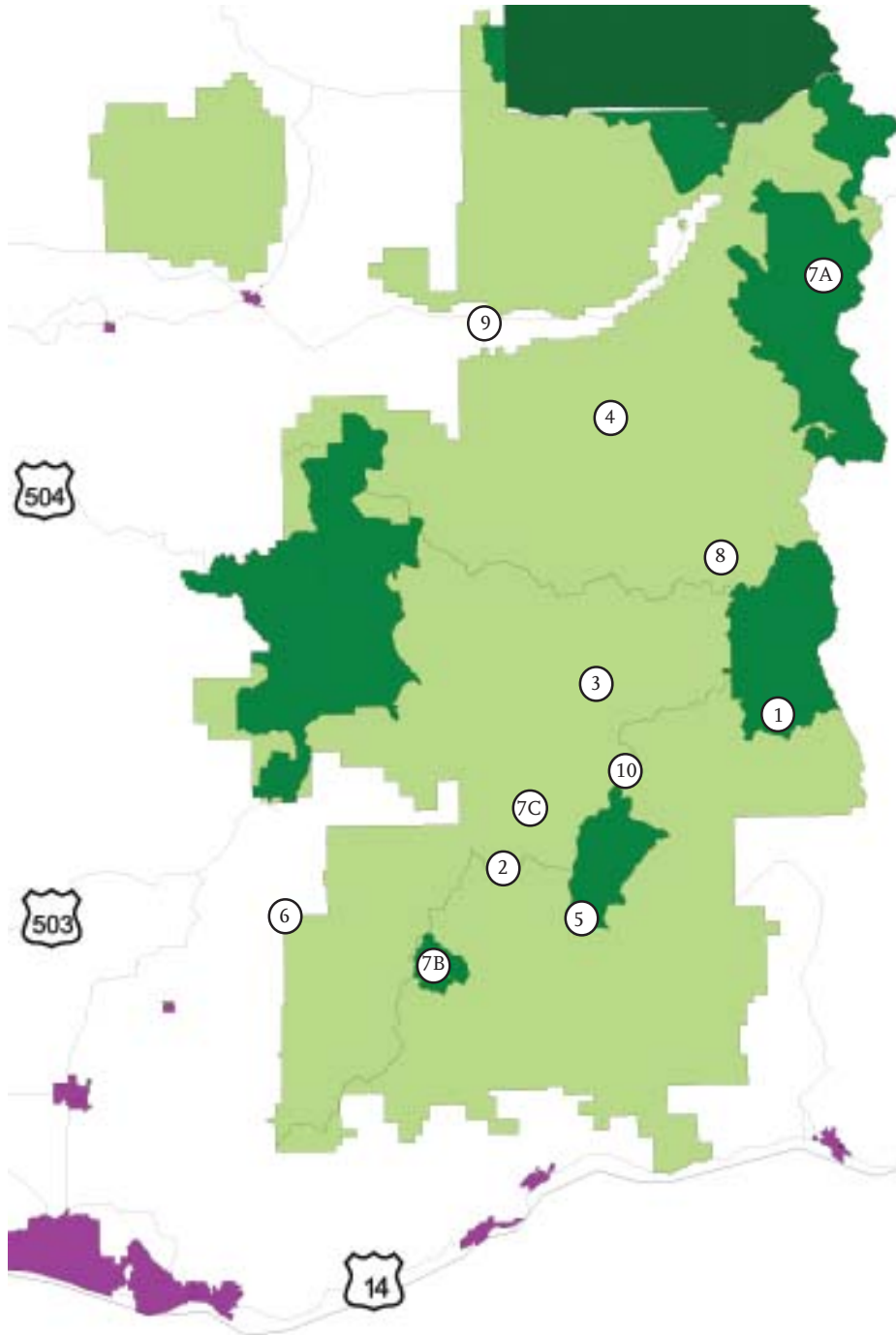


# THE FORGOTTEN FOREST: EXPLORING THE GIFFORD PINCHOT



A Publication of the Washington Trails Association



*Cover Photo by Ira Spring*

## Table of Contents

About Washington Trails Association	Page 4
A Million Acres of outdoor Recreation	Page 5
Before You Hit the Trail	Page 6
Leave No Trace 101	Page 7
<b>The Outings (see map on facing page)</b>	
1. Climbing Mount Adams	Pages 8-9
2. Cross Country Skiing: Oldman Pass	Pages 10-11
3. Horseback Riding: Quartz Creek	Pages 12-13
4. Hiking: Juniper Ridge	Pages 14-15
5. Backpacking the Pacific Crest Trail: Indian Heaven Wilderness	Pages 16-17
6. Mountain Biking: Siouxon Trail	Pages 18-19
7. Wildlife Observation: A. Goat Rocks Wilderness B. Trapper Creek Wilderness C. Lone Butte Wildlife Emphasis Area	Pages 20-21
8. Camping at Takhlakh Lake	Pages 22-23
9. Fly Fishing the Cowlitz River	Pages 24-25
10. Berry Picking in the Sawtooth Berry Fields	Pages 26-27
Acknowledgements	Page 28
How to Join WTA	Page 29-30
Volunteer Trail Maintenance	Page 31
Important Contacts	Page 32

## **About Washington Trails Association**

Washington Trails Association (WTA) is the voice for hikers in Washington state. We advocate protection of hiking trails, take volunteers out to maintain them, and promote hiking as a healthy, fun way to explore Washington.

Ira Spring and Louise Marshall co-founded WTA in 1966 as a response to the lack of a political voice for Washington's hiking community. WTA is now the largest state-based hiker advocacy organization in the country, with over 5,500 members and more than 1,800 volunteers.

### **Maintaining Washington's Trails**

In the past decade, WTA conducted more than 350,000 hours of volunteer maintenance on public lands in Washington. That's an in-kind donation of more than \$3.5 million to parks and forests statewide. Fun trail work parties let volunteers give back to the trails they love.

