Summer Plans? Sign Up for Hike-a-Thon!

# Washington TRAILS

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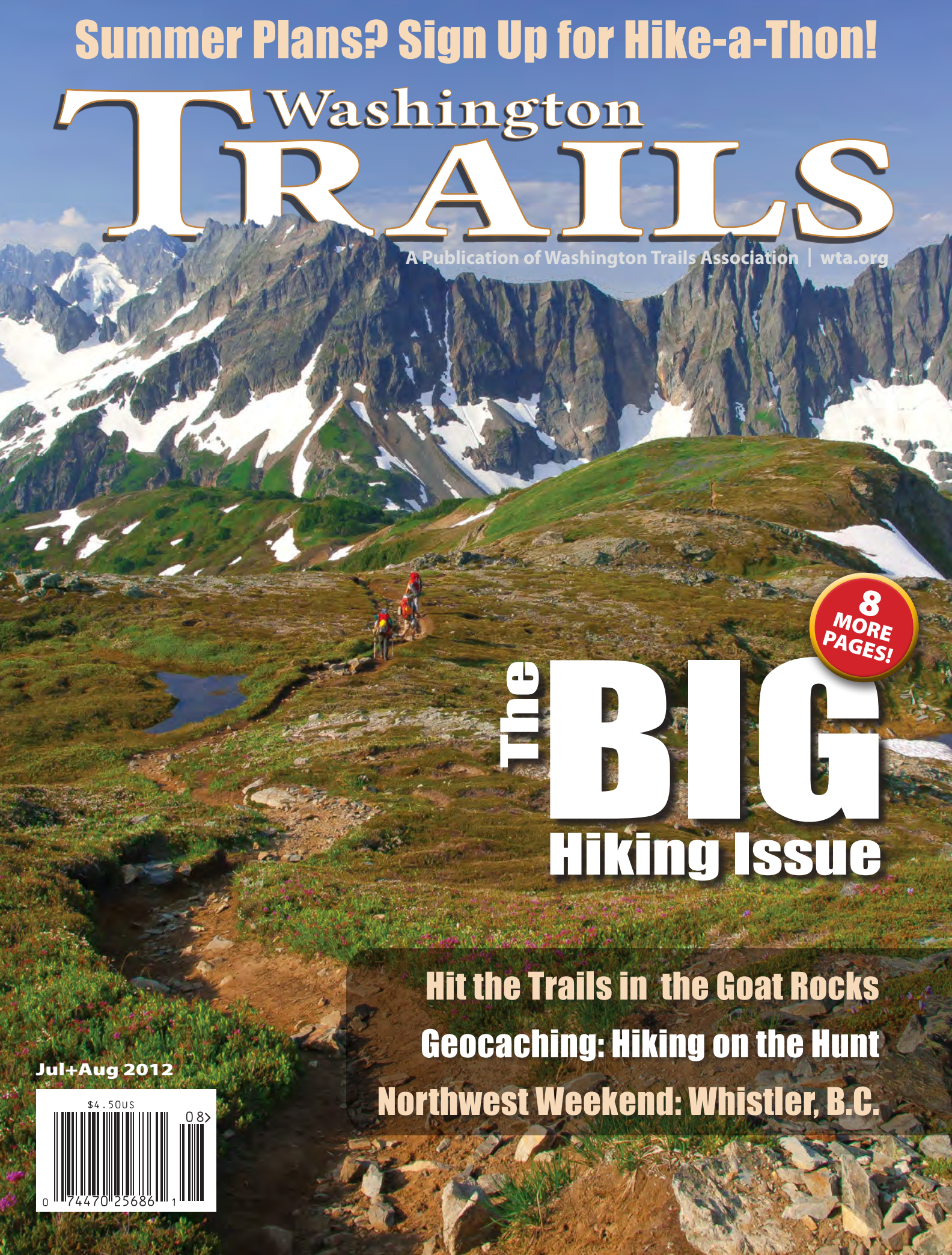

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## The BIG Hiking Issue

Hit the Trails in the Goat Rocks

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**The only way to get your HIke-a-Thon 2012 shirt is to sign up!**


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**Register today at wta.org/hikeathon**

# Washington TRAILS

**Staff Picks:** What's your favorite trail snack?

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# WTA Highlights »

### A few things we wanted to share

**TOP:** WTA staff and board accept the Forterra award for Community Service at the annual Forterra Conservation Awards breakfast, in recognition of WTA's volunteer trail maintenance program.

**BOTTOM:** Participants at WTA's second annual Hike the State event listen to WTA Executive Director Karen Daubert speak about hiking in the Mazamas.


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**Karen Daubert**
Executive Director
karen@wta.org

# Looking Ahead

I was recently hiking the Umtanum Falls Trail. I had on my white T-shirt—the one with "WTA Volunteer" all over it—when I ran into Mike and Kevin. It was Kevin's first hike ever, and he proudly demonstrated his CamelBak backpack for me. Mike shared how he had wanted to find the perfect place for his young son's much-anticipated adventure and found this one on WTA's website. While munching away on snacks, we shared stories of first hikes, great trails, volunteering and the importance of being outside.

As I moved along, leaving Mike and Kevin to continue enjoying their special day together, I was reminded of similar conversations I have enjoyed with hikers and WTA members over the past several months. I was also reminded of the importance of the months ahead.

This fall, WTA will have completed its first new strategic plan in over five years—a plan that will lay out a clear vision of growth for the years ahead. Believing wholeheartedly in the importance of a visionary plan that sets the stage for the next few years, we have engaged in major planning efforts, all with the intent of building on WTA's strong traditions, programs and member needs.

**Focus on Volunteer Work**

With more than 9,000 miles of trails, and limited times of the year when many are accessible, how do we decide where best to invest our time? When the majority of our members and volunteers live in the South Puget basin, what percentage of our work should be focused there? And what about the spectacular Colville, Gifford Pinchot, Columbia River Gorge and Olympics?

**Engaging Youth**

With a youth program focused on trail work, what more can WTA do to encourage and involve young people? As the environmental leaders of the future, should we expand the program to include educational opportunities for youth, teachers and parents?

**What to Advocate**

When asked to review forest-wide or region-wide projects, should we think about the entire environmental impact or should we focus on specific impacts on specific trails? And what impending issues are we ready to be for or against?

These are all important questions, and I look forward to many hearty discussions. The first step in the process was our June member survey, and I thank you for the overwhelming response. We are now analyzing data from this survey as well as from our trail, communications, advocacy and development teams. The next steps will be completing interviews with key partners and stakeholders, then making decisions regarding critical next steps based on this accumulated data. And before the holidays, we'll have a draft plan of WTA's future action.

It's not too late to share your own thoughts. Email me, call me, flag me down on the trail during Hike-a-Thon! And in the meantime, let my photo of Kevin and Mike be a happy reminder of the pure joy that comes from being outdoors and exploring nature together.

**Mike and Kevin Moore hiking on the Umtanum Falls Trail**

Karen E. Daubert

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.

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

WASHINGTON TRAILS ASSOCIATION

# EDITOR'S CHOICE


## Smaller, Lighter, Faster

When it comes to loading up your pack and heading out for the weekend, every little thing you stuff in there—and how much it weighs—adds up quickly. A well-equipped pack can contain an almost equal amount of contents for a weeklong trek or a single overnight—barring, of course, food, and maybe an extra pair of socks and underwear.

Thankfully, modern gear companies take this into consideration, helping us to maximize our wilderness enjoyment by minimizing the load we carry out there. As we head into the backpacking season, I've had the opportunity to sample a few items of note that are ideal for just this kind of weight- and space-saving solution.

A backpacking staple for decades, Seattle-based Therm-a-Rest has outdone themselves with the **NeoAir XLite** backcountry mattress (1). Rolled, this 3-season sleeping pad is about the same size as your 1-liter water bottle and weighs in at a scant twelve ounces (reg. size). Inflated, it provides a comfortable 2.5-inch-thick pad that captures and reflects heat back to you, helping to keep you warm at night.

I've been carrying the same big, clunky water filter for years. No more, with the new **SteriPEN Freedom** (2). This ridiculously compact water purifier kills up to 99.9% of harmful water-borne bacteria (the same as filters and iodine) using germicidal UV light. The 2.6-ounce rechargeable Freedom can provide up to 40 uses (20 liters) per charge—perfect for fast weekend escapes.

The MSR Pocket Rocket has been a favorite of mine for quick and easy cooking—until now. Ring in the **MSR MicroRocket** (3)—smaller and lighter, but with the same amazing cooking performance as its now "bigger" brother. This 2.6-ounce powerhouse canister stove (with its own Piezo igniter) packs up small enough to fit into the tightest crevice of your pack, while keeping load weight to a minimum.

Lighten your own pack load this summer with any one of these trail-tested performers.

**Eli Boschetto**
Editor
editor@wta.org

# Enjoy the View

I'm a sucker for big views. To me, the ultimate hiking payoff is reaching a summit or ridge with bird's eye views of expansive meadows, gaping valleys, crystalline lakes and ragged, snowy peaks stretching to the horizon.

One of my favorite views is from the south rim of Mount St. Helens. The hike—if you can call it that—up Monitor Ridge was a beast! Picking out the best path up two miles of jumbled lava rock, followed by the slog up the final steep, ashy slope was exhausting. But in reaching that 8,300-foot perch above the steaming crater below, the entirety of Washington's—and some of Oregon's—South Cascades were all laid out before me. As the wind howled and clouds raced by, the glacier-capped peaks of Mounts Hood, Jefferson, Adams and Rainier stood at attention, as well as the jagged spires of the Goat Rocks and everything else for more than 100 miles in every direction. The struggle of the climb evaporated and I just stood in awe.

For this issue of *Washington Trails*, I went to our team of regional hiking pros and asked them to give me their recommendations for just that—the best hikes for those amazing views that leave you giddy with both achievement and elevation. We covered the entire state, from the remote Kettle Crest in the northeast corner, all the way to the deep valleys and high ridges of the Olympic Peninsula. In between, a selection of trails in the North, Central and South Cascades that will surely knock your Thorlos right off. And wanting even more, we even ventured up into British Columbia's Coast Mountains for some truly spectacular alpine experiences.

We added eight more pages to this issue so we could cram in more hikes and more stunning photos to encourage you to get out and find your own favorite view. I'm looking forward to adding a few new favorites to my own list, including one of the Lyman Lakes from Cloudy Pass (pg. 51). So grab your boots and your packs and have a fantastic summer on Washington's trails. And don't forget—enjoy the view!

