

Teanaway Magic

Lofty peaks, geologic wonders and great summertime hikes beckon in the Alpine Lakes



ALAN BAUER

The relatively dry Teanaway region north of Cle Elum is rich in wildflowers and panoramic views. Here, hiker Gary Jackson traverses Teanaway Ridge, with the peaks of the Stuart Range in the distance.

BY JOAN BURTON

Hikes in the Teanaway River area have a special charm. Weather is often clearer in early spring or late fall when skies on the west side of the Cascades are gray and dripping. That feature alone justifies the two-and-a-half hour drive to trailheads for me, but there are also unique sights to be seen there. Flowers are abundant, some unique to the area, and larch displays are magnificent in late fall.

We recently made a fall backpack trip up Stafford Creek to a small, unnamed meadow between Earl and Navaho Peaks. We expected to find little or no water, but the meadow was

green and marshy in places, with a few late asters, and the creek was running. Springs high on the slope of Navaho fed it, we decided. We had a warm clear night, so warm that we hardly needed our tents, and woke ready to wander upward. Since one of us was recovering from surgery, we didn't expect to go far. To our surprise, the trail up Navaho was a highway over a bare, serpentine ridge, and in an hour and a half we stood on the 7,200-foot summit. Around, beside, and beneath us lay Ingalls Peak, the Stuart Range, the rest of the Teanaway peaks, and the Enchantments.

Another favorite Teanaway hike, beautiful in springtime, is Iron Bear.

The name refers to the combination of the drainages of Iron and Bear Creeks. Steep switchbacks take you up through meadows bright with scarlet gilia, golden balsamroot, yellow bell, Jeffrey shooting stars, chocolate lily, calypso orchids, blue camas, white (death) camas, lomatium, white fawn lily, yellow monkey flower, sea blush, small flowered blue-eyed Mary, miners' lettuce and Siberian miners' lettuce, red flowering currant, salmonberry, field chickweed and prairie star.

A unique flower show comes just

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JOAN BURTON



In autumn, blazing yellow larches dot the hillsides above the Teanaway River and its tributaries.

ALAN BAUER



Located east of the Cascade crest, the Teanaway region is a prime habitat for dryside wildflowers such as bitterroot.

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above a junction with the Teanaway Trail. There you can see bright pink lewisia rediva growing out of a rockslide, without a green leaf or stem showing. The flowers resemble water lilies floating on a volcanic scree slope. At the summit of Iron Bear you look into the Stuart Range — so close it appears you could traverse a ridge to reach it. Often this summit will have snow until mid-summer, but dry areas for a lunch stop are close by.

Bean Creek Basin is a lovely Teanaway meadow above Beverly Creek and Bean Creek. A two-mile hike takes you up the creek to the basin, or to a pass next to Earl Peak. A few winters ago, an avalanche came down one side of the basin, crossed it and went up the other side, snapping off head-high alpine tree trunks. The flowery basin has water and makes a delightful camp.

Even in cold weather, the Teanaway offers delights. Hiking in the fall above popular Esmeralda Basin on a heavily used trail, we climbed to Fortune Creek Pass, a ridge alongside Ingalls Peak. On the other side, lying on a shelf, was blue and scenic Lake Ann, surround by golden alpine larches.

Part of the magic of the Teanaway is that it can surprise you. The County Line Trail is another favorite. To reach it, turn right off the North Fork Teanaway Road at Beverly Creek, and drive approximately 1.5 miles to the trailhead parking lot. Cross the footbridge and proceed 0.5 mile up an old roadbed to where the Beverly Creek Trail crosses Bean Creek. Continue 2.1 miles to the 5,200-foot level and turn right up Fourth Creek for 0.5 mile to the 5,500-foot ridge crest. In late fall, we camped there one cold night. Temperatures dropped below freezing. The surrounding larches were golden, and when a light snowfall during the night draped them in white, they looked like storybook trees. Magic indeed! ♦

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JOHN HOWELL

View property: there are plenty of hikeable peaks in the Teanaway. This panorama from Iron Peak offers a glimpse of Bill's Peak in the foreground and Mount Stuart in the distance at left. Iron Peak's name comes from the huge quantities of iron here: so much that magnetic compasses are useless on the summit.

The Teanaway offers many ways to hike

By JOHN HOWELL

The skies are often sunny in the Teanaway when inclement weather hovers over Puget Sound. Hikers love this scenic recreational area, which is bordered on the north by the Wenatchee Mountains, on the south by the Wenatchee National Forest boundary, the Cle Elum River on the west and Teanaway Ridge on the east. Ingalls Peak has the highest elevation at 7,662 feet. The lowest elevation is 2,400 feet at Salmon la Sac.