### **Advocating for Hiking Trails**

WTA protects trails through lobbying and grassroots advocacy on issues that impact hikers, like trail funding and Wilderness protection. We work closely with federal and state policymakers to advance hikers' interests in Forest Planning and new recreation projects. We engage hikers in trail protection through our Endangered Trails Reports and email advocacy network.

### **Getting People Outdoors More**

WTA promotes hiking as a fun, healthy way to explore Washington. Events like TrailsFest ([www.trailsfest.org](http://www.trailsfest.org)) and our Wildland Discovery Hike series offer an enjoyable and safe environment for families and urban dwellers to explore the outdoors. *Washington Trails* magazine is packed with backcountry advocacy opportunities, gear reviews, hiking tips, and feature stories. Our website, [www.wta.org](http://www.wta.org), is a superb, interactive resource for hikers to stay informed on the latest trail conditions and backcountry news.

You can help Washington Trails Association protect and maintain your hiking trails by becoming a member today. Join with the enclosed envelope or online at [www.wta.org](http://www.wta.org).

## **A Million Acres of Outdoor Recreation**

Washington's Gifford Pinchot National Forest, at 108 years, is one of the oldest National Forests in the United States. Over the decades, it has seen enormous change, from heavy logging and road-building, to an increase in recreation visitors with the creation of federally designated Wilderness areas within its boundaries. The Gifford Pinchot offers myriad recreation opportunities for hikers, mountain bikers, equestrians, anglers, and those just seeking a great place to hang out by a lake and watch the sun set over Mount Adams. The Gifford Pinchot is relatively undiscovered, and we hope this guide will give you everything you need to get out and see more. The best way to learn about this Forest is to experience it.

In this guide, you'll find ten different ways to enjoy the Gifford Pinchot and its environs. Hikers can avail themselves of the Indian Heaven Wilderness and the Dark Divide Roadless Area. Mountain bikers can explore the wild country of Siouxon Creek. And anglers can cast for steelhead in the Cowlitz River, one of the biggest and most wild rivers in Southwest Washington. Washingtonians have begun to discover the Gifford Pinchot, and the Forest Service is starting to catch up with them, recognizing that the days of big timber and mineral production have turned to recreation—that the future of the Gifford Pinchot is in preserving its wild landscapes, to the benefit of both muscle-powered visitors and wildlife.

Washington Trails Association (WTA) has been working with the Gifford Pinchot Forest staff for more than 20 years now, starting with their last Forest Plan, and continuing with the more than 3,000 volunteer hours we field every year. We've seen the Forest change, for good and ill, and are committed to protecting what's special about it—its big roadless areas, like the Dark Divide, its wild streams, and its magnificent trails.

So enjoy this guide. Get out there, pick huckleberries, hike some trails, or swim in Takhlakh Lake. And after you do, give WTA a call to find out how you can volunteer for a work party or help to protect the wild vistas of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest.

## Before You Hit the Trail

As always, you should exercise caution when exploring the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. Neither the outing descriptions nor the maps contained in this guide should be considered definitive. Please contact the land management agencies cited in the guide for complete and up-to-date information, trail conditions, road quality, etc. The maps provided are for reference only. The following websites offer great trail condition information:

**Washington Trails Association:** [www.wta.org](http://www.wta.org). Click on Trip Reports

**Gifford Pinchot National Forest:** [www.fs.fed.us/r6/gpnf](http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/gpnf)

**Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument:**  
[www.fs.fed.us/gpnf/mshnvm/](http://www.fs.fed.us/gpnf/mshnvm/)

Before you leave for *any* hike, no matter how short or simple it seems, stock your pack with the Ten Essentials:

**Extra Clothing:** Prepare for the worst possible climatic conditions, including insulating layers and wind and rain protection.

**Extra Food:** Take more food than you think you'll need, so that if you're stuck out overnight, your supplies will see you through.

**Knife:** Good for first aid or cutting wood.

**Firestarter:** Candle or chemical fuel for lighting wet wood.

**First-Aid Kit:** At a minimum, take Band-aids, aspirin and disinfectant.

**Matches:** Keep them dry with a plastic bag or other waterproof container.

**Flashlight:** In case you're unexpectedly on the trail after dark, pack an extra bulb and batteries.

**Map:** Green Trails, TOPO! or USGS Topographical maps are acceptable. The maps in this book are not.

**Compass:** Know how to at least find north.

**Sunglasses:** They will protect your eyes on sunny days or when you encounter snow.

## Leave No Trace 101

In the 1970s, the sport of backpacking boomed. Hikers streamed onto trails all over the country to find quiet and a connection with nature. All that use has had its impacts. People who have been hiking for decades lament the loss of microbe-free mountain water, and government agencies responsible for our wild places have had to limit access to areas like the Enchantments and the Seven Lakes Basin because of environmental damage. For all these reasons and more, it is important to practice leave-no-trace (LNT) principles no matter where you hike.

**Water:** Treat all water with iodine tablets or use a mechanical water purifier. Parasites such as giardia, found in backcountry water worldwide, can cause serious illness. Camp, cook, and wash dishes at least 100 feet from lakes and streams. Only use soap for personal sanitation—when washing dishes, warm water is usually sufficient.

**Campsites:** Take care to camp in areas that have seen previous heavy use. Pristine campsites should stay that way. Lightly used ones should be allowed to rebound. High country plants take decades to grow; don't camp on them. Instead, look for bare rock.

**Wildlife:** Animals are attracted by food smells; prepare meals at least 100 feet from camp, downwind. Either hang all food 12 feet up in a tree, 12 feet from the trunk, or use a bear-resistant container, such as Garcia Machine's product.

**Waste:** Urine is sterile—but salty! In the mountains, pee on rocks rather than heather, to protect plants from salt-loving mountain goats. Bury solid human waste in holes six inches deep. Tampons should be packed out in a double-sealed ziploc bag. Hang the bag as you would hang your food, as the blood smell can attract smaller animals.

