up to the

Mount Dickerman reports of early May.

First, the condition of the gully/waterfall crossing above the switchbacks. The snow-bridge is still intact but not by much. There is a LOT of air underneath it and falling through it (or sliding off it) would likely be serious. The warm weather brought a lot of people out to pound on it. I doubt it'll last much longer.

Not far past the snowbridge the snow is continuous and stays that way to the summit. It seemed stable enough in the early morning but the afternoon sun brought much postholing as it softened considerably. I had Microspikes, full crampons, AND snowshoes (a little excessive, yes) but never used any of them. I do recommend an ice axe in one hand and a pole in the other for the steep parts (up and down).

The summit remains heavily corniced so proceed with the usual caution.

③ Heather Lake

Green Trails Granite Falls 109

June 1, 2010 by nSellon

We went up about 11 a.m. and there were 15 other cars in the parking lot. Didn't seem crowded once on the trail though. It was a beautiful hike. Very moderate and good for beginners. You climb for a while and then it levels out, following a little more climbing before the lake. The lake itself is breathtaking. Powerful mountain backdrop with more than 15 waterfalls falling from the snow at the top. Gorgeous, clear, blue water that is wrapped up in trees. Great hike and easy to get to!

Central Cascades



④ Iron Goat Trail-Stevens Pass-West

Green Trails Stevens Pass 176

June 3, 2010 by Silverpeople

We wanted to start at the Wellington trailhead, but when we saw all the snow at the Stevens Pass ski area, we should have known! Down the Old Cascade Highway a short distance the road was filled with snow. Ruts in

the snow show that high-clearance vehicles have driven through, but we knew our Outback wouldn't make it. So we drove down to the site of the Iron Goat Interpretive Center, where the red caboose is being outfitted but is not yet ready. The parking lot is large, there were clean restrooms with solar-powered lights, and a wide asphalt trail led off to the Iron Goat. At a fork in the trail, the asphalt continues left to the Martin Trailhead; this trail looks as if a wheelchair could make it through. We chose the trail called the Windy Pass Crossover. It starts out as a wide, forested trail, but as we went higher, the trail became more narrow, steeper, and in some places consisted of rough stone stairs.

Not to belittle it: it's a great trail, beautifully engineered. Even though we were hiking a day after a great deluge, the trail was not muddy and there was no standing water. We reached the Iron Goat Trail just a few feet from the west end of the Windy Point Tunnel, one short mile and 700 feet of elevation from the caboose. We continued to the Wellington trailhead, accompanied by the sound of running water. The embankments above us, both natural and manmade, were pouring water, but this trail too is beautifully engineered and maintained. No mud, only two places where there was standing water. We thought about walking down the Old Cascade Highway from Wellington, but Ranger Paul, whom we met at the big snowshed viewing platform, discouraged us. He said the road is not very interesting and it would dump us out on U.S. 2, which we would have to walk along for a quarter of a mile to get to our car. So we went back the way we came, down those steep stairs.

On the Iron Goat trail, we saw lots of wildflowers—bleeding heart, spring beauty, Indian paintbrush, one lone yellow glacier lily. We also had two great treats: a big patch of wild ginger and a flower that was new to me, Hooker's fairy bells. (Ranger Paul had a flower book.)

⑤ Ingalls Creek

Green Trails 209, 210

June 3, 2010 by terpene

The last time I was here I was short on time, so only went down the trail a couple of miles. It's such a great trail that I decided to return and finish out the hike.

Ingalls Creek is pretty impressive in itself. Taking a break in one of the many excellent camp-

Mariposa lily, one of the more unique wildflowers you can find on the Ingalls Creek Trail. Photo by Karen Sykes.



sites along the creek, I threw in some sticks and with the aid of a watch and some eyeball distance measurements, determined that the water is moving at least 20 miles per hour. And there's a lot of water. If you fell in this creek, you'd be in serious trouble, so I definitely wouldn't recommend trying to ford to get a look at the falls at Falls Creek; trying to cross even the few spots where the creek widens out would be foolish.