Cheers ~

## You Choose in *WT*'s Reader's Choice

*Washington Trails* is wrapping up the year with its first Reader's Choice issue. We want to hear from you—your favorite views, the best campsites, the most wildflowers, the tastiest post-hike grub, and all of your selections for why Washington is the best place for hiking. This will also help us determine what you want to see in *Washington Trails*' pages next year. Visit **wta.org/readerschoice** to take our survey and vote for your trail favorites—then watch for the results in the Nov+Dec issue later this year!

## Meet Our Members!

### Nick Fieldman

Senioritis. What high school senior doesn't suffer from this dreaded affliction? Not the seniors at Seattle Academy, that's who! As part of his senior project, Nick Fieldman joined the WTA staff as our second Seattle Academy intern for the months of April and May.

Nick's first hiking experience on Hurricane Ridge and around Olympic National Park sparked his interest in hiking, but his passion for the outdoors stems from his exploration of the national parks of the American Southwest such as Arches, Canyonlands and Zion in Utah.

When last year's Seattle Academy intern learned of Nick's enjoyment of the outdoors, he recommended WTA for Nick's senior project. Nick spent his volunteer time assisting the membership program, helping to process membership gifts and thanking all the new members who joined during the Spring Member Drive—including himself! He also helped create new outreach materials and went on his very first—and hopefully not last—WTA trail work party.

Come fall, Nick will be off to college in Vancouver, British Columbia. We wish Nick the best of luck and thank him for all his help this spring!

*— Kara Chin*

# You Said

In response to last issue's commentary on Scotch broom and the plight of Washington's meadows, we received this encouraging letter from member Paul Allen.

I noted Linda Frizzell's story on Scotch broom and the loss of meadows (*Washington Trails*, May-June 2012) with some interest. I just want to point out that all is not lost in the battle with broom. To borrow from George Lucas, a ragtag band of rebels in south Puget Sound is unbowed and undefeated in the broom wars. The glacial outwash prairies south of Olympia have mostly succumbed to development or agriculture, but some sizable chunks remain. The Nature Conservancy started working with Fort Lewis, DNR, Fish and Wildlife and Thurston County to restore some of these chunks about 15 years ago. The two I'm most familiar with are Mima Mounds Natural Area (DNR) and Thurston County's Glacial Heritage Site.

Glacial Heritage is 1,100 acres of mostly undeveloped mounded prairie. Historically, natives burned the prairie in order to keep out Douglas-firs and encourage food plants such as camas. Fifteen years ago, Glacial was an old-growth Scotch broom forest being invaded by conifers. Old-timers tell stories of the broom arching over the gravel roads, blocking out the sun. Over the years, the broom has been attacked with tractor-mounted mowers, gas-powered brush cutters, herbicides, burning, manual pulling and cursing. While the Conservancy has provided the heavy equipment and expertise, most of the labor has been by volunteers—the aforementioned ragtag band. People are at one spot or another on the South Sound prairies every Tuesday and every second Saturday—rain, sleet or shine, all year-round.

Today, the Glacial Heritage Site and Mima Mounds are mostly broom-free. Restoration at Glacial has progressed to the point that endangered Taylor's checkerspot butterfly larvae were released there a couple of months ago. Our annual Prairie Appreciation Day event happened on May 12, and it made my heart soar to have more than 1,000 people come out and see what can be done through sheer dogged determination over time. Soon it will be a sea of blue camas, with yellow and blue violas, strawberries, chocolate lilies, shooting star, red paintbrush, endangered golden paintbrush, lupine, larkspur, trillium and on and on.

Yes, much has been lost. But we, the volunteers, the Friends of Puget Prairies, the Center for Natural Lands Management, The Nature Conservancy, and all our other partners refuse to give more ground. Bestride a flowered mound, in rain gear and boots, with a weed wrench held high and mud on our knees, we say to the broom, "You shall not pass!"

*— Paul Allen*

Visit us online at **wta.org**. Check trip reports, discuss trail issues, see recent photos and keep up with the Signpost Blog. For contributor information, email **editor@wta.org**.

Share your comments with us by sending an email to **editor@wta.org**.
Snail-mail to WTA, 705 Second Ave., Suite 300, Seattle, WA 98104; or call (206) 625-1367

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# Q&A

With more than 2,000 Washington high points under her pack straps, Fay Pullen is the peakbagger you've probably never heard of. Recently, she came in to chat with WTA's Karen Daubert and Eli Boschetto.

**When did you start peakbagging in Washington's Cascades?**

I moved to Washington when I was twenty-one. That was in 1963. I took my first climbing course in 1964. Most of that time I didn't care about lists or achievements. I just wanted to climb peaks. I started with the known peaks—Rainier, Baker. Then, in 2003, I was introduced to the 100 Highest group—which I hadn't even known existed. This opened up a whole new world to me. Between 1964 and 2003 I had climbed 50 of those; between 2003 and 2007 I climbed the other 50. But I wasn't done—I wanted more.

**With the 100 Highest under your belt, what came next?**

I next moved on to the 200 Highest, working my way down in elevation. I have nine more to go, and I'm hoping to complete that list this year. I'm really looking forward to getting back to the Ptarmigan Traverse and checking off Spire and Gunsight; the ones I'm most concerned about are Phantom and Crooked Thumb in the Northern Picketts. I'll need help with those.

**Nearly done with the 200 Highest—and over 2,000 total—what have been some of the most difficult peaks to claim?**

Lincoln, Middle Index and South Hozomeen were exceptionally challenging. They were very steep, with lots of exposure and no easy retreat if something went wrong. Through my years of experience, though, I know how to find good routes when I'm going solo, or how to pick good companions for routes that are more difficult.

**What's the closest you've come to danger on any of your climbs?**

I had trouble on Red Ledge above Kool-Aid Lake. I went soloing early in the season, hoping to get a good crossing of the Middle Cascade Glacier and bag Formidable. The crossing in was no problem, but on the way back I was tired and the snow had softened. Where the ledge is bisected by a gully, I kicked a step that suddenly broke under me. I found myself flying down the gully, thinking, "So this is how it ends." As luck would have it, I came to an abrupt stop in the snow where the gully curved—right before plummeting over a 200-foot rock face. I managed to hold onto my pack, ice axe and other gear, so was able to build an anchor and rappel down to safer ground.

Fay Pullen perched atop 8,815-foot Forbidden Peak on August 18, 2006. Mount Buckner is in the background. This was climb number 100 on Fay's Top-200 List, and completed the Bulger 100 Highest List.

Photo by Beth Blattenberger

**Venturing out on many solo outings, do you carry a personal locator or other emergency device?**

Obviously, none of the technical devices available now were available when I started climbing years ago. Now when I go out, I carry a SPOT Satellite Communicator and a smartphone. Thankfully (knocking wood), I've never had to use the SPOT.

**Now that you're looking at the completion of the 200 Highest this year, will there be a celebration?**

Oh, I'll probably celebrate in some small way, but I'll just be thinking about the next list of peaks I'll want to climb. I'll probably go for the 100 Highest in the Olympics next.

**What words of advice would you offer for those interested in starting their own peakbagging challenge?**

When I started my own challenge of reaching the 100 Highest, I really didn't think I could finish it. But I just kept climbing away, gaining confidence and getting better, and things just started falling into place. I started thinking I *could* finish. Whatever your dream or objective is, you just have to go for it. With determination, you'll make it.

# Support Ramps Up for Green Mountain Lookout Preservation

Earlier this year, Federal District Judge James Coughenour ruled in favor of a Wilderness Watch lawsuit and ordered the removal of the Green Mountain Lookout. Judge Coughenour determined that the lookout compromised the character of the Glacier Peak Wilderness and that the U.S. Forest Service had acted improperly by not soliciting public comment on the project. However, new developments are shedding light on this judgment, and the effort to preserve the Green Mountain Lookout is gaining steam.

Built in 1933, and currently on the National Register of Historic Places, the Green Mountain Lookout was used for decades to spot fires in the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. Since the mid-1980s the lookout has been a popular destination for hikers venturing in from the Suiattle River Road, which has been closed since 2006 due to flood damage.

Over the generations, heavy snow, rain and mountain sun had weathered the lookout and its foundation. In 2002, following a failed attempt to repair the foundation, the Forest Service airlifted the structure to Darrington, where it was restored by volunteers. Seventy-five percent of the original structure's materials were used in the restoration project, and in 2009, it was airlifted back to its former perch. It was these actions that spurred the lawsuit.

In 2010, Montana-based Wilderness Watch sued to force removal of the structure, contending that the project violated the Wilderness Act's ban on structures and motorized equipment and did not comply with procedural requirements outlined in the National Environmental Policy Act.

In new developments, Sens. Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell, joined by Rep. Rick Larsen, sent a letter Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack urging him to "ensure that this [removal] is not the final result of this lawsuit, and that all legal means [are used] in order to protect the Green Mountain Lookout." U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Washington Jenny Durkan has also filed a motion before Judge Coughenour asking that the ruling be amended and the decision remanded back to the Forest Service.

This would then give the agency a chance to conduct the environmental studies that were under contention in the case, and to reach a decision as to how to proceed consistent with Judge Coughenour's ruling.

Forest lookouts have a long history in the Pacific Northwest. These solitary buildings have offered shelter to forest workers, loners, wilderness mystics and poets. Today, they present destination opportunities for hikers and backpackers, not only for spectacular wilderness views, but also as a source of historical and cultural significance. WTA will continue to track this issue as it proceeds.

*—Jonathan Guzzo, WTA Advocacy Director*

## New Interagency Pass for Military Personnel Grants Free Access

As part of the initiative to support our nation's service members, the new Interagency Annual Military Pass grants free access to more than 2,000 national forests, national parks, wildlife refuges and other public lands around the nation.

This new military version of the America the Beautiful National Parks and Federal Recreation Lands Annual Pass will be accepted at U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Reclamation, Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Army Corps sites that charge entrance or standard amenity fees. This includes Mount Rainier and Olympic National Parks, as well as any wilderness area requiring a Northwest Forest Pass; North Cascades is already free.