**Demeanor:** Except during hunting season, choose earth-toned gear, so that you blend in with your surroundings. Respect others need for quiet; don't make excess noise. When in the wilderness, don't camp too close to other hikers—one reason we go into the woods is to enjoy the expansive aloneness of the outdoors.

## **Climbing: Mount Adams**

**Round Trip:** 7 miles

**Climbing time:** Allow 12 hours or 2 days

**High point:** 12,276 feet

**Elevation Gain:** 6,675

**Best Hiking Time:** Summer

**Maps:** Green Trails #366, Mount Adams West

**Getting There:** South Climb Trailhead is at Cold Springs campground just south of the Mt. Adams Wilderness where South Climb trail No. 183 and Cold Springs trail No. 72 depart

**Whom to Contact:** Mount Adams Ranger District, (509) 394-3400

At 12,276 feet, Mount Adams is the second tallest of Washington's five volcanoes. Even so, hikers with minimal climbing experience can summit Mount Adams via its non-technical South Climb. Climbing from the South, via Lunch Counter is a long and difficult hike, and climbers will encounter snow and exposed slopes, which add to the difficulty. However, hikers will not have to rope in or rappel, so limited technical expertise is all that is necessary.

Since Mount Adams reaches above 12,000 feet, all hikers, no matter how fit, will have to be aware of the signs of hypoxia, or altitude sickness, and be prepared to turn around if those symptoms show up. All South Climbers should carry crampons and an ice axe and know how to self-arrest. Since mountain weather is changeable, even during the warmest months, bring extra clothing, food, and all of the ten essentials. Novice climbers can hook up with organized group climbs, led by both The Mountaineers and The Mazamas.



North ↑

## SOUTH CLIMB

From the Cold Springs campground, head north on trail #183. Cross the Round-the-Mountain trail (#9), and continue until you're just below the Crescent Glacier. Skirt to the left (west) of the Glacier, continue ascending until you reach a large, flat area called the Lunch Counter, which is at about 9,000 feet. Stop here, grab a snack and a lot of water, and then continue your ascent. You'll continue climbing due north on the snowfield just west of the glacier until you reach the false summit of Adams, also known as Piker's Peak (11,700 feet). There's a dip and then a steep climb to the summit, which is about 600 feet higher than the false summit.

Since this climb is not on a trail, keep looking back so you get a sense of what you should be seeing on your way back down. To make sure you're headed the right way, recross Piker's Peak, and bear southeast down the side of the Crescent Glacier.

If you like, you may stay overnight at the top of the Crescent Glacier on the way up. This is recommended, as it will allow your body to acclimate to the altitude.

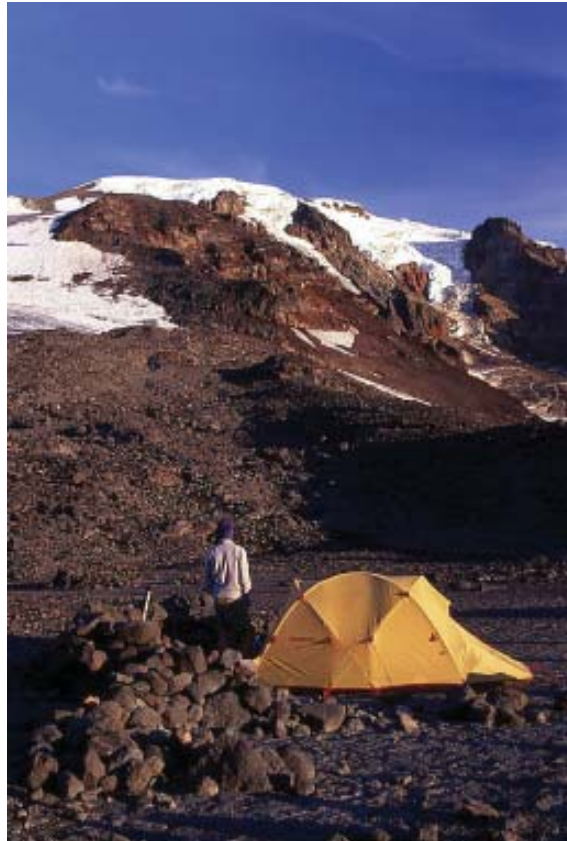


Photo by David Schiefelbein

## **Cross Country Skiing: Oldman Pass**

**Round Trip:** Oldman Loop: 1.2 miles

Scenic Loop: 5.7 miles

**Skiing Time:** Allow 7 hours

**High Point:** 3,040 feet

**Elevation Gain:** 160 feet

**Best Time to Ski:** January through February

**Maps:** Green Trails #365, Lone Butte

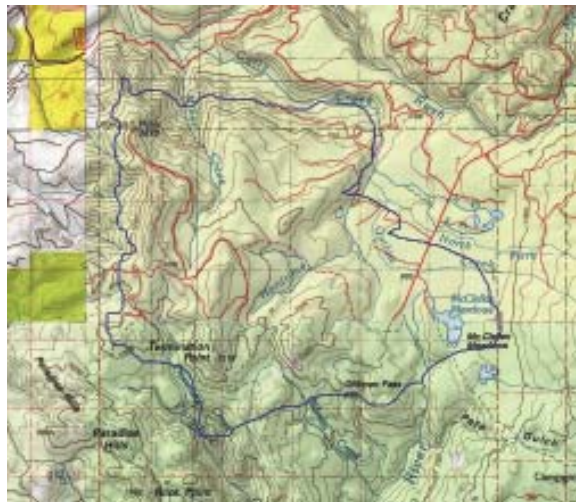
**Getting There:** Head north from Carson on the Wind River Road. Turn left at Forest Road #3055

**Whom to Contact:** Mount Adams Ranger District, (509) 395-3400

The Gifford Pinchot is a great place to get out and ski. Old forest roads, groomed and ungroomed trails, summer hiking trails, and the characteristic buttes and meadows of the Forest make for some of the most scenic and least populated cross country opportunities around. The Wind River Winter Sports Area is a complex of eight Sno-Parks, 4 of which are reserved for non-motorized winter recreationists. The Sno-Parks offer a wide array of great, quiet outings in the woods, combining quiet tours through deep fir forests with opportunities to telemark through old clearcuts.