I've added this hike to my "favorite wildflower hikes" due to the great variety of not-so-common and rare species along the trail. Toward the middle of the hike, there is more shade and water, resulting in a whole new set of species to see. I even saw some calypso orchids. I saw eight even though I wasn't particularly looking for them, so there are probably lots more. My SOD (species of the day), though, was the very rare elegant cat's ear (rare for Washington, anyway, as its home range tends toward northern California and Oregon).

Hikers behind blooms on Easton Ridge. Photo by Karen Sykes.

Of course, I cast many forlorn glances at the Teanaway peaks, one of my favorite hiking haunts, across the creek, still snowbound. But not that much snow--pretty soon we'll be up



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Creek Valley. It would be fun to hike to the Fourth of July Creek Trail and follow it down to a second car.

Stats: 4,300 feet elevation gain, 2.3 hours up, 4.2 hours round trip.

Snoqualmie Pass Area



6 Easton Ridge

Green Trails 208, 240

May 23, 2010 by love2hike

It turned out to be a beautiful day for our Mountaineers group to hike the Easton Ridge. We hiked in just a little over 3 miles, enjoying the views and sun when available. The hike does not follow the top of the ridge so we had to scramble up to the top to enjoy the views, which we did a couple of times.

The trail is clear of snow for the first few miles. We did not go much farther after encountering snow. Although it was fairly warm, it would still snow small flakes occasionally. Very magical.

A few wildflowers are starting to make their appearance, and we saw an enormous anthill.

7 Jungle Creek, Way Creek

Green Trails Mount Stuart 209

May 30, 2010 by whitebark

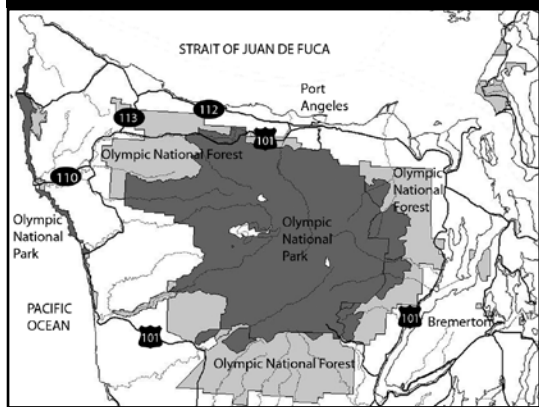
We did a vigorous 8-mile loop hike around Johnson Peak, utilizing the Jungle Creek and Way Creek Trails, and a 1.5 mile-section of the Jungle Creek Road. These uncrowded trails tend to melt out early than some of the more popular paths in the Teanaway River region. Here, as everywhere in this area, the scenery is lovely and the weather dry (usually). Glacier lilies and other wildflowers are just coming out; the show should just get better in the following weeks.

The Jungle Creek Trail is in fair condition, with sections of steep, narrow tread and a few blowdowns around a mile in. These blowdowns

do have the advantage of stopping motorcycles from driving up the trail (they are legal here). Beyond the Johnson Creek junction, extensive, steeply-sloped snowbanks still cover the Way Creek Trail on the north side of Johnson Peak...use caution if the snow is icy. Past the 4,800 foot high point, at the Koppen Mountain Trail junction, the snow situation gets better, with only a few patches of snow to cross. The lower part of the Way Creek trail is snow-free, and in generally good condition, though its tread is narrow and slumped on many places where it traverses steep hillsides. Just a few blowdowns to cross, just enough to discourage wheeled traffic. The final 1,000 foot descent to Way Creek trailhead follows a jeep road badly chewed up by fun-loving Memorial Day ATV drivers.

The 1.5 mile road walk portion of the loop is surprisingly pleasant. There is little traffic on this dead-end road and one is serenaded by the musical sounds of Jungle Creek most of the way.

Olympic Peninsula



8 Duckabush River

Green Trails The Brothers 168

May 30, 2010 by JanerSue

We reached the trailhead at about 8:30 a.m. after a few miles of artful pothole dodging along the Duckabush Road. There were about 10 cars in the lot, mostly overnights.