Active-duty members of the U.S. military and their dependents can pick up their pass at most national park and national forest visitor centers where entrance fees are charged. The pass covers the owner and accompanying passengers at recreation sites that charge per vehicle. At sites where per-person entrance fees are charged, it covers the pass owner and three accompanying adults age 16 and older. The pass is not valid at concessionaire-operated campgrounds or for rental services.

More info at **nps.gov/findapark/passes.htm**

# Grizzlies Rebounding in Eastern Washington

Recently, a Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife motion-activated camera captured video of a grizzly bear in the "Wedge" portion of the Colville National Forest, in northern Stevens County. The video provided the most vivid evidence yet of a quietly burgeoning bruin population in northeast Washington and southern British Columbia.

Grizzly bears once roamed from northern Mexico to British Columbia. Researchers have estimated there were 50,000 to 100,000 grizzlies in the lower 48 states at the time of Lewis and Clark's western expedition. In the last century, those numbers plummeted to around 1,000 bears.

The Selkirk Mountains, including the portion in Pend Oreille County, host one of the last remaining populations of grizzly bears in the lower 48 states; researchers estimate there to be 50 to 70 grizzly bears in this vital wildlife connection between the Rockies and the Cascades.

Grizzly bear sightings have been picking up in recent years, likely because the population itself is slowly increasing. Michael Borysewicz, wildlife biologist for the Sullivan Ranger District, which includes the Salmo-Priest Wilderness, recorded 11 reliable sightings in 2010.

In the autumn of 2010 a woman hiking on the Crowell Ridge Trail to Watch Lake reported a grizzly bear foraging on huckleberries on one side of the ridge. Although many sightings are deemed unreliable because it is suspected the "grizzly" sighted was in fact a black bear, this hiker had a handy comparison to differentiate between them: two black bears happened to be foraging on the opposite side of the ridgeline at the time.

Grizzly bears occasionally wander into Stevens County from across the Canadian border; recently, a radio-collared grizzly was detected on Abercrombie Mountain, after a meandering trip that took it across the border several times and close to the Sullivan Ranger Station.

Wildlife biologists attribute the growing number of bears to several factors, including road closures that have been put in place since the 1980s, greatly limiting potential poachers; campers learning to store food properly; and finally, changing public perception—bears are simply not as reviled as they used to be.

Before venturing out in bear country this summer and fall, visit the Grizzly Bear Outreach Project website (http://bearinfo.org/) for tips on differentiating between grizzly and black bears and contact information for reporting a grizzly sighting.

*— Aaron Theisen, Northeast Washington Correspondent*

**OPPOSITE: The restored Green Mountain Lookout. This popular day hike climbs through wildflower meadows to jaw-dropping views of Glacier Peak. It was listed on Washington Trust for Historic Preservation's 2011 Most Endangered Historic Properties List.**

**Photo courtesy of Washington Trust for Historic Preservation**

**BELOW: Video capture of a grizzly bear in Colville National Forest. This lounging bruin activated a nearby motion-control camera just 1.5 miles from a ranger station. Grizzly sightings have been on the rise in Eastern Washington since 2010.**

**Image courtesy of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife**

# REI Awards Grant for Trail Maintenance

Washington Trails Association recently received a grant from REI to put volunteer crews on the ground where they're needed most this summer and outfit them with necessary tools and supplies. The $20,000 award is expected to help maintain 65 trails across the state between July and September.

REI's commitment to WTA volunteers extends over many years. In addition to investing in WTA's volunteer trail maintenance efforts through their grants program, REI stores are active partners in recruiting volunteers for trail work parties throughout the year.

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

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**To find out how your company can support WTA's work for trails, please call us at (206) 625-1367 or email lisac@wta.org.**

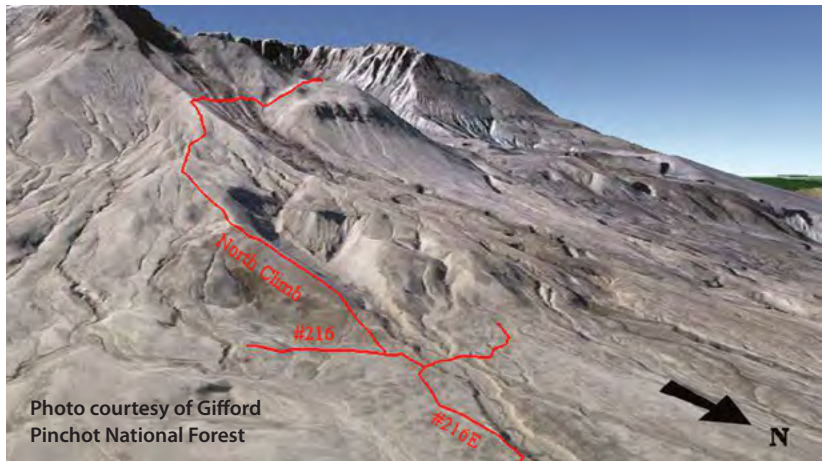


Photo courtesy of Gifford Pinchot National Forest

# New Trails in the Works for Mount St. Helens Monument

U.S. Forest Service staff at the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument are planning two new trails as part of their five-year Strategic Investment Plan. Pending the outcome of the required environmental review, one of the projects could begin as early as October 2012.

The first new trail, potentially shovel-ready this fall, will appeal to families and others seeking a short hike to a beautiful viewpoint. The route will be just over 1 mile, leaving from the Ape Cave trailhead and climbing though a mixed evergreen forest to a prominent ridgeline.

The second project in the planning stages is a new climbing route on the north side of the volcano. If approved, this route will offer climbers access to the northeast ridge of the blast crater, an area currently off-limits to hikers. Ascending to above 7,000 feet, the route will stop just shy of the actual crater rim, but it will perch climbers atop the Sugar Bowl with unparalleled views directly into the mouth of the crater.

WTA and other partner organizations will play an important role in supporting these projects. According to Lisa Romano, the community engagement specialist on the monument, these projects wouldn't be feasible without volunteers willing to pitch in with construction and future maintenance. On the proposed northern climbing route, volunteers with the Mount St. Helens Institute and Mountain Stewards program will be needed to provide public education, monitoring and occasional emergency assistance, just as they do on the south-side climbing route.

*— Ryan Ojerio, WTA Southwest Regional Coordinator*

# WTA Members Gave Big!

give BIG The Seattle Foundation

The Seattle Foundation's GiveBIG event on May 2 raised $48,000 for WTA's work to protect and maintain trails. Of 1,200 nonprofits, WTA placed 6th in the number of donations received and 21st in total amounts received. Wow! These generous contributions were then "stretched" by matching funds from GiveBIG sponsors. WTA also received a special $2,500 match from the Eleanor Morton Trask Advised Fund at The Seattle Foundation. In all, the event raised $7.4 million for nonprofits in our region.

# Hike More by Challenging Yourself

I find that I get outside much more by challenging myself. If I sign up for a 50-mile backpack with the Boy Scouts, I hike more just getting ready for the trip and end up enjoying the backpack even more. When I register for a big one-day bike ride, I end up doing more training rides. The payoff: the big ride is easier and more gratifying.

Last summer I challenged myself to hike more by joining WTA's **Hike-a-Thon** and setting an aggressive mileage goal. I was pretty sure I could make my goal, but I was anxious about gathering pledges. My wife made me feel better by having our dog, Shasta, pledge for me the day after I registered. Our dog loves hiking. One down.

I have a number of hiking friends, so I started with them. They pledged immediately. They, like Shasta, were going to get the benefit of my organizing more outings. Once I had a few pledges in my pack, and my confidence up that people really do want to give to trails, I composed an email to all the hikers in my address book. I promised weekly updates, and inserted the link to my Hike-a-Thon registration page to make it easy to click and pledge.

One of my pledges decided that miles weren't an interesting enough goal, so he challenged back with a generous pledge per 1,000 feet of elevation gain—though next time I will only agree if he will pledge for the elevation loss as well. Once word spread among my pledges that they weren't bound to just the dollar-per-mile standard, the creativity came out. The big one was $10 per mile for every mile *over* my goal. Having this list of creative challenges made asking for pledges easier, more fun and more successful—and challenged me to exceed my own goal.

For Hike-a-Thon 2012, I've added a few more challenges to my personal pledge card:

- 2x for every mile on a trail never hiked before
- $10 extra for every former fire lookout visited
- 2x for every mile hiked with teens under 16 years old
- 4x for every mile hiked with children under 8 years old

I am looking forward to participating in Hike-a-Thon again this year. Every mile I put in helps WTA fund their many important programs. And then there are the prizes! In addition to all the regular categories, this year WTA has added prizes for weekenders—just one hike per week! Now set your own goal, and join me on the trails this August.

No goal is too small. Challenge yourself!

*— Rob Shurtleff, WTA Board President*

**Register and get all the info at wta.org/hikeathon**

# Meet Loren

## WTA's new digital content manager

Before she could walk, Loren Drummond's parents had her out on the trail in the Colorado Rockies. Years later, as a writer, editor, online advocate and all-around geek, she's spent most of her career in front of screens, immersed in digital spaces. But the wilderness has always been her first love, her touchstone. As the new digital content manager for WTA, she'll get to use technology for the purest of reasons: to connect and support an incredible community of hikers and would-be hikers with Washington's wild places.

Loren comes to WTA with more than a decade of digital communications and advocacy experience, most recently with The Humane Society of the United States in Washington, D.C. She's backpacked (and rebuilt) sections of the Colorado Trail, and she's put in miles on the Appalachian and Pacific Crest Trails, too. She has a particular fondness for desert camping, alpine lakes and marmots. This year, she's set her sights on exploring Washington's North Cascades.

# Hike-a-Thon 2012

**HIKE-A-THON SEASON IS HERE!** Have you already registered, or are you still looking for some inspiration? Check out the stories of these past and present Hike-a-Thon'ers and you'll see that Hike-a-Thon is fun, easy, good for you—and good for trails! There's even prizes!

Visit wta.org for great trail suggestions for all ages and join us this August for Hike-a-Thon. Your support helps maintain hiking trails across Washington. **Register at wta.org/hikeathon**.

Scan tag for more info

## Hiking for the Heart and Soul

I started hiking in 2005 and was enjoying it quite a bit. At the time my weight really hindered my ability, but it wasn't stopping me from getting out on manageable trails. In 2010 I was preparing to pledge for a friend's Hike-a-Thon run and realized that I really wanted to do it myself. I signed up and ended up hiking 30 miles that year. Considering I was morbidly obese at the time, I felt pretty accomplished.