From this Sno-Park, there are plenty of different tour lengths for backcountry skiers, from easy 1.25 mile road routes, to a challenging 12.5 mile loop on road 65. This loop follows roads and a few summer hiking trails.

Utilizing a network of groomed roads and ungroomed trails, skiers can negotiate the McClellan Meadows Loop. This is where skiers can get their heart rates up with flat tours, and where telemarkers can play in the clearcuts.



North ↑

This is a relatively easy loop, except for a somewhat difficult descent, and one really tough and steep climb.



Skiing here starts from route 30, on route 3050. In no time, the trail intersects with the Snow Foot Trail, #148. In half a mile, the trail intersects with the Scenic Trail. This trail continues through the forest for 1.5 miles to the Road 3054 Sno-Park.

At the upper end of the Sno-Park, off the signed trail, find another trail signed Oldman Pass. In 2.5 miles, you'll top out at Oldman pass, after a steep and steady climb. After crossing the east side of road 30, you'll continue on trail #151. At this point, the trail heads down through a clearcut to the Wind River. Climbing, the trail continues until it turns into a steep scramble to the top of a ridge, at 3,000 feet.

The trail connects with the McClellan Meadows Trail, and ends. Head straight through a few trees and across a creek to the meadows.

Turn left here and head northeast on Road 3053 to the Sno-Park. Turn right at the intersection for a quick .75 miles on the Hardtime trail to the Road 3050 Sno-Park.

## **Horseback riding: Quartz Creek Trail**

**Round Trip:** 21.2 miles

**Riding Time:** Allow 2 days

**High Point:** 4,200 feet

**Elevation Gain:** 2,400 feet

**Best Time to Ride:** July through September

**Maps:** Green Trails #366, Mount Adams West

**Getting there:** From Cougar, take Forest Road 90 west to the Lewis River Horse Camp.

**Whom to Contact:** Mount Adams Ranger District, (509) 395-3400

The Quartz Creek Trail, located on the Southern edge of the Dark Divide Roadless area, is one of the most scenic trails in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. Quartz Creek tumbles through a narrow slot, and the trail tacks up along the hillside, with the creek almost always in view. There are some steep grades--20%--but the trail is in generally good condition.

A little steepness, though, has its rewards. Along the Quartz Creek Trail, you'll find magnificent stands of old-growth cedar and Douglas Fir. The river sounds constantly from its gorge, the trail is rife with wildflowers in the spring, and on a recent visit



North ↑

there, I found numerous saprophytes growing in the dappled cathedral-forest shade. Saprophytes are a family of plants that do not contain chlorophyll, instead drawing nourishment from the ample dead vegetation on an old-growth forest floor. Saprophytes are an indicator of an exceptionally healthy old-growth forest.

Equestrians here can camp along the trail as it travels along the river. The creek can be seen almost everywhere along the trail, sometimes in sounding cataracts, and sometimes as a sheeting waterfall. Quartz Mountain and Garfield Mountain, both stunning peaks, can be seen through the trees along the way. There are three stream crossings, all of which are unbridged at this point. Late in the season, the crossings are safe; but when the creek is high, swallow your pride and turn back. It's deceptively fast water down there.

### **Lewis River Horse Camp**

The Quartz Creek Trail is accessible from the Lewis River Horse Camp, which provides stock-only camping. There are 9 camp sites and parking for 10 trailers and 15 vehicles. Facilities include a toilet, water, and highlines at camps. The Forest Service has designed the camp so that large trailers can easily be turned and parked.

#### **About the Dark Divide**

The Dark Divide Roadless Area is 75,000 acres of unroaded country between Mount Adams and Mount St. Helens. It is a series of high ridges and valleys, wildflower filled meadows and old growth. Of nearly 100 trail miles in the Dark Divide, 90 of them are motorized. For more information about the Dark Divide, contact WTA at (206) 625-1367.



Photo by Susan Saul

## **Hiking: Juniper Ridge; Observation Peak**

**Length:** Roundtrip 23.2 miles

**Hiking Time:** Allow 2-3 days

**High Point:** 4,800 feet

**Elevation gain:** 2,000 feet

**Best Hiking Time:** mid-June through October

**Maps:** Green Trails #333, McCoy Peak

**Getting There:** From Randle, take Forest Road 23 south to Forest Road 28, and turn right. Immediately after crossing the Cispus River, turn left on Forest Road 2801. The trailhead is on the right.

**Whom to Contact:** Cowlitz Valley Ranger District (360) 497-1100

**Warning:** Backpacking Juniper Ridge means hikers must carry all the water they will need. Juniper Ridge is completely dry, except for one seasonal snowfield.

The Juniper Ridge Trail takes hikers through some truly amazing country. Fires in the early part of the last century completely denuded this high ridge of trees, and, combined with volcanic pumice from Mount St. Helens, created near perfect conditions for three of our favorite high country elements--wildflowers, huckleberries, and views, view, views. Hikers on Juniper Ridge start relatively low and gain elevation quickly. The route from there is a long classic ridge ramble, studded with peaks. The first one you'll hit is Juniper Peak, followed rapidly by Sunrise, which can be climbed via a switchbacking route to the summit. After Sunrise, hikers will traverse more up and down, followed by long switchbacking ascents, a brief snowfield traverse, and a some good trail that threads exposed talus slopes. The reward for all this hiking is the mountain goat redoubt of Jumbo Peak.



North ↑

Jumbo is a classic volcanic plug, with long vertical strips of hardened magma rising out of the surrounding pumice. On the south side of Jumbo, look for wild strawberries in July and August, the best dessert any hiker could ask for.