Steep-walled valleys provide major drainages, including the Cle Elum River, Teanaway River, Beverly Creek and Stafford Creek.

On forested trails you will see hemlock, Douglas fir, grand fir, lodgepole pine, ponderosa pine and white pine. At higher elevations look for whitebark pine, western larch and subalpine fir.

Mountain goats roam some of the higher ridges and peaks. Other wildlife include elk, deer, black bear, coyotes and bobcats.

Wild flowers are abundant in the meadows and on mountainsides. Glacier lilies, scarlet gilia, buckwheat and lupine are among the most prevalent. Ridges and peaks are too dry and rocky for floral displays, but they offer glorious views of surround-



ing mountains and valleys.

North of Cle Elum and Roslyn, drive the Salmon la Sac Road for access to trails in the western Teanaway. Hex Mountain, Sasse Mountain, Sasse Ridge and Jolly Mountain are close to Puget Sound. These are on Green Trails map Kachess Lake 208.

The heart of Teanaway country is accessed east of Cle Elum from state Highway 970 and Teanaway Road. Forest roads branch off North Fork

Teanaway Road to the east and west, providing a variety of hiking opportunities (map Mount Stuart 209). Trails include valley hikes such as Esmeralda Basin 1394, Beverly Creek 1391, Johnson-Medra 1383 and Stafford Creek 1259.

The north boundary features Hawkins Mountain, Esmeralda Peaks, Iron Peak, Bean Peak, Earl Peak and Navaho Peak. From any of these, the

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In late spring and early summer, balsamroot and other wildflowers put on a vivid show of color.

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views of the Stuart Range are unbeatable! Look at your compass when atop Iron Peak and see how it acts.

Yellow Hill Trail 1222 is a good conditioning day hike off the Middle Fork Teaway Road at the area's southern boundary. The start of Old Spur Road leading to the trailhead has a dirt berm and is accessed by high-clearance vehicles. In 3.5 miles of hiking, you gain 1,800 feet to viewpoints in all directions. The impressive display of yellow flowers no doubt inspired the hill's name.

Teaway Ridge to the east is also great for vistas. From U.S. Highway 97, north of Mineral Springs, turn west on Road 9738 (map Liberty 210). Drive to Road 120 which is on the right (north) and gated. Park at the gate. Hike north on the old road a mile, and come to Teaway Ridge Trail 1364. Continue straight ahead, enjoying the views of peaks to the north. The ridge is best hiked in June and the fall. July and August can be very hot and dry on the ridge.

Back in your car, you can go south on Road 111. In less than a mile the road becomes Teaway Ridge Trail 1364 southbound. Continue south

another 1.2 miles to Red Top Mountain, at elevation 5,361 feet. Visit the lookout restored by volunteers and the Forest Service.

There are many loop-hike possibilities in the Teaway. A good one involves approaching Teaway Ridge from the west. Drive North Fork Teaway Road to the end of the pavement. At the junction, keep right on Road 9737. Take the next right on Stafford Creek Road 9703, and park at road's end, elevation 3,200 feet. Doing this loop counterclockwise provides

the best views. Hike Bear Creek Trail 1351, 3.5 miles east to Teaway Ridge. Hike north joining County Line Trail 1226 to Miller Peak. Return to your car on Miller Peak Trail 1379 for an 11.3-mile loop. An additional 0.8 mile at Miller Peak will include its 6,400-foot summit.

Lakes are sparse in the Teaway. Gallagher Head Lake, however, is a precious gem in a delightful setting. This lake is nestled between Esmeralda Peaks and Hawkins Mountain among meadows of flowers. Drive 22 miles on North Fork Teaway Road 9737. Turn left on a short road to Boulder-DeRoux Trail 1392. Gain 1,800 feet in 4.4 miles to beautiful Gallagher Head Lake. Scrambling in the Wenatchee Mountains is in front of you, or kick back and enjoy the scenery.

By taking two cars and leaving them at different trailheads, more hikes become available.

When looking for clearer skies for hiking, consider the Teaway for enjoyable hiking. June is a good month for favorable weather and wildflower viewing.

Get the latest trail conditions from Cle Elum Ranger District by calling (509) 674-4411, or by stopping in for a visit. Their staff is very helpful to trail users. ♦



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There aren't many lakes in the Teaway region, but the few there are gems, including Ingalls Lake and Gallagher Head Lake (pictured above). Hawkins Mountain is in the distance.