Two months after Hike-a-Thon, I realized that my weight was killing me. I was prediabetic, my knees were shot and I had high blood pressure. I was not healthy. I decided to have weight-loss surgery, and over the next year I lost 150 pounds.

What a difference the weight loss made for my hiking! In 2011 I did Hike-a-Thon again, setting a personal goal to hike every day through the month. I not only met that goal, I won a prize for hiking to the most lakes. I was able to start doing hikes with elevation gain, including a 12-mile jaunt on the Denny Creek Trail. My teenage daughters occasionally hiked with me. One of them commented, "Jeez, Mom, you're in better shape than I am!" as we huffed up a hill to Squires Lake.

When last year's event was over, they both expressed interest in joining me for the next Hike-a-Thon. This year we'll make it a family affair, including my husband—all proudly sporting our Hike-a-Thon T-shirts out on the trails. It's a great way for us to spend time together outdoors.

*Carianna Gischer will be hiking her third Hike-a-Thon this year and is looking forward to spending time with her daughters on the trails.*

## Team Effort

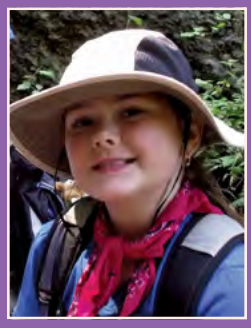
When WTA began allowing Hike-a-Thon participants to form teams last year, the event took on a whole new meaning for me. I have been an avid participant for many years, so I already had the "bug" and an established base of super donors. Now I had the challenge of convincing my hiking friends to join me.

I promoted it as a way to combine and focus our fundraising efforts in a fun and competitive way. The cumulative and team prizes provided a powerful incentive. Before long I had five teammates who were not just strong hikers, but shared a commitment to WTA's mission and wanted to help with fundraising. Their enthusiasm was infectious, and they took what I had learned in previous Hike-a-Thons to a whole new level!

My teammates and I did most of our communicating by email and our own Facebook group. That made it easy to share fundraising tips and hiking schedules, and as team leader, I made sure my teammates had the information and tools needed. Now in its second year of a multi-year mission, team Captain Kirk and the Redshirts invites YOU to accept the Hike-a-Thon challenge! Find a few hiking friends or family members, come up with a goofy team name and get registered today!

*Steve Payne is a Mountaineers hiking guide and has participated in six Hike-a-Thons.*

## Kids Can Hike-a-Thon Too!



It is not hard to get me outdoors. I like to go hiking and get close to nature. Hiking in Hike-a-Thon has made it possible for my family to see lots of exciting new things. Each time it is something different, like animals or their tracks, weird plants or even a fishing boat in the middle of a field.

I tell my friends they should hike in Hike-a-Thon because it's better than what you can see on TV. You feel like you are on top of the world when you reach a peak. Best of all, you can make a difference for the forest's trails by raising money and awareness.

Two years ago, my dad and I signed up for our first Hike-a-Thon. We put on our Hike-a-Thon shirts and hit the trails. With 15 miles under our belts, we ended up winning the prize for "Most Miles Hiked With Kids." I also won a new pack at the awards banquet. My favorite hike that year was to the top of Mount Pilchuck, since we can see it from our house.

The next year my mom and sister wanted to give it a try. We signed up as a family, and four blue shirts came in the mail. This time we hiked all over Mount Rainier for a whole week. It turns out that my little sister, Meg, can hike with the best of them when fueled by blue raspberry Jolly Ranchers. At the end of last year's event we were placed in the Hike-a-Thon Hall of Fame for "Family Team Outings" (12) and 113 miles hiked.

We're already guessing what color this year's T-shirts will be and thinking of our team name. The Hike-a-Thon may keep us counting the miles and dreaming of prizes and sponsors, but the real prize is the fun we have as a family.

*Gabi Loesch is eleven years old and is looking forward to her third Hike-a-Thon this year.*

# Repeat Defender

What keeps me coming back to Hike-a-Thon? How about hiking so many days through the month, eating whatever I want and losing weight, and finding new trails and new friends to hike with. One of my favorite things: putting the message on my answering machine that says, "I'm out of the office participating in a fundraiser." I actually get messages from people wanting to pledge.

But the best thing is being able to support WTA and all the great trail work they do. I appreciate that these contributions go directly toward keeping my favorite trails in good shape. Plus, the enthusiastic support I receive from sponsors, and the opportunity to educate folks about the importance of maintaining these trails, only demonstrates that others support WTA's efforts just as much.

One year I actually thought I would give my donors a break and not participate. Many of them called me and insisted they wanted to continue their support of WTA, so I signed up again. After all, what a great excuse to take a day off work in August and help raise money to support Washington's trails.

*Pam Roy has participated in six Hike-a-Thon events, logging more than 900 miles and raising more than $16,500 for WTA.*

## Ahh ... The Great Outdoors

Of all the miles I've hiked, my real triumph has been getting my outdoor-phobic sister out with me at least once each year during Hike-a-Thon. I've tried a variety of trails, but the only place she is willing to go is Deception Pass State Park. Last summer, we left for the park on a perfect bluebird day. As we arrived at the park, however, we were greeted with foggy, overcast skies. Five minutes into our hike my sister exclaimed, "This is wreaking havoc on my hair!"

My sister made no attempt to disguise her displeasure. At one point I stopped to take some photos, while she moved on a short way ahead. Then came a shriek so loud that it probably made everyone on Whidbey Island jump a little. My sister had just had a near-death encounter with a garter snake. From that point on, I was on "snake watch."

As the hike continued I had to extoll the virtue of not tweeting or texting, but trying to enjoy the natural sights around her. We stopped briefly at Rosario Beach, where my sister was quick to scold me for touching the critters in the tidepools, urging me to wash my hands as soon as possible so I wouldn't contract some horrific disease.

After our grueling 1.5-mile hike, we made it back to the car. Needing a bit of relaxation at this point, we headed to North Beach to sprawl out on the warm sand under the sun, which had by now reappeared. While I took in the lovely views of Deception Pass Bridge and the surrounding islands, my sister happily took in the latest IKEA catalog.

*Lindsay Leffelman is a Washington Trails correspondent and has participated in Hike-a-Thon six times.*

## Hiking for Trails

The first year I participated in Hike-a-Thon, I started off small. I had planned to hike 100 miles and raise a couple hundred dollars. That first effort was a success, so I started to set my fundraising sights higher. My mileage remained around 100 with each year's event, though my fundraising efforts steadily increased. In the previous three years, I've raised $460, $825 and a whopping $2,500 in 2011. That's a lot of funding to help maintain my favorite hiking trails.

This year, I spent all winter hiking and snowshoeing with friends, getting ready for this summer's hiking season, and feeling confident that I can pull off my best Hike-a-Thon yet. This year I'm also joining a team, which will enable me to raise even more money as I hike even more miles, as I'm doubling my mileage goal to 200. I'll be knocking off 93 of these on a full circuit of the Wonderland Trail, many more in the Enchantments and an assortment of day hikes.

WTA is an organization that I really believe in, and as an avid hiker, I want to do my part to help support WTA and the trails I love so much.

*Rosie Sgrosso will be hiking her sixth Hike-a-Thon this year and is aiming to double her mileage and surpass her previous fundraising successes.*

## Making Miles Count

WTA's Hike-a-Thon is a great opportunity to get out there and have fun hiking while raising money to keep those trails I love in good shape. My own tactic for adding up the mileage is to just get out and go somewhere fun as often as possible. The more enjoyable the trip, the more likely I am to keep going.

It's easy to rack up miles on flat trips around the Issaquah Alps if I don't want to drive too far, but I really like to get out during summer's short window of access. Some of my favorites are the Spider Meadow–Buck Creek Pass and Mount Rainier's Wonderland Trail. Last year I hiked the 211-mile John Muir Trail in California's Sierra Nevada—it was spectacular! And don't forget about Washington's section of the Pacific Crest Trail!

*David Baxter logged 238 miles in last year's Hike-a-Thon. This year David is thru-hiking the PCT—watch for him on trail!*

**Sarah Rich**
Program Assistant
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**Q.** What volunteer never speaks a word but dedicates its entire life to supporting trail maintenance?

(Hint: It has four legs!)

**A.** A pack animal.

(Although we haven't met every single one of our volunteers!)

# NO HORSIN

*To see a pack animal loaded down with baggage, plodding down a trail, hearkens back to the days before motorized vehicles, when stock were the only form of transport.* But even in modern times, pack animals—horses, mules and llamas—are the ideal transport for conveying hundreds of pounds of food, tools and other gear into the backcountry. These "beasts of burden" are what sustain the work crews during many of WTA's Volunteer Vacations.

## Pack 'Em Up

For just one weeklong Volunteer Vacation, crews need 750 pounds of communal gear—food, cook tents, propane tanks, hand tools, rigging and other materials. Often deep in the backcountry, these trails are too far to access on day work parties. In such places, there is no motorized alternative, so all that gear needs to be carried in on foot. And since lugging in an 80-pound pack full of food and tools doesn't make for much of a "vacation," we turn to stock.

Pack animals usually come in "strings," or groups of animals. There are several different groups in Washington with pack strings that transport gear into backcountry sites for WTA. The National Park Service has one string in the Olympics, while the U.S. Forest Service has three strings: one in the Methow Valley, one at Wenatchee River and one in Cle Elum. There is also the Back Country Horsemen of Washington (BCHW), a not-for-profit organization that volunteers to pack several WTA trips every year.

But before the animals get out on trail—before the packing organization even steps in—WTA staff begin the bundling process at our storage facility in North Bend, where all of the gear and tools for Volunteer Vacations are kept. They carefully pack the bear-proof aluminum panniers so their weights will balance evenly on the pack animals' backs.

When the packers and their stock meet WTA at the trailhead, usually a few days before the start of a trip, they pack each animal with up to 150 pounds of gear. On the trail, the packer leads the stock string on his or her own animal, usually letting the youngest animal bring up the rear. Once loaded and on the move, the pack string travels at around 3 miles per hour—about the same speed as a good hiker.

When they reach the crew's campsite, the packers cache the gear and then turn around to journey back to the trailhead. After the WTA crew has come in for a week of trail work, the packers return to take the gear back out again.