A broad meadow known as Jumbo's Shoulder beckons as one of the finest lunch spots around. On a recent Juniper Ridge hike with some WTA members, we were lucky enough to see a small herd of elk in the little meadow beneath Jumbo's Shoulder. To this day, I'm haunted by the whispery echo of their hooves in heather.

Continuing along this trail takes you down, down, down into the valley of Canyon Creek, lined with occasional old growth. At the junction of the Juniper Ridge and Boundary Trails, you'll encounter Dark Meadow, an excellent area for camping. Dark Meadow has some of the finest beargrass displays around.

This trail is tough. Dusty, rough around the edges, and steep in places, Juniper Ridge is for strong hikers with a yen for high ridge wandering. If you hike Juniper Ridge in the high-use season, you'll soon see the cause of the ruts and dust--motorcycles. This trail has suffered significant damage from heavy motorized use on trails that are not designed for it. In the summer, when the snow melts, water runs down the wheel-loosened soil, washing huge ruts into the trails. When motorcycles hit ruts that are too deep, they make an alternate side trail rather than get their pegs caught in a deep trench. The result is more off-trail use and more damage in the high meadows.



Photo by Karl Forsgaard

## **Backpacking: Pacific Crest Trail Through Indian Heaven Wilderness**

**Round Trip:** 34 miles

**Hiking time:** Allow 3 days

**High Point:** 5,000 feet

**Elevation gain:** 1,600 feet

**Best Hiking Time:** July through October

**Maps:** Green Trails #365, Lone Butte and #397, Wind River

**Getting There:** The Indian Heaven Wilderness is located in the south central portion of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, just north of the Big Lava Bed. It can be accessed by Forest Roads 24, 6048, and 420. The Cultus Creek Campground, elevation 3988 feet, can be reached from Trout Lake on road No.24

**Whom to Contact:** Mount Adams Ranger District, (509) 395-3400

Some of the most scenic sections of the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) pass through Washington. Through the North Cascades and the Glacier Peak Wilderness, hikers and backpackers wind their way through high granite, wildflower meadows, and lakes. But to associate the PCT in Washington with just the North Cascades is to miss several wonderful sections south of I-90. The Indian Heaven Wilderness stretch passes by lakes, across huckleberry fields, and through pristine high country meadows.

The hike starts outside the Wilderness, at Big Lava Beds, rolling through low hills and forest. After entering the Wilderness, hikers start climbing, gently at first, and then steeper as you summit Berry Mountain, 5,000 feet. Linger in the meadows on the summit ridge of this peak for a water break or lunch.



North ↑

The next stop is Blue Lake, after which hikers bear right on the PCT, and take in several more peaks and lakes, including East Crater (a volcanic feature) and Junction Lake. Huge meadows follow, and are great places to view wildlife, or just sit, take a break, and perhaps look for huckleberries.

Your next lake is Bear, followed by deep forest glades, culminating in the flanks of Bird Mountain. From here, the trail takes on a more alpine character, with open meadows, scree and talus, and views opening up on the north side of Bird Mountain. On a good day, the Goat Rocks, Mount Adams, and Mount Rainier are visible.

After Wood Lake, the trail splits. Hikers can either summit Sawtooth Mountain, which entails a steep up followed by a steep down, or follow the western flank of the mountain, which is relatively level. A scant 1.4 miles more takes you to the northern terminus of the trail, at the Surprise Lakes campground.



Photo by Dan Nelson

### **Wilderness**

Wilderness is the strongest protection that public lands can have. When Congress designates an area Wilderness, it permanently places that area off limits to mining, logging, or any kind of permanent human development. The only kind of recreation allowed in Wilderness is non-motorized or mechanized, which means only hikers and stock. And since Wilderness designation requires an act of Congress, it can only be undone by the same means, which is an extremely long and difficult process—which means that Wilderness is a very durable form of protection.

## **Mountain Biking: Siouxon Trail**

**Roundtrip:** 24 miles

**Riding Time:** 6 hours

**High Point:** 3400 feet

**Elevation Gain:** 2200 feet

**Best Riding Time:** June through November

**Maps:** Green Trails #364, Mount St. Helens

**Getting There:** From Mount St. Helens Headquarters, follow Forest Road 54 east to Forest Road 57. Turn left at 57 and left again at Forest Road 5701. The trailhead will be on your right.

**Whom to Contact:** Mount Adams Ranger District, (509) 395-3400

The Siouxon Trail offers great twisting singletrack with lots of interesting features, including elegant Horseshoe Falls. The entry point for this trail is roughly one mile down Road 5701. There is another entry point three miles further. Both access points have parking areas.

The trail heads down to West Creek, and from there tacks alongside Siouxon Creek upstream. After one mile, riders will hit an intersection with the Horseshoe Ridge Trail. Continue upstream—ahead, there is an intersection with trail #156 where the Siouxon and Wildcat Creek flow together. The trail intersects trail #140 again, and continues on to trail #130A. At this point, the trail runs alongside Siouxon Creek, reaching Calamity Creek in about 3 miles. Calamity Creek runs over the trail at a width of about 20 feet. Watch out for slippery, wet rocks.

The final trail section—about 3 miles—is steep, with tight switchbacks. After the 1,900 foot elevation gain, the trail ends at



North ↑  
18

Forest Road 58. Riders starting at Road 58 should exercise caution, as the downhill can be dangerous on a trail frequented by equestrians and hikers.

There are any number of interesting features on this trail—Hickman’s Cabin, which is a ruin now, was a camp for firefighters who battled fires which raged in the wake of the Yacolt Burn, which swept through the area in 1902.

Several waterfalls cascade into Siouxon Creek, including lovely Horseshoe Falls. The Creek has numerous pools and eddies tinted deep green. This is a classic Gifford Pinchot Forest, replete with mosses, Oregon oxalis, and fern thickets.