The trail to Big Hump is in fine shape, so green and lush this time of year. A bit of water on the trail in some spots, but nothing troublesome. Enjoyed the vanilla-leaf, foamflower, spring-beauty, bunchberry dogwood, Solomon's-seal, paintbrush, rhodies and orange honeysuckle. The winter wren and varied thrush were constant companions. Encounters with two off-leash dogs, whose owners never even bothered to call them back when they were checking us out, were the only irritants of the day. Plenty of

solitude on this trail, as usual.

At the viewpoints around Big Hump, watch out. The rocks are slick with mossy slime and you don't want tumble off the edge.

9 Dry Creek

Green Trails 167, 199

June 1, 2010 by twopaddles

Thank you, WTA! Our group had hiked this trail last autumn and found more than 100 blowdowns and lots of standing water in the 4 miles of trail we covered. The trail is now in excellent condition, a real pleasure to hike. Wildflowers are blooming.

We parked at the gated causeway at the upper end of Lake Cushman and walked across to the trailhead. The trail leading along near the lakeshore through private cabins is well signed. Past the trail register, we enjoyed a good spring flower display as we wound through the forest, then turned up the Dry Creek drainage. We turned back at about 4 miles, at the crossing of Dry Creek. The creek is high, due to spring runoff; crossing this stream at this point would be a challenge.

10 Mount Rose

Green Trails 167, 199

May 31, 2010 by Jon In Flight

Just moved into the Tacoma area about three weeks ago and have always heard about the amazing hiking to be had in the Olympics and Cascades. On Monday morning, a pair of friends and I had a coin flip between Mount Rose and Mirror Lake, and Rose came out on top, so we packed up the car and headed out to give Mount Rose a shot as our virgin hike in Washington.

Are you ...
Can you ...
Will you ...
Hike-a-Thon?

Hike-a-Thon: [noun]
a yearly event where hikers protect the trails they love by hiking in August

Hike-a-Thonner:
[noun] hiker of any age and experience level who makes his or her miles count by hiking and collecting pledges from his or her friends and family to raise money for trails, trail maintenance, and wild lands protection

For details, see article, p.18.

Duckabush Privy.
Photo by Cathy Farrar.

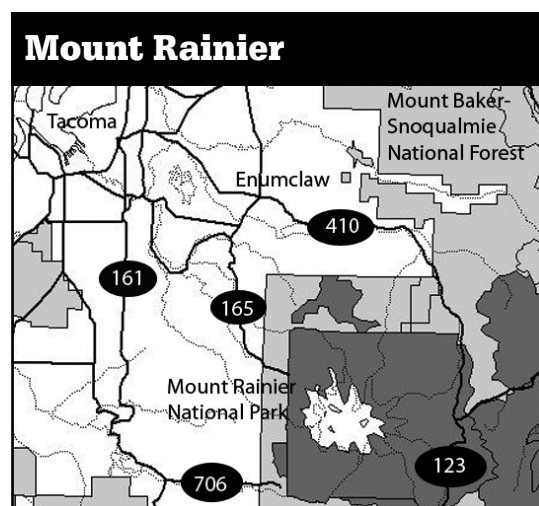


It was very much worth the knee pounding we received. The trail is in very good condition all the way up to the trail split. We chose to head left up the 1.1 miles to the summit, hoping for a shorter hike than the 1.6 miles to the right. What we got was a very nice hike up through some streams and nice meadows and light snow covering the trail. It then turned pretty rough with a good bit of snow and a steep trail following the orange trail markers. We finally broke out of the snow and back onto the trail for the last 300 feet or so to the summit, which was dry.

Weather was pretty nice, a good bit of cloud cover but no rain, so it made for a nice break at the summit as we rested our knees. We decided to make a loop out of it and follow the 1.6-mile trail back down the ridge line. The snow on this side was a bit more packed and made for a nice break for the knees. After about 500 feet or so of decent we came out of the snow and enjoyed a nice afternoon hike down to the car.