## Move 'Em Out

Packers don't let just any animal out on trail. Horses and mules aren't mature enough to serve as pack animals until they're at least four years old. Once they have reached this ideal age, these animals spend months training to get in shape to bear our heavy loads. Long before the packing season begins, packers take their animals on dry runs into the mountains to get them acquainted with steep and rugged trail terrain.

Not only is there the age of animal to consider, but the type as well. In the Methow, the Forest Service uses both horses and mules. Dan Rogers, a land manager in the Methow, prefers mules, stating that they are generally heavier than horses (weighing up to 1,200 pounds) and calmer. He explains that when a mule meets other users on the trail, it often faces up to its "opponent" rather than getting spooked and wreaking havoc like horses sometimes do. In the more than twenty years that Rogers has been packing with mules, he has witnessed only one mule kick a hiker.

When packers use horses, the best pack animals are those that have draft horse blood in them. These breeds are not only stronger and heftier than many other horses, but they're also gentler. Horses with Arabian blood tend to be much more aggressive.

A different animal altogether, llamas are put to work on some of WTA's annual trips to Lake Chelan. Jim and Sara Thomas, long-time WTA volunteers who have retired to Lake Chelan, have been offering up their string of llamas for use on WTA trips for more than ten years. They currently own 12 llamas—eight male and four female—that they keep not only as packers, but also as pets. Because llamas are small and have padded feet, they are safe pack animals and have a low impact on trails. Llamas also don't require any extra food. In fact, their appetites actually help brush the very trails that WTA works to maintain. As Jim Thomas says, "The whole country is a smorgasbord for them."

# IG AROUND

**L–R: Raymond Ewing leading a pack string; Larry Davis loading packboard on a mule; Doc and Deb Wesselius hauling gravel for new trail tread in Capitol State Forest**

**Photos by Jim Thode**

## A Valuable Resource

Without a doubt, stock are invaluable to performing trail maintenance in the backcountry. Doc Wesselius, a packer with the BCHW who has packed for WTA over many years, explains, "With stock support, trail crews can get farther away from trailheads to work on trails."

These remoter trails are often the ones that need the most attention, and without the help of stock it would be difficult to support the crews out there for week-long stretches. Dan Rogers points out that "when you are sawing and lopping and digging all day long, you need a lot of calories to sustain you. It's only with the help of stock that WTA crews can get the sustenance they need to [maintain these] trails for the rest of us."

But stock can only support trail crews that are working on trails that are open to stock passage. Because they are bigger and more nervous creatures than humans, animals need trails to be more level and open than hikers generally require. Sometimes this can be tricky. If a trail crew needs gear to work on a trail that is in terrible condition, it can be difficult for stock to traverse the trail to bring the necessary gear to the campsite. But for the most part, it works well that human and animal volunteers help each other out. Humans clear the trails that are open to stock, and in turn, stock bring them the supplies to do so.

Tim Van Beek, WTA's project coordinator, sometimes accompanies the packers and strings in transporting gear to Volunteer Vacation camps. When he's riding a horse, he is much more attuned to deficiencies in trail conditions for equestrians. "Riding a horse is really eye-opening in terms of what work needs to be done on the trail for horses," Van Beek says.

While modern advances and machinery continue to put pack animals out of work, stock still find an important role in helping to maintain trail systems and provide access to some of our most spectacular wilderness settings. There is something romantic about these big, stoical animals trudging along, quietly but diligently carrying out their important purpose in the world, continuing to volunteer, season after season, in supporting our trail crews.✦

## Hiking With Stock on Trail

When you approach stock on a trail, a friendly greeting alerts them to your presence. Pack strings and riders always have the right-of-way. Hikers should move to the downhill side, allowing the riders and their animals to pass.

Your initial instinct may be to stay on the uphill side of such large animals, but being on the downhill side makes them less likely to spook. If you find yourself in an awkward or unsafe situation it is best to communicate with the lead rider to ask what you should do.

## Three Easy Tips

**1.** Make your presence known by being visible and addressing the horse and rider. The horse will recognize you are a human and not a talking tree or a threat to them.

**2.** Remove your pack and hat; this will help you look more human and less like a threat. If you're on a bicycle, come to a complete stop and sidestep off the trail.

**3.** Move to the downhill side when possible; this will make you appear smaller and less likely to spook the animal.

**Lewis County chapter of BCHW packing supplies for a WTA work party on Goat Mountain**

**Photo by Deb Wesselius**

# YOUR DOLLAR$ AT WORK

WTA volunteers deserve huge credit for all the efforts they put forth into helping maintain our hiking trails. But without the support of members and donors—like you!—much of this work could not get done. Your financial support allows WTA to plan, coordinate and outfit the volunteer maintenance projects that keep trails open and accessible for everyone. If you recently joined, renewed or donated to WTA's Spring Goal, your dollars were put to work on more than 70 trail projects across the state.

Gary Zink

WTA volunteers have been maintaining portions of the **Duckabush River Trail** for many years: logging it out each season, repairing washouts and performing other maintenance to help keep it in hikable condition. This popular trail offers hikers and backpackers a quiet getaway into the Brothers Wilderness in the eastern Olympics, replete with shady cedar and firs, a wild and rushing river and ridgetop views from Big Hump.

Last year, the Duckabush was closed due to damage from the Big Hump Fire. When we were asked to devote more resources to help get the trail ready, financial support from WTA members gave us the ability to respond. In May and June of this year, WTA Backcountry Response Teams were called in to help restore the fire-damaged section so that the trail can safely be reopened to hikers.

*Call the Hood Canal Ranger Station at (360) 765-2200 for current status.*

*Meg MacKenzie and Mark Clark use an 8.5-foot crosscut saw to buck a burned tree blocking the Duckabush trail on the way down Big Hump toward Five Mile Camp. Wayne Siscoe pounds wedges and lubricates the saw as needed.*

Thick brush and failing switchbacks were just a few things that hikers had to contend with on trails at **Liberty Lake Regional Park**, just east of Spokane. At this ideal summer destination, hikers can explore trails with lake and valley views, a waterfall and an ancient cedar grove.

WTA volunteers have begun their third season of work with Spokane County Parks to restore this once-primitive trail system. WTA volunteers even rerouted the trail around a section damaged by some industrious engineers (aka beavers). This spring saw improvements to a switchbacked section near a viewpoint, and next will be the installation of a log-stringer bridge across Liberty Creek, working with volunteers from Back Country Horsemen of Washington.

WTA's growing volunteer base in the Spokane area relies heavily on financial backing from WTA members to fund project planning and outfit crews with needed tools and supplies.

*WTA volunteers repurpose a section of puncheon to fix a chronically muddy section of trail at Liberty Lake Regional Park. Before installing, hundreds of pounds of rock was hauled in and laid as the base.*

## UPCOMING TRAIL WORK PARTIES

**July 6, 7, 8 – Comet Falls:** We've finished our epic Glacier Basin project, but don't worry—there's still plenty of work to be done on these day trips in Mount Rainier National Park.

**July 21-23 & August 4-6 – Salmo-Priest Loop:** This remote trail in the Colville's Salmo-Priest Wilderness needs a lot of work. There's still room for you to join one of these BCRTs to meet that need.

**August 2, 4, 5, 9, 11 & 12 – South Fork Skokomish:** It's a front country trail with a back country feel. Come out on one of these day trips on the scenic Hood Canal.

**August 4-5 – Goat Mountain:** This trail in Southwest Washington faces the threat of exploratory drilling. Show you care enough to keep it maintained by participating in this weekend event.

**August 11-12 – Twin Lakes:** This Northwestern Washington trail in the Mount Baker district needs your help to keep it up to par for hikers. What better place to spent a weekend in August?

**August 25-September 1 – Meander Meadows:** Join WTA for a whole week to help fix up this beautiful back-country section of the epic Pacific Crest Trail for weary thru-hikers.

**These are but a few of the 207 WTA work parties being held in July and August. Join us for a day, a weekend or a whole week, and show your support for Washington's trails. Visit wta.org/volunteer/trail-work-parties to find one near you!**

**Alexa Lindauer**
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# Don't Take Your Kids Hiking
## (Let Them Take You!)

Nothing quite interests children more than being able to take part in deciding something, be it selecting a movie to watch, what to eat for dinner, or where to take the next hiking or camping trip. Try engaging your kids in the trip-planning process. If your children are too young for trip planning, there are other ways to engage them during your adventures to help them feel like they're part of the experience. In this way, they'll gain confidence in their abilities, develop a respect and appreciation for the outdoors, and hold a personal investment in the outing they helped to plan—instead of feeling "dragged along."

### Kids Take Charge!

Plan your trips with your kids. Kids love challenges, and helping to plan an outdoor adventure could be right up their alley. Show them maps and guidebooks of where you could go, or take them to the WTA website and choose a location together. Once a location is selected, check the weather together and count out the mileage and elevation gain. Teach your kids how to read a topographic map by explaining contour lines. You can demonstrate this by clenching your hand in a fist and drawing circles around your knuckles at the same "elevation," pretending your knuckles are different peaks. When you flatten your hand, the circles around your knuckles will mimic mountain contour lines!

**Demonstrate how a topo map works by drawing "mountains" on your hand**

**Photo by Alexa Lindauer**

### Take Only Pictures, Leave Only Footsteps

Teach your kids early on how precious nature is. Encourage them to stay on trails, share them with others and leave them as they're found. The seven Leave No Trace (LNT) principles are a great place to start.

1. **Plan ahead and prepare.**
2. **Travel and camp on durable surfaces.**
3. **Dispose of waste properly.**
4. **Leave what you find.**
5. **Minimize campfire impacts.**
6. **Respect wildlife.**
7. **Be considerate of other visitors.**

Use a fun acronym to help everyone remember all seven: **P**apa **T**om **D**oesn't **L**ike **M**eg **R**unning **B**ackwards. You can learn even more about LNT and their special PEAK (Promoting Environmental Awareness in Kids) program by visiting the Leave No Trace website (lnt.org/teach/focus-youth-and-teens).

### Cedars and Mushrooms and Slugs, Oh My!

Kids want to know what they're seeing on trail. Naming things develops interest and appreciation, and keeps them from getting bored. Bring pocket field guides on your hikes and help kids learn about Washington's native flora and fauna. Trees, wildflowers, and large mammals are often favorites. Perhaps change it up a bit and try to identify amphibians, birds, insects, fungi, rocks, clouds or constellations. You don't need to see a bear or cougar to boast about wildlife sightings. Salamanders, banana slugs and woodpeckers are fun and easy to find and identify. Encourage your kids to identify one new thing on every hike.