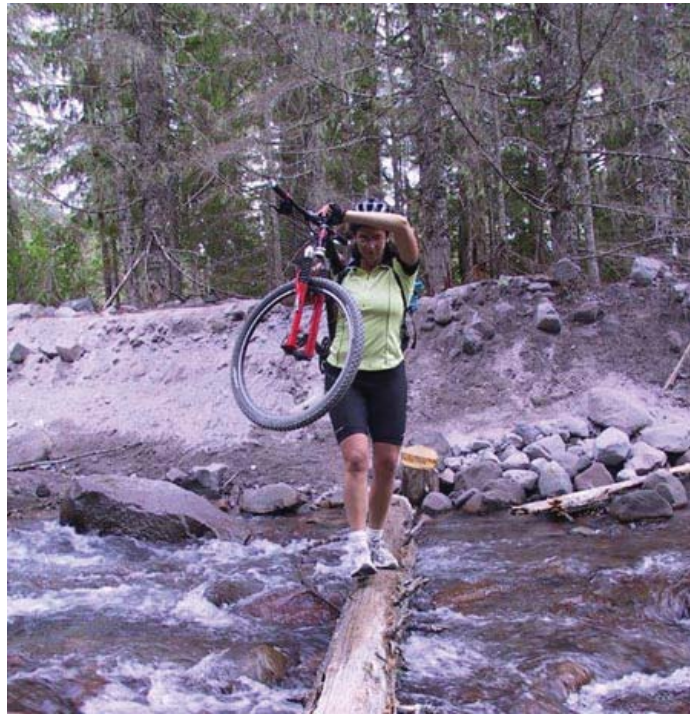


Photo by Scott Marlow

## Wildlife Viewing in the Gifford Pinchot

### Goat Rocks Wilderness

Cowlitz Valley Ranger District: (360) 497-1100

A 105,600-acre alpine wonderland, the Goat Rocks are the remnants of a volcano, extinct for approximately 2 million years. The Goat Rocks earned their name from the herds of mountain goats, abundantly found in the area. This pristine wilderness boasts of beautiful views of major mountains and broad green meadows.

Wildlife opportunities in the Goat Rocks are copious. From catching a glimpse of Bighorn Sheep along Hawkeye to spotting hoary marmots and pikas closer to Goat Lake, this area is a wildlife haven.

Moving along the Packwood Lake Trail, you have breathtaking views of alpine meadows dotted with small lakes and even smaller ponds (albeit infested with mosquitoes during the summer months). You can come across pikas and marmots above timberline, while the more reserved deer and elk have been spotted lower down. Mountain goats frequently make an appearance in the higher country, especially along Upper Lake Creek, which feeds Packwood Lake at the northwest boundary, and in Nannie Basin in the southern portion of the area.



Photo by Alan Bauer

## Lone Butte Wildlife Emphasis Area

Mount Adams Ranger District: (509) 395-3400

One of the most remarkable sections of the Gifford Pinchot is the 12,450-acre Lone Butte Wildlife Emphasis Area (LBWEA).

This unique area is best explored on foot, bicycle or on horseback. Lone Butte, Cayuse, and Skookum Meadows are rich communities offering countless chances to view elk, deer, beaver, common snipe, warblers, and turtles. Roads leading into the area are closed to motorized vehicles, reducing stress on wildlife and creating unique recreational opportunities. Bring binoculars, field guides, food and water, and enjoy your experience. Snowmobiles are permitted December 1 through April 16.

## Trapper Creek Wilderness

Mount Adams Ranger District: (509) 395-3400

Trapper Creek Wilderness consists of 6,050 acres of diverse habitat located in the central portion of the Wind River Ranger District in the southern Cascades of Washington. Sparkling cascading streams and waterfalls are plentiful throughout the steep slopes at the lower elevations, while huckleberry fields occur in the higher elevations near Observation Peak.

Trapper Creek Falls viewpoint offers a view of the breathtaking 100-foot cascade.

Spotted owls inhabit the Wilderness as well as barred owls, pileated woodpeckers and northern goshawks.



Photo by Alan Bauer

## **Car Camping: Takhlakh Lake Campground**

**Elevation:** 4,416 feet

**Best Camping Time:** Summer (closed in winter)

**Getting There:** From Randle, take State Highway 131 for 1 mile, stay left at Y on Forest Road 23 all the way to the lake, and Forest Road 2329. At least 4 miles of gravel Road to campground.

**Dump Station:** No

**Maximum vehicle length:** 22 feet

**Water:** Yes

**Toilet facilities:** Yes

**Picnic Area:** Picnic tables available for registered campers

**Campfire availability:** Yes

**Whom to Contact:** Cowlitz Valley Ranger Station, (360) 497-1100

Takhlakh Lake is one of the most scenic campgrounds in the state. You've probably seen the view from the lake in any number of calendars—Mount Adams rises in the near distance—only 5 miles as the crow flies—and its reflection in the lake at sunrise and sunset is not to be missed.

Located on the northwest flanks of Mount Adams, Takhlakh Lake provides any number of great activities for families. Fishing, kayaking and canoeing, having a cookout, or just sitting and watching the alpenglow overtake Adams' snowfields are wonderful ways to spend the day at this camp. Some trails leave from Takhlakh, but if you're looking for an activity on a lazy summer day, the short and easy Takhlakh Lake Loop



North ↑

(described below) is the perfect way to spend the afternoon.

There are a few campsites right by the lake, but the vast majority are in the trees a little bit. Still, each one is somewhat unique and relatively secluded. If you're lucky enough to score one of the lakeshore sites, you'll have much more solitude. Fees for both overnight camping and day use are charged at Takhlakh Lake. Since this facility is run by concessionaires, they do not accept the Northwest Forest Pass.

### **Takhlakh Lake Loop Trail**

This is a wide, easy hike that circumnavigates the shore of Takhlakh Lake. If you like, the loop connects with another hike through Takh Takh meadows, so you can create an easy figure 8 loop that takes you about 2.5 miles.