For equipment, we had a day pack with some fresh socks and food and a sturdy pair of boots each. Poles would have been nice to add for the downhill and poking through some of the deeper snow up high.

Overall, this trail was in good condition. For my first hike in Washington, I am super impressed and I can't wait to get out on some more of what the Olympics have to offer.



11 Summit Lake

Green Trails Enumclaw 237

June 7, 2010 by RaineWalker

Driving up to the parking area wasn't too bad. We took a Scion XB and even saw a sports car parked on the side of the road at a camping

spot. There is a part of the road that is pretty seriously washed out to one side, but it remains drivable and is marked. There is also a short section of snow and ice on the road up there but the ruts were clear so staying in those made the trip easy. The parking lot itself looked great.

We wandered about half a mile in, crossing over several small sections of snow (some with mountain lion tracks) before we got to what looked like the beginning of the real snow. Mostly, it was ice. I'd hoped—despite the cooler weather we've been having—more of it would be melted. Alas, since it was not, we went back down to the empty parking lot and had lunch.

The lesson? Bring crampons, just in case.

12 Carbon River

Green Trails Mount Rainier West 269

June 5, 2010 by Janice Van Cleve

The Carbon River Trail will be in better shape than it has been for awhile since two WTA crews are working on it right now. I was on the first crew from May 29 to June 5. The Carbon River is a wild, raging torrent that ignores boundaries. The work we did may be destroyed in a week or may last a couple of months. Yet in spite of the drenching rain and bitter cold it was worth it to make the improvements we did.

Parking for this popular trail is at the Carbon River Ranger Station just inside the Rainier Park boundary. It is a 5-mile road hike in to the Ipsut campground, which is well furnished with outhouses, bear sheds and fire pits. The road in is washed out in several areas, forcing several rough and muddy detours navigable by the rangers' ATVs.

From the campground, the trail passes through forest and over three log bridges with handrails to the Ipsut waterfall junction. It's a small falls with an abandoned water processing station, but it is only 100 yards from the main trail, so you might as well go see it. Then the trail climbs gently through lush forest to the Carbon River. There are three more log and handrail bridges where we worked to improve approaches. The trail here is only inches above the flood level and could easily be wiped out in the next surge. About a mile farther the trail bursts out onto a cliff above the Carbon River, where we cleared an avalanche. Here the trail descends down to the river to cross the gravel and boulder bar to the other side. You will see here also the beginning of the reroute we worked on, but you can't use that branch yet.

Crossing the gravel and boulder bar is interesting even in low water and decidedly exciting in high water. During our work week we had a deluge of rain that fed the gushing river right up to the bottom of the two log bridges! Cross the "island" to another log bridge and you enter a very pleasant forest with delicate understory. The old channel of the Carbon River lies beyond. Some of our folks hiked up to the snout of the Carbon Glacier with no problems. Lots of wildflowers and ferns to entertain along the way.

13 Silver Falls Loop

Green Trails 270, 302

June 2, 2010 by jasonracey

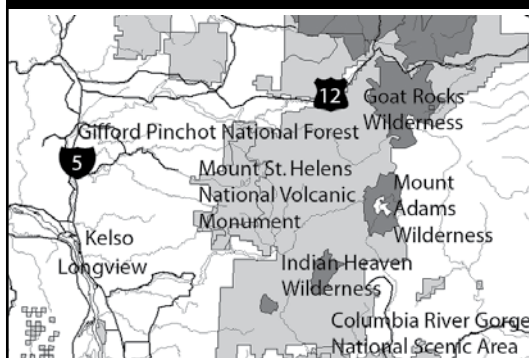
Hiked the Silver Falls loop from Stevens Canyon Road to Ohanapecosh and back. Brought my three-year-old and he had a great time. Had to carry him about half the distance, however.

The trail is in perfect condition. The forest is green. The waterfalls are going strong, and there are a lot of them. Silver Falls is spectacular, but I failed to get a single decent photo of it. It's so big that the amount of water created too much contrast for the camera settings I was using.