If your kids already like hiking, these suggestions should help bring their outdoor adventure to the next level. If you're pulling teeth trying to get your kids off the couch and outdoors, these simple, teachable ideas may give hiking an extra appeal. Good luck to you and your future outdoor leaders!✦

**Jonathan Guzzo**
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# STATE OF ACCESS

The rains and flooding of 2003, 2006 and 2007 left a mark on trails and roads across Washington state. While many of the trails have been repaired, hikers are still waiting to see what the future holds for access to these trailheads. These wilderness thoroughfares provide access for millions of trips into the North Cascades, the Olympics and Mount Rainier.

The White Chuck and Carbon River roads are lost, never to return. The future of the Dosewallips is unclear. And the Suiattle, which sustained damage in all three storm years, is only now being considered for repair. Add sub-adequate funding and legal disputes, and the challenges to our recreational access road system become even more difficult to resolve. Nonetheless, WTA is embarking on an ambitious plan to help land managers, elected officials and stakeholders from the public do exactly that. It's called the **State of Access Project**.

This summer, WTA is sifting through piles of research, walking miles of road and enlisting the expertise of volunteers and land managers to write a landmark report on the state of selected wilderness roadways throughout Washington. As part of the plan, we'll convene a panel of land managers, nonprofit leaders and decision makers to address the future of our road system and offer solutions designed to preserve recreational-access routes, while still protecting the integrity and beauty of the landscapes they traverse.

Succeeding will require overcoming certain hurdles, including the following.

**Weather:** This is the big one, as we all know the beating that our roads and trails take because of it. Factor in the unknown effects of climate change and the possible increase in frequency of severe storms and their toll, and it's clear that we need to plan how to build resilience into our road system. Weather is the least predictable and most damaging problem we have to tackle—and the one over which we have the least control.

**Funding:** These days, it's difficult for Congress to pay for even the most basic services of government. The U.S. Forest Service has been operating with dwindling appropriations for years, and that situation will likely get worse with current budget deficits and shortfalls.

**Challenges:** There's no getting around the fact that roads have an impact on the environment. We can mitigate that impact by right-sizing the road system. But even as every road has a constituency that supports its preservation, many also have someone—either a group or a single individual—who wants to see them closed.

It's important to note, however, that not all roads are created equal. For example, in the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest there are several roads that lead to multiple trailheads and are typically drivable in a regular passenger vehicle. But thousands of additional miles of little-used spur roads branch in every direction, leading to defunct timber, mining or recreational locations. These roads pose a public safety and environmental threat, and WTA supports the efforts made to decommission these routes.

The final report will offer recommendations for how to build resilience into the road system, and suggestions to procure funding and work with stakeholders to overcome challenges. We'll then use this report to help land managers prioritize and move their projects forward, and lend support and urgency to congressional appropriations for our road system.✦

*If you're interested in helping research, draft and examine the condition of these roads for the report, we welcome your participation. Contact Jonathan Guzzo at (206) 965-8558 or email jonathan@wta.org for more information.*

**STATE OF DISREPAIR:** The current condition of the Suiattle River Road requires hikers to walk the closed road up to 13 miles to reach some of the best trails in the Glacier Peak Wilderness.

Photo by Kim Brown

## CLOSE:
**Explore in a day or a weekend**

## WILD:
**Rugged landscapes and wildlife aplenty**

## HIGH:
**Glaciers, cirques and alpine meadows**

**Expansive meadows and jagged peaks greet hikers to the Goat Rocks Wilderness. Here, the Pacific Crest Trail traverses wide meadows under Ives Peak in Cispus Basin.**

**Photo by Lee Rentz**

# TRAILS ON THE ROCKS

*Looking for a spectacular wilderness escape this summer? Look no further than the Goat Rocks Wilderness. This ancient landscape, once a highly explosive stratovolcano, has been worn away by erosion and glaciation, leaving behind a wilderness playground of alpine meadows, rock gardens, glacier-fed streams and one of the best wildflower displays anywhere in the Northwest.* | By Ashley Morrison

Located in a pocket of the larger Gifford Pinchot National Forest, north of Mount Adams and south of Mount Rainier and White Pass, this unique landscape was once a 12,000-plus-foot volcano. What remains now is a ring of ragged, 7,000 to 8,000-foot peaks, namely Gilbert Peak, Old Snowy Mountain, Ives Peak and Tieton Peak. Branded the Goat Rocks for the area's natural inhabitants, this 108,000-acre wilderness contains more than 120 miles of trails—and even more if you count all the scrambling and climbing opportunities.

The beauty of the Goat Rocks Wilderness will leave a lifelong impression. Hiking there last summer, I crossed paths with an older woman taking in the views. We exchanged friendly trail "hellos," and she announced that it was her eightieth birthday that day, and this is what she had requested from her family—one more trip to the Goat Rocks. And there she was on a 90-degree summer afternoon—miles deep in rugged wilderness, on rocky trail surrounded by fields of lupine, paintbrush and anemone, in pure delight with this magical place.

While more and more hikers "discover" the Goat Rocks every season, its location, and the little extra effort required to get there, helps keep the area from being overly crowded. But as soon as you're at the trailhead, the sensory experience begins: the crisp alpine air filling your lungs, the smell of verdant pine trees wafting into your nostrils, the sounds of chittering birds and chipmunks dancing into your ears. From here, the sights haven't even begun, so you'll be anxious to be on your way. You'll quickly find that you should have planned more time for your trip, as you'll be pausing around every turn to stop and ponder the beauty of your surroundings—and only your eagerness to see what's waiting around the next bend will help you press on.

The following pages will give you a taste of the grandeur of the Goat Rocks Wilderness, as told by several of *Washington Trails*' regional correspondents. Between them, they've hiked nearly every mile of the area—some many times over—and have highlighted a spectacular selection of trails sure to please even the most critical of wilderness lovers—from grand views along Nannie Ridge and Bear Creek Mountain, to wildflower meadows along the Pacific Crest Trail to Shoe Lake, and an amazing exhibit of glacial geology on a scramble up Old Snowy.

So whether you're a first-timer or a fifth-timer, consider a new trail adventure in the Goat Rocks this season and experience it for yourself. You're sure to find something magical here, ensuring your own return to this amazing Northwest wilderness.

# Bear Creek Mountain

*Bear Creek Mountain was my first solo hike, during my first summer of firefighting for the Forest Service. I asked a co-worker if he knew of any trails near the old Tieton Ranger Station with solitude and killer views. He introduced me to what has become my favorite hike.*

**HIKE IT ▶**
Bear Creek Mountain

**MILEAGE:**
7 miles RT

**ELEVATION GAIN:**
1,336 feet

**HIGHEST ELEVATION:**
7,337 feet

**MAP:**
Green Trails 303:
White Pass

There are at least three different routes to Bear Creek Mountain. For this outing, I chose the one with the shortest mileage: Trail 1130 starting at Section 3 Lake. After a mildly bone-rattling drive to the trailhead, I was ready to sprint to the summit, when I encountered my first scenic distraction. At Section 3 Lake, little more than a pond, really, I was surrounded by wildflowers and hundreds of leaping, newly hatched frogs. The ground at my feet was literally alive, and vibrant: a welcome change after several weeks on the fire line.

Heading off, Trail 1130 started at a gentle grade, through broken, mixed conifer forest of subalpine fir, white pine and Engelmann spruce. A half-mile from the trailhead, just when I thought this was going to be a shaded stroll through the forest, the trees opened up into a wide meadow teeming with a rainbow of wildflowers—paintbrush, lupine, pussytoes, columbine and tiger lily seemed to stretch on forever. I had never really been interested in wildflowers until that moment. This meadow opened up a whole new aspect of hiking for me: not just beauty from a summit, but beauty on the way to a summit. Now all thoughts of racing to the top had vanished in favor of photographing every different wildflower I could find. It was tempting to linger here for the rest of the day, but the prospect of big views beckoned me onward.

The next mile was more of the same alternating forest and meadow. I passed the junction to Tieton Meadows and made a quick crossing of Bear Creek. During the last mile, the elevation gain was the steepest, but as the views expanded with every step, the hard work was barely noticed. Russell and Bethel Ridges began filling the scene. At my feet was evidence of Mount St. Helens' eruption, a reminder of the intense volcanic history of the area. As I huffed up the final stretch, passing the junction to Conrad Meadows and through intermittent patches of mountain heather, I kept wondering where the promised views were—and then the obvious shape of Mount Adams suddenly graced the horizon.

Arriving at the summit, the South Cascades were laid out before me: the entire Goat Rocks Wilderness surrounded by Mount Rainier, Mount Adams, Devil's Horns, Tieton Peak and so many more. The area's volcanic history was impressed upon me as I peered around the rim of the range. This was clearly a large volcano at some point, and Bear Creek Mountain stood at its eastern edge. It's no wonder the Civilian Conservation Corps built a lookout here in the 1930s. The lookout may be gone, but the views remain.

I lingered until the afternoon began to fade, then made my way back to the trailhead. I hadn't seen another person the entire day, and I had found within myself an awakening to a new aspect of wilderness.

*— Kimberly Craig*

**Tieton Peak takes center stage, flanked by Goat Citadel, Big Horn, Ives Peak and Old Snowy, from this viewpoint on Bear Creek Mountain**

**Photo by David Hagen**

# Nannie Ridge & Sheep Lake

*How's this for a perfect day? Grab your lunch and the dog and head up Nannie Ridge to Sheep Lake for panoramic views of the Goat Rocks backed by Mounts Adams, Rainier and St. Helens. Just make sure to pack the bug spray.*

The first time I hiked this trail, I was primed for grand, knock-my-socks-off views. I was disappointed when it strolled straight into dense pine forest. The disappointment didn't last, as the views came soon enough. Starting from the Walupt Lake Campground, the trail got down to business right away with a steady climb that made me grateful for the shade. There were quite a few dabbling creeks through this wooded stretch, but nothing I couldn't just hop right over. I'm sure by late summer these little trickles are usually dry, so I wouldn't count on them for a reliable water source at a later visit.