The trail starts in thick patches of huckleberry and beargrass, continues on through forest, along the shore of the lake, and to a wetland with a series of boardwalks built for drainage. At this point, hikers will find the junction to the Takh Takh Meadow Loop, and can increase the length of their hike by doing this 1 mile meadow hike.

After this sidetrip, the loop follows the lakeshore to the parking area.

This side of the lake has the best views; stop here for a few photos before getting in your car, or heading back to camp.



Photo by Doug Diekema

## **Fly Fishing: Cowlitz River**

### **Driving Directions:**

Cowlitz River parallels Hwy 12 East of Randle WA

**Fish Species:** Rainbow, Cutthroat, Small Mouth Bass, Whitefish, Brown Trout, Coho Salmon

**Fishing Methods:** Fly, Spin, Bait

**Angling Season:** Open year-round above Lake Scanewa

**Map:** Green Trails Randle #301 and Packwood #302

**Comments:** most of the river valley is private land so the best access is at road crossings.

**Whom to Contact:** Cowlitz Valley Ranger District, (360) 497-1100

The Cowlitz River in the northern portion of the Gifford Pinchot is a virtual paradise for anglers. Famous for salmon and steelhead fishing, this river presents anglers the opportunity to fly fish all year round, with its large runs containing 10,000 summer fish and up to 20,000 winter fish. Though the warm bright summers may be preferred to the gloomy Washington winters, the Cowlitz plays host to large quantities of coho salmon arriving from October through December. It also has the distinction of being the state's largest producer of hatchery steelhead.

There are numerous eddies, side-channels, and creeks that add to the river's complexity. Small channels on this river are often as large as some other smaller Northwest rivers. These features create superb holding

water for a wide variety of fish species.

Long, gently sloping gravel bars make for ideal fly fishing



North ↑

opportunities with both single and double handed rods. The 30-mile course through the Gifford Pinchot offers the possibility of hooking large fish (average of 15 pounds), and Chinook as large as 50 pounds have been caught.

One of the unique features of the Cowlitz is its abundant wildlife, both below as well as above water. The river is endowed with various species of fish, and river otters, nesting bald eagles, Cooper's Hawks, peregrine falcons, osprey, great blue herons, white tail deer, canada geese and mergansers are all found in the vicinity. The majestic Mount Rainier and Mount St. Helens rise tall in the distance, as you spend a few peaceful hours on this scenic river with your favorite fishing rod.



Photo by Susan Saul

## **Huckleberry Picking: Sawtooth Berry Fields**

**Round Trip:** Short walk from car

**Riding Time:** Allow 1 day for picking

**Elevation:** 4000 feet

**Best Time to pick:** mid – August to mid – September

**Maps:** Green Trails #365, Lone Butte and #366, Mount Adams West

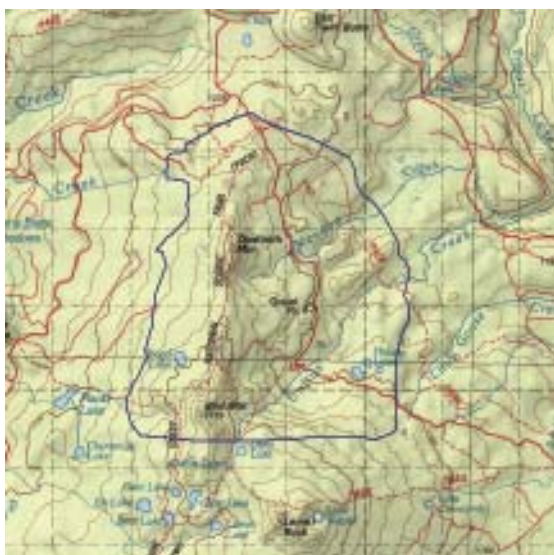
**Getting there:** From Carson, take the Wind River Highway to Forest Road 30. Turn right at Forest Road 580 and drive to the end.

**Whom to Contact:** Mount Adams Ranger District, (509) 395-3400

Whoever included gluttony in one of the seven deadly sins forgot the huckleberry exemption. These deep purple, rich berries are related to the common blueberry, but only in the sense that fine wine is related to grape juice. Huckleberries, while generally smaller and less abundant on the bush, possess a rich, deep, intense flavor that blueberries cannot match. Add to that the antioxidant qualities of huckleberries, and there's no reason to stay away from them.

Some of the best huckleberry picking in Washington is in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. Several of the outings that we describe in this guide afford great opportunities to fill up on the sweet fruit. But by far, the best place to pick in the Forest is the Sawtooth Berry Fields.

The fields can be found just north of the Indian Heaven Wilderness on the Pacific Crest Trail. After leaving Indian Heaven Wilderness, the trail dips down into the fields. Here, the fields sprawl for acres. The berries are plump, deep purple, and sweet to the taste. Hikers who elect to traverse Indian Heaven via the



North ↑

PCT (see outing #5) can continue for a short hike into the fields for a huckleberry fest before the return trip, and dayhikers can make a short outing on the PCT to fill their water bottles with purple gold.

The berry fields are heavily used by commercial berry pickers; give them a wide berth. Sections of the berry fields are open only to the Cowlitz tribe, by handshake agreement with between the Cowlitz and the Forest. Respect those historic agreements. These fields have been picked for thousands of years by the tribe. The Cowlitz cultivated these fields, using burns, to clear trees and encourage huckleberry growth.

The Sawtooth Berry Fields are in an area of the Forest that has been the site of logging and road building, but still contains enough intact acres that, given restoration work, it could function as a safe haven for wildlife passing between large protected cores of land. These wildlife corridors are essential to long term habitat for threatened and endangered species. Bears are common here, as they love to fatten up on ripe huckleberries.