The western branch of the loop isn't quite as

interesting. It's nice forest, but it just can't compete with the eastern branch's many waterfalls.

South Cascades



14 Horseshoe Ridge, Lower Siouxon Creek

Green Trails Lookout Mountain 396

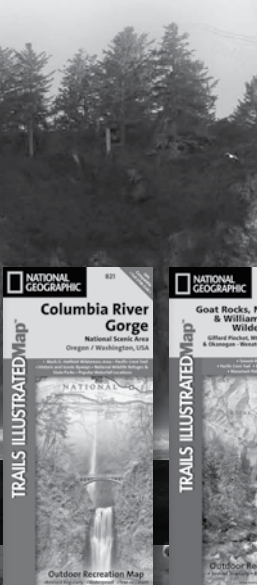
May 31, 2010 by rfschreiner

We hiked in on the Lower Siouxon Creek Trail and camped 3 miles in near the Wild Cat Creek at an established campground. The hike starts heading downhill and continues relatively flat for the next few miles. The trail is in good shape all the way to the campsite. Make sure to have a camera ready along the way, as you



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will pass beautiful stretches of river, including waterfalls.

The Horseshoe Ridge Trail stems off the Siouxon Trail on the right, just past the Wild Cat Creek. This trail was logged-out and is clear for about 2 miles going up hill. The corridor is clear and is usable for hikers and bikers (thanks to Henry and his crew). Equestrian users may want to be cautious on this trail. The Horseshoe Ridge Trail loops around back onto the Lower Siouxon Trail (you pass this hiking in), but is littered with blowdowns. Steep trail and uncleared corridor makes it difficult to hike. This was a fun trail to hike. It needs a little more work but is heading in the right direction!



Lower Siouxon.
Photo by Ryan Ojerio.

15 Lost Lake, Greenwater and Echo Lakes

Green Trails Lester 239

May 28, 2010 by JHPearce

Left the trailhead around 4:30 p.m. Friday. Only three other cars in the parking lot. This was a welcome sign, as I was certain the holiday weekend would have drawn more crowds. The trail was empty of any other hikers my entire climb. The evening was surprisingly dry considering the rain I left in the city. Spotted one campsite on the western shore of the lower Greenwater Lakes.

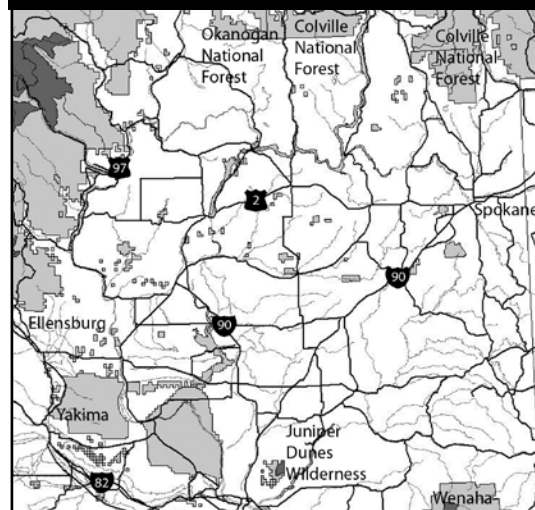
Contrary to the report from geezerhiker (on May 24), thankfully the snow above Lake Quinn was significantly less deep. No postholing past my knee. Still, decent boots or gators are recommended. My pup and I made good time to Lost Lake. Had a brief interlude with the party of three (plus one dog) at the first camp on the north end of the lake. I handed off a hot pink knit hat they had dropped the day before. Nailed down a great spot on the lake with Mutton Mountain peeking through the clouds.

Dinner and a campfire all before sundown. The night was quiet with minimal rain.