By mile 1.5, the forest started giving way to clearings of huckleberry fields. It was too soon after starting to take a break, but I couldn't resist ripe berries. Throwing vanity to the wind, I stuffed my mouth with juicy berries, staining it purple—until I suddenly remembered that bears are also keen on these berry fields. Moving on, the trail took to the ridge, and I started keeping an eye out for wildlife. After all, I was on "Nannie" Ridge, heading to "Sheep" Lake.

After 3 miles, the trail crested onto the exposed ridge under Nannie Peak. The elevation was around 5,800 feet, and the air was dusty with grit and volcanic ash stirring in the breeze. The hillsides below were covered with wildflowers: paintbrush, lupine, yellow glacier lilies and a variety of others.

It was time for a little scramble. Nannie Peak was only a half-mile and 300 more feet of elevation away. Many side trips I've done have offered nothing more than extra miles on my boots—not so with this one. Following a quick scramble up a boot-worn path, seriously outstanding views of the South Cascades volcanoes met me: Mount Rainier to the north, Mount Adams to the south, Mount St. Helens to the southwest, and the whole of the Goat Rocks Wilderness spread out before me. At this point, I proceeded to exhaust my camera's memory card capacity.

Having suitably soaked up the panorama, I continued on to Sheep Lake. The path dropped several hundred feet below the ridge into beautiful meadows. Here is where it's best to be armed with good bug repellent, as early summer mosquitoes were everywhere. At 4.4 miles from the trailhead, I arrived at Sheep Lake and a junction with the PCT. This is a perfect spot to hand off extra food and snacks to hungry thru-hikers. They're especially thankful to receive something new and exciting that they haven't gotten sick of yet.

Sheep Lake was very cold and clear—a chilly opportunity to rinse off the dust and sweat accumulated on the way here. Too cold for me, but my dog happily splashed right in. With a gently sloping shoreline and gorgeous backdrop, the lake made a relaxing lunch site. If I had been backpacking, I would have snagged one of the nearby camp spots to settle in and relish the view of Mount Adams bathed in sunset alpenglow. Instead, I enjoyed my lakeside lunch, snapped a few more photos, and then, thoroughly satisfied, headed back the way I'd come.

*— Brittany Manwill*

**◀ HIKE IT:**
Nannie Ridge and Sheep Lake

**MILEAGE:**
9 miles RT

**ELEVATION GAIN:**
1,800 feet

**HIGHEST ELEVATION:**
5,800 feet

**MAP:**
Green Trails 335: Walupt Lake

**Enjoy the serenity of Sheep Lake amid a sea of wildflower meadows**

**Photo by Jeremiah Pierucci**

# Old Snowy & Goat Lake

*Scramble above the crowds at Snowgrass Flat to the rocky summit of Old Snowy for unparalleled views down the knife-edged spine of the Goat Rocks and over Cascade peaks beyond.*

This trip is one of my all-time favorite overnights for high alpine environments. The hike in and the gentle scramble to the summit of Old Snowy's rocky crown take you through every beautiful layer of wilderness scenery that summer in the Goat Rocks has to offer.

Timing is key. Don't go too soon, as you don't want to make a large blood donation to the resident mosquito population lurking in the bear grass and huckleberry-filled lower forest. Don't go too late either, as you won't want to miss the wildflower bloom that covers these meadows and slopes in an explosion of color, one of the largest in Washington. Often, late-season snow provides a dramatic color contrast against alpine flowers, crumbling mountain peaks and turquoise lakes. Under "normal" conditions, late July and early August is the peak time to go. Pack the telephoto—wildlife (yes, goats!) are abundant.

There are a few options to tackle Old Snowy. My recommendation is to begin a loop hike at the Chambers Lake trailhead. Starting up Snowgrass Trail 96, the path heads east through thick coniferous forest of subalpine fir and mountain hemlock en route to the popular Snowgrass Flat. After a long grind up a series of forested switchbacks, the Bypass Trail branches off, connecting to the PCT. Good places to camp can be found here, away from the crowds closer to the Flat, and water can be obtained from any of the gurgling, flower-choked streams running through the area. The sunset against Ives Peak and Old Snowy makes an idyllic backdrop for dinner and preparing for the next day.

Before packing up and slinging on the heavy pack again, I like taking a quick jaunt up the trail to Snowgrass Flat. An early-morning visit lets me breathe in the sweet flower-filled air surrounded by morning alpenglow long before the day hikers arrive. The almost guaranteed wildlife sightings necessitate lugging the camera along.

Packed up and now heading north on the PCT, continue the loop above vast wildflower fields to the rocky flanks of Old Snowy, where the PCT crests at 7,600 feet—its highest point in Washington. Here one can divert onto a faint bootpath through the talus and scree right up the mountain. The rocky path disappears here and there over boulders, but the route is direct and simple—just be sure to test those boulders before placing your weight on them.

Once on top, you'll be presented with 360-degree views that will simply take your breath away. Just out of reach, Packwood and McCall Glaciers cling to the crumbling slopes below. Goat Lake appears across the way. If not still frozen, its water will be pouring over its southern edge in a 1,000-foot cascade, feeding Goat Creek in the valley far below. Mounts Adams, Rainier and St. Helens, along with the craggy summits of Ives Peak and Mount Gilbert, fill the skyline in every direction. This is my nirvana.

From the rocky summit, I could easily return by the same route, but because I long for scenery, I return to the PCT, then take a connector to the junction of Trail 86. From here, it's 3 miles to Goat Lake along the flanks of Old Snowy, now high above. Whistling pikas and marmots are my company through the meadows to the lake. More nice campsites can be found at the lake, and I would stay another night if responsibility weren't calling me back. Instead, I continue on. I make a quick, 2-mile detour to take in more stellar views from atop Hawkeye Point, then knock out the final 6 miles descending the Goat Ridge Trail, eventually reentering forest and completing my picturesque journey amid a remarkable wilderness.

Don't let the popularity of Snowgrass Flat keep you away. The area is heavily used on summer weekends, but most hikers don't venture beyond the Flat. For less company, make the trip midweek. After hiking this, you'll be glad you did—and you'll likely use this hike as one to compare to all others.

*— Ashley Morrison*

**Take in panoramic views of Goat Lake, Hawkeye Point, Lake Creek Valley and Mount Rainier from the summit of Old Snowy; Photo by Ashley Morrison**

**INSET: Shoe Lake seen from the PCT; Photo by David Hagen**

# Shoe Lake

**◄ HIKE IT:**
Old Snowy

**MILEAGE:**
18.3 miles RT

**ELEVATION GAIN:**
5,000 feet

**HIGHEST ELEVATION:**
7,930 feet

**MAP:**
USFS: Goat Rocks and Tatoosh Wilderness

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**HIKE IT ►**
Shoe Lake

**MILEAGE:**
14 miles RT

**ELEVATION GAIN:**
2,600 feet

**HIGHEST ELEVATION:**
6,600 feet

**MAP:**
Green Trails 303: White Pass

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**MORE ▼**
Pick up the Falcon Guide *Hiking Washington's Goat Rocks Country*

*This long day hike south on the PCT from White Pass travels through meadows and rock gardens with views of Rainier and Adams, culminating with a wide panorama of the entire Goat Rocks and a sparkling lake set in a basin of wildflowers.*

Since the Shoe Lake basin is closed to camping, it makes for one of my favorite long day hikes. Access is easy with the PCT trailhead at White Pass. The southward route climbs 1,000 feet in 2.5 miles, switchbacking moderately through open forest with few views past Ginette Lake, small and swampy, just off the trail in the trees. Beyond the lake is a junction with Trail 1144 coming in from Round Mountain and Twin Peaks. The next mile gains 400 feet to the junction with Trail 1112, coming in from the top of the White Pass Ski Area. To this point, the surroundings are generally open forest, but from here the trail ascends into wildflower meadows with scattered trees, crossing the ridgecrest into Hogback Basin and presenting great views of Mount Rainier. This is where it starts getting good.

The southward PCT continues climbing to a 6,300-foot saddle on a spur of Hogback Mountain. From here, I'm able to see the trail ahead contouring above Miriam Basin to the saddle just below the Shoe Horn, a spire on the ridge just north of Shoe Lake. This stretch is one of my favorite parts of the hike. Traversing above the green meadows of Miriam Basin through red and gray fractured lavas is a reminder that the Goat Rocks are the roots of an ancient volcano. Rock gardens are everywhere, dotted with arnica, lupine, paintbrush and heather. I spied what could be some good camping in the meadows at the south end of Miriam Basin.

Grunting up the final switchback to the saddle above Shoe Lake, I'm rewarded with a grand view. Spread out before me is the main spine of the Goat Rocks: Devil's Horns, Tieton Peak, Mount Curtis Gilbert, Goat Citadel, Ives Peak, Old Snowy, Elk Pass and Chimney Rock—all still blanketed with snow, even into late July. Mount Adams peeks over the top of all. Below, the sun sparkles off the waters of Shoe Lake, a small alpine pool of blue-green water draped around a central peninsula that someone's fanciful imagination thought resembled the shape of a shoe. The slopes of the basin are blue with summer lupine. By scrambling the easy slopes of the high point to the west of the saddle the views get even better—a 360-degree panorama of the South Cascades, the eastside foothills, and north to the peaks of the Alpine Lakes Wilderness.