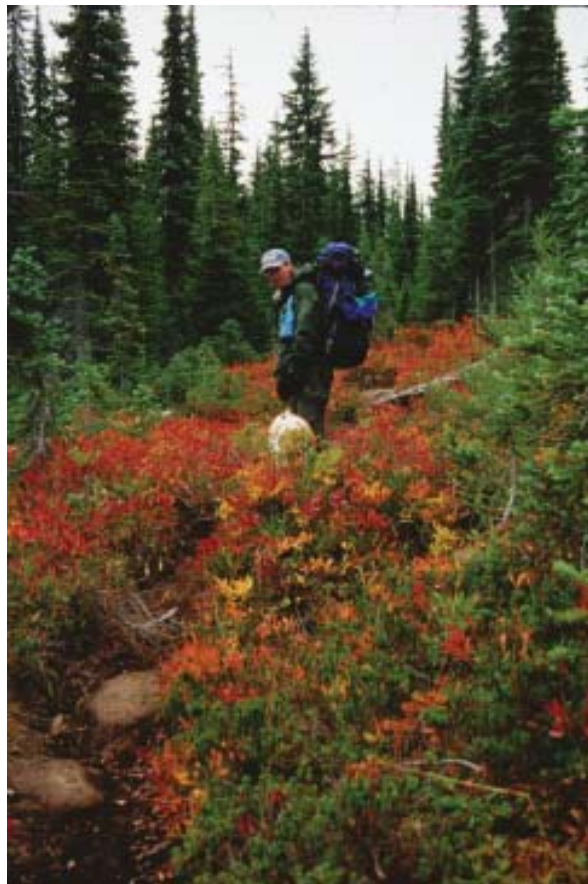


Photo by Dan Nelson

## Acknowledgements

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TOPO! maps were created using National Geographic TOPO! Washington State Series with 3D Shaded Relief. Support WTA by purchasing TOPO! on our website.

Additional copies of this guide are available online at [www.wta.org](http://www.wta.org). Thanks to Adobe for donating Adobe PageMaker and Acrobat Distiller to make that possible.

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Washington Trails Association members play a vital role in preserving our state's wealth of trails by supporting our volunteer program, legislative outreach, and informative publications. Please consider becoming a member today. If you love to hike, you stand to benefit from WTA's work:

**Results On the Ground:** Each year, WTA recruits and trains over

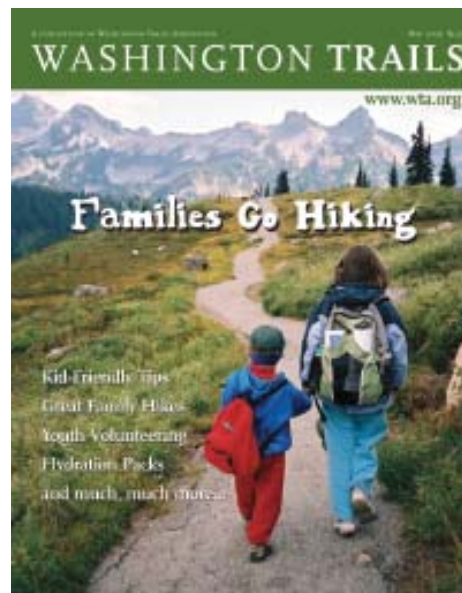
1800 volunteers to maintain hundreds of trail miles throughout Washington, both in the backcountry and in parks closer to home.



Photo courtesy of Washington Trails Association

**A Great Hiking Magazine:**

We publish *Washington Trails* ten times a year and deliver it straight to your mailbox. In every issue, you'll find the latest outdoor recreation news, helpful backpacking advice, and trip reports from across Washington.



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Photo by David Schiefelbein

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**To join, use the envelope provided with this guide, or join online at [www.wta.org](http://www.wta.org).**

## Our Volunteer Trail Maintenance Program

Washington Trails Association has an extensive volunteer trail maintenance program.

Statewide, we do about 67,000 hours of volunteer work every year. Over the years we've worked on trails in places like Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument, and at Bird Creek



Meadows in the Yakama Indian Reservation, which is contiguous with the Gifford Pinchot and the Mount Adams Wilderness. We work in other areas of southwest Washington as well, including on State Parks land, at Beacon Rock State Park.



In the upcoming months, we will continue to work at Bird Creek Meadows and Beacon Rock. We post our work parties on our website—[www.wta.org](http://www.wta.org)—as they're scheduled, and we encourage you to visit and join one. Volunteer trail maintenance is a fun way to give back to the wild places you love.

### The Three Rules of Trail Maintenance

1. Safety first.
2. Have fun.
3. Get a little work done if you can.

We get a lot of great work done on the Forest. Come join us and find out for yourself. **Sign up for a work party at [www.wta.org](http://www.wta.org).**

## **Important Contacts**

After your outing, you might want to contact the following people, and let them know why this area is so special to you. Legislators and National Forest Service staff enjoy hearing from the public, especially when they're doing a good job.

### **Gifford Pinchot National Forest**

Forest Headquarters  
10600 NE 51st Circle  
Vancouver, WA 98682  
(360) 891-5000

Cowlitz Valley Ranger District  
10024 US Highway 122  
PO Box 670  
Randle, WA 98377  
Phone: (360) 497-1100

Mount Adams Ranger District  
2455 Highway 141  
Trout Lake, WA 98650  
Phone: (509) 395-3400

### **Offices of Congressman Brian Baird (D-3)**

Washington, DC Office:  
US House of Representatives  
1421 LHOB  
750 Anderson Street,  
Washington, DC 20515  
Phone: (202) 225-3536  
Fax: (202) 225-3478

Vancouver Office:  
O.O. Howard House, Suite B  
Vancouver, WA 98661  
Phone: (360) 695-6292  
Fax: (360) 695-6197

### **Office of Senator Patty Murray**

173 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
Phone: (202) 224-2621  
Fax: (202) 224-0238

### **Office of Senator Maria Cantwell**

717 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
Phone: (202) 224-3441  
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