Left camp for a day hike to Echo Lake. Came across another solo hiker coming down from the lake. He asked me for the time, I couldn't help him out as I intentionally had lost track of this information. A slightly longer snow crossing than the Lost Lake trail but similar in depth and difficulty presented itself. I was surprised by the size of the Lake. A low hanging fog hovered just above the tree line. Spotted one campsite on the shore of this fine body of water. Headed down to the horse camp and discovered it was still covered in snow. Had lunch overlooking the lovely marsh at the south end of the lake. I was regretting leaving camp back at Lost Lake given the surprising desolation I experienced at Echo. My descent back down the trail, however, validated picking Lost Lake. In sequence headed up the trail, party of two, party of three, and then the group of Boy Scouts (12+). Lost Lake made for a fine quiet camp and the extra hiking made for a good spring romp.

Sunday morning was sunny and made for a beautiful descent. As expected, lots of day hikers on their way up to Greenwater Lakes. Returned to trailhead around 12:30 p.m. to a full parking lot. This is a great spot for early season overnights and day hikes.

Inland Northwest



16 Douglas Creek Canyon - North

Green Trails USGS Palisades, USGS Alstown

May 31, 2010 by Natasha'n'Boris

We hiked this trail on the last day of a three-day campout in Douglas Creek Canyon. No

matter what the *Desert Hikes* book says, people shouldn't be afraid of the access to this one: the gravel road approaching it has been graded recently and while steep, is very hospitable to even passenger cars. The parking area is nicely manicured and well signed. It's a wonderful area, very magical in its desert grandeur and loneliness. If you're any kind of naturalist, this is prime country for poking around and taking lots of notes and pictures.

In contrast to the jeep roads and canyon bottom, this trail, for hikers only, has a distinctly "out there" feel, with soaring walls, less invasion of nonnative plants, and the lovely fragrance of spicy sage and wild rose. The "trail" follows an old railroad grade, and chunks of the railroad are still strewn around, including ties and spikes. There are great thickets of rose blooming in the first part of the trail. The exposed basalt is a great study in volcanic activity, and you can look across the canyon and imagine lava in motion by the pillars and curved tubes and chunky broken rocky froth. The trail crosses the creek in a couple of overgrown spots, marked by "Trail" posts. It's hard to get either wet or lost. The beaver activity has braided the creek into channels that are narrow and easy to hop over. There was a sizable beaver pond at one point. The only caution in this area are the spikes of beaver-chewed willows underneath the grass. They can leave an ugly bruise if the points gouge a leg.

The trail winds back up onto the old railroad grade, passing some outcrops of deep yellow rock with gardens of lupine, penstemon and some yellow composite flower. We saw lots of birds and heard their calls amplified from the rock walls. The calls of ravens were especially striking as the birds soared from on top of the ridge down into the canyon. There are lots of neat side canyons worth coming back to explore. We saw deer tracks, but no deer.

There are some great potential campsites that would make this area wonderful for a weekend of exploration. Where the trail takes a sharp bend west, there is a slope that can be scrambled for wonderful views.

The trail supposedly runs for several miles, but is overgrown after awhile. We didn't have a GPS with us today, so we weren't quite sure where we turned around.

It was nice to have had such a relaxing hike before we faced the awful Memorial Day traffic. We managed to get through the usual yodel-fest in Leavenworth without too much trouble, but bogged down about 8 miles east of Gold Bar and crawled to Monroe over the next 1.5 hours. Next time, we'll take Tuesday off and keep hiking for another day!

17 Umtanum Creek Falls

Green Trails USGS Manastash Creek

Jun 06, 2010 by Rebecca Lavigne

Had planned to hike Black Canyon, but turned into the parking lot for Umtanum Falls to save some drive time on the gravel road.

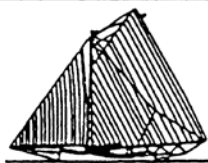
It was rainy even in the desert here, and the trail was extremely slick and muddy. Still lots of wildflowers in bloom, including balsamroot and a beautiful iris (Oregon?). The real stars of the outing, though, were the cute western tanagers and many other songbirds. We spent so much time watching the birds that we didn't make it very far down the trail.

Before reaching the falls, we heard several gunshots ahead that seemed to be from target shooters. Getting closer we heard a pretty raucous group and decided not to venture farther. We turned around and soon stopped for lunch. We could hear the group hiking towards us back to the trailhead. They fired one final shot as they were walking down the trail (still well out of sight) toward us.

It turned out it was a group of high school students out for a fun night in the desert. They clearly thought they would have the whole canyon to themselves and were a little embarrassed and apologetic when they came upon us.



Umtanum Creek Falls with winter snowmelt. Photo by Alan Bauer.



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A Walk on the Wild Side »

Playing with Pulaskis

Big tools, plenty of dirt, a break from routine and no cooking draw a fifty-five-year-old mom to WTA's Volunteer Vacations. *Kristen Isakson*

I am the mother of four daughters and the wife of a charming high-school history teacher. We've lived in Anchorage, Alaska for thirty-one years, but my soul lives in Seattle, where I grew up hiking on the trails of the Cascades and Olympics. I read *Washington Trails* on dark, snowy winter days and dream of all the Volunteer Vacation locations for the coming summer: the Dark Divide, Carbon River and Pasayten Wilderness weave through my dreams. Sometimes, in the frigid cold, I can hear the wind in the pine trees and smell the warm firs and taste the sweet huckleberries while I read the descriptions of all the places WTA is working.

In Alaska, my family spends all summer exploring; we float in a huge raft on the Yukon River, camp all over the Kenai Peninsula, and haul in big, fresh salmon with our friends. Then, in early August, my husband goes back to high school and the girls start their fall sports—"Aha," I say to myself, as I see my opportunity to escape to the Cascades presenting itself.

Since I do everything with a large (and cheerful) family, the idea of signing up for a trip on my own has serious appeal. On the three Volunteer Vacations I have been on thus far, I have pitched my little tent in a meadow on the Lake Chelan shore, behind a

huge log near Waptus Lake and in sweet-smelling Meander Meadow, right next to a lovely creek.

For me, it's a safe way to steal a week away in the mountains, eat a gourmet menu that I neither plan nor cook and have a grand adventure where I don't have to manage anyone or declare whose turn it is at charades. Another benefit: I get to handle big, heavy tools and roll boulders and trees over cliff edges. There's always someone interesting to talk to, and I can curl up and take a catnap in the sun any time I want to. Try that with four kids around!

I've found the other volunteers are easy to enjoy and undemanding and the leaders are interesting and likeable. A whole week's sabbatical for me to be by myself with my thoughts, away from the regular stresses of life, is a wonderful thing.

I'm already dreaming of late summer. My husband and kids don't know I am planning to slip away, again, but I'll present my request carefully, when I think I'm due for a favor after being "super mom" for the summer.

I'm dreaming of playing with Pulaskis and dreaming of the trails. ♦





Featured Landscape » Obstruction Point

This high trail in the Olympics contours along Grand Ridge and offers a spectacular view of Mount Olympus. Look up close and you see outcroppings of basalt splashed with colorful lichens. Look across the valley and you see the moody Olympic Mountains. From the Deer Park Trailhead, it's 7.5 scenic miles to Obstruction Point.

From late July through mid-August, Obstruction Point boasts immense patches of brilliant pink western sweet-vetch interspersed with vivid red paintbrush, yellow arnica and blue lupine. It is a dizzying display of psychedelic colors. Add to this mix the fuzzy white seed heads of the western pasque flower, and you have a spectacular show.

Luckily, the last mile or so of the Deer Park Trail is nice and gentle, as your attention can wander off through these bountiful flowers.

—Cindy Clark

Hike It»

Obstruction Point-Deer Park Trail. *Olympic National Park*

Distance: 15 miles round trip. **Elevation:** 6,100 feet to 5,400 feet. **Map(s):** Green Trails Mount Angeles 135. **More Info:** <http://www.nps.gov/olym>. **Permits:** Olympic National Park Pass required. Overnight hikers must register at the Wilderness Information Center in Port Angeles.

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