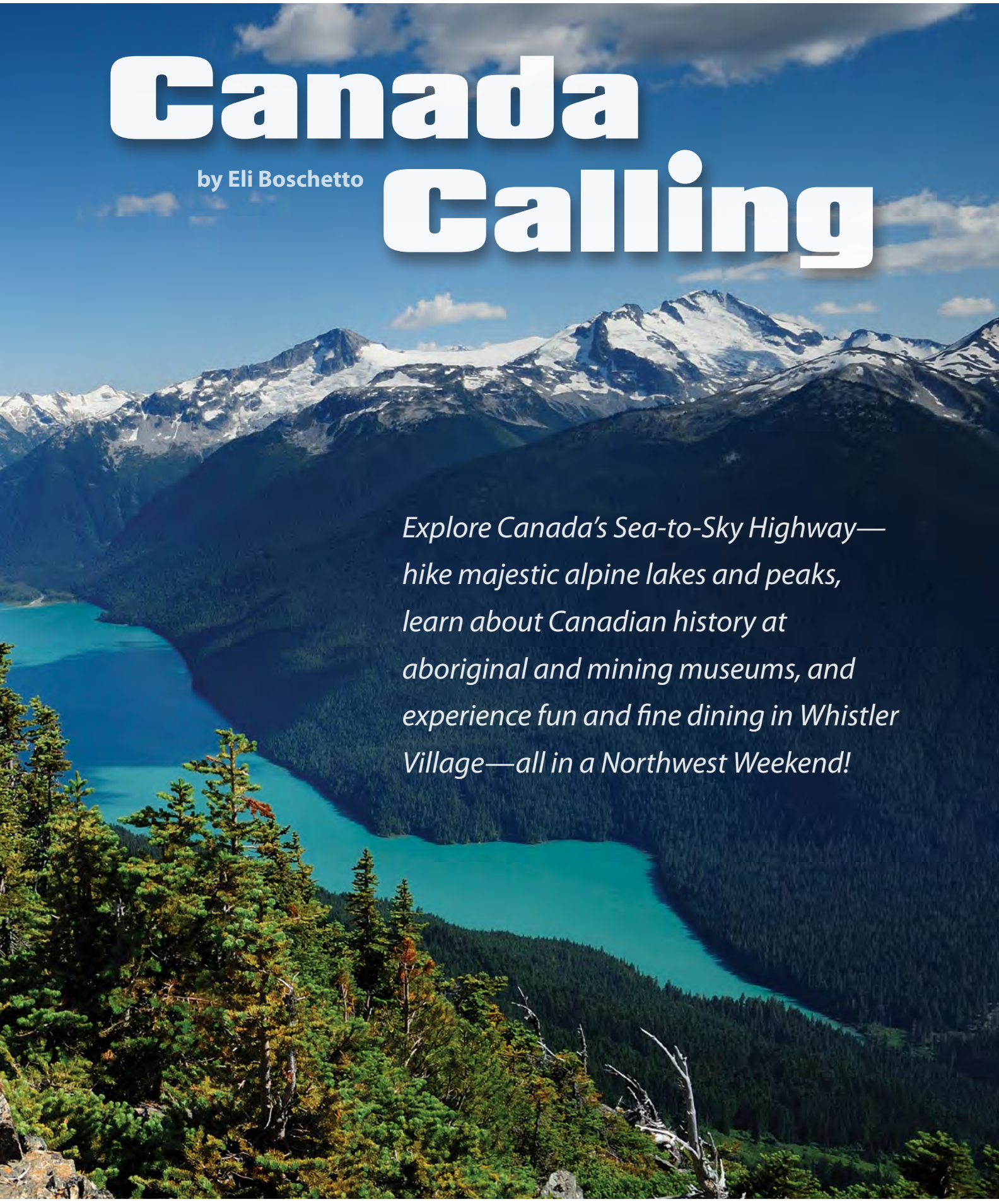
When I've had my fill of the views, I like taking the spur trail down to the lake to lounge in the meadows and, if it's warm and there aren't too many bugs, take a swim from one of the sandy beaches. Rested and refreshed, I get a repeat performance of the scenery heading back the way I came, pausing for the views of wildflowers and distant peaks, satisfied with another fine day in the Goat Rocks. As I'm walking, I'm already planning my return in the autumn, when the basin will be as red with huckleberry as it is blue with lupine during summer, all the while reflecting that the hike to Shoe Lake is hard to beat.

*— David Hagen*

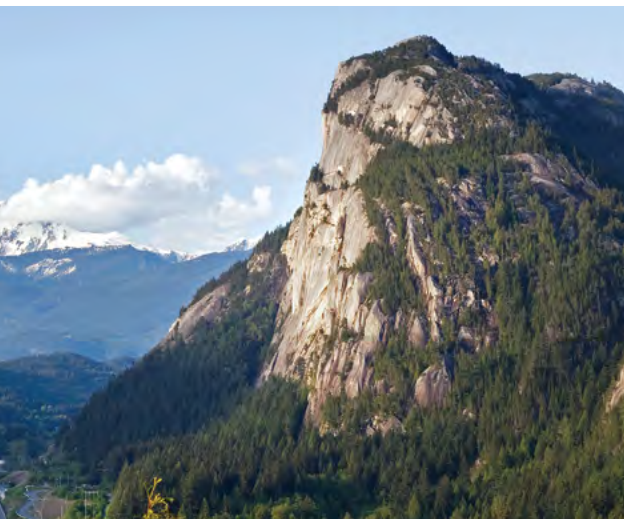

NORTHWEST
WEEKEND
Whistler, B.C.

# Canada Calling

by Eli Boschetto



*Explore Canada's Sea-to-Sky Highway—hike majestic alpine lakes and peaks, learn about Canadian history at aboriginal and mining museums, and experience fun and fine dining in Whistler Village—all in a Northwest Weekend!*



***You've no doubt heard of the world-class skiing*** at Canada's Whistler-Blackcomb Resort. What you may not have heard of is the equally world-class hiking in those same mountains, shortly after the winter snows have melted away. With countless trails reaching deep into the Coast Mountains' alpine regions, you'll marvel at ragged peaks, crystalline lakes and immense glaciers amid sprawling meadows and gurgling creeks. And your days aren't over when the hiking ends, as Whistler's wide selection of pubs, eateries and fine restaurants will charm everyone from casual diners to even the most critical foodie.

For an easy start to your trip, drive north on I-5 and take exit 275 to enter Canada at the **Pacific Crossing**. (Passport or enhanced Washington driver's license required for traveling to/from Canada; cbp.gov.) After crossing, continue north on Pacific Highway 15 to its connection with Trans-Canada Highway 1. (This will help you avoid the traffic and congestion of going through Vancouver.) Take Hwy-1 west through Burnaby and North Vancouver towards Horseshoe Bay. As Hwy-1 comes to its end, transition onto the Sea-to-Sky Highway 99 toward Squamish and Whistler (1). Heading north, enjoy a spectacularly scenic drive up the east side of Howe Sound as the craggy Coast Mountains begin soaring above.

## Canada's Outdoor Capital

Your first stop is the **Britannia Mining Museum** (britanniaminemuseum.ca) in the small town of Britannia Beach (2). The Britannia Mine—with more than 150 miles of mining tunnels—first began operating in 1888 and by 1929 was the largest producer of copper in what was still part of the British Empire. Numerous interpretive displays focus on mining machinery, core samples and the miners' lifestyle; a forty-minute train tour into the historic Mill 3 building offers a glimpse of what it was like to work in an underground mine. Kids will delight in panning for gold or getting a close-up look at a giant haul truck.

By now you're probably ready for lunch—and you'll want to fuel up for today's big hike. Drive north to the town of Squamish (3), taking note of the towering granite prominence just outside of town; you'll be heading back there after lunch. Behind the Extra Foods grocery store, stop into **The Cup Bistro and Deli** (thecupbistro.com). This hole-in-the-wall eatery creates a variety of mouthwatering soups, salads and sandwiches using organic, locally sourced ingredients. They also offer a selection of cold cuts and cheeses for do-it-yourself creations—you might want to stock up for the weekend.

Recharged, head back to the Shannon Falls parking area (4) at **Stawamus Chief Provincial Park** (bcparks.ca), across the road from the Klahanie Campground. Start your exploration by first taking a short, well-maintained path to a viewpoint

**PHOTOS THIS PAGE, FROM TOP:**

Mill 3 building at the Britannia Mining Museum, photo by Alex Law; Shannon Falls near Squamish, photo by Bob Young/Tourism B.C.; The imposing Stawamus Chief, photo by Bob Young/Tourism B.C.; Summer in Whistler Village, photo by JF Bergeron/Tourism B.C.

**PHOTOS OPPOSITE PAGE, FROM TOP:**

Tree Trek EcoTour, courtesy of Ziptrek; Fine dining at Kypriaki Norte in Whistler Village, courtesy of Kypriaki Norte; Garibaldi Lake in Garibaldi Provincial Park, courtesy of B.C. Parks; Upper Joffre Lake in Joffre Lakes Provincial Park, photo by Robert Nowak; Black bear family, photo by Michael Allen/Tourism Whistler

**OPENING SPREAD:**

Hikers on Whistler's High Note Trail get a bird's eye view of Cheakamus Lake; photo by Steve Rogers/Tourism Whistler

## Be Bear Smart

The mountains and meadows of Canada's Coast Mountains are home to hundreds of black bears. They spend their summers feeding on open ski slopes, berry patches and alongside the roadways. Many bears have become habituated to human presence, but as with bears anywhere, they should never be approached, and viewed from a safe and respectable distance. If you notice a sow with cubs, exercise proper bear etiquette and leave the area.

For more information on Whistler's furry residents, visit **bearsmart.com**.

below 1,105-foot **Shannon Falls**, the third-highest waterfall in British Columbia. Now it's time to really stretch those legs. The trail to the top of **Stawamus Chief** is a heart-thumping 4.5-mile round trip with nearly 2,000 feet of elevation gain. The payoff is a stunning aerial view high above Howe Sound, with a string of Coast Mountain peaks to the west. To reach the summit you'll use a series of dirt trails, wooden steps, ropes and ladders—go for Peak Two for the best views. It may sound harrowing, but it's safe for most ages.

At this point, you've had a pretty full day and are probably ready for some food and relaxation. Head back through Squamish, making a quick stop at **Nesters Market** (nestersmarket.com/squamish) to load up on weekend necessities—bread, cheese, drinks and snacks—then drive north to Whistler's Creekside Village (5) and dinner at **Creekbread** (creekbread.com). Order one of their specialty pizzas or salads, all created with local, organic ingredients. Their wood-fired pizzas are so tasty, you'll never look at ordinary pizzas the same way again. Ready to retire, head for your lodging or campground of choice (see a list of recommendations on page 34), and get well rested—your weekend is only beginning.

## Choose Your Adventure

For day two, start early and stay local. Enjoy what Whistler Village (6) has to offer: dining, shopping—and hiking! Tailor a hike to your own liking—short, long, easy, strenuous—at the **Whistler Interpretive Forest** (whistlereh.com/whistler-parks/interpretive-forest-park.html), a network of trails in a lush forest preserve along the Cheakamus River, or in **Lost Lake Park**, with more than 18 miles of trails around a peaceful, forested lake. For elevation hounds, ride the Whistler Gondola and Peak Chair to hike the **High Note Trail** (whistlerblackcomb.com/todo/summer/hiking). From nearly a vertical mile above the valley floor, you'll be captivated by breathtaking panoramic views of the Coast Mountains and peer far below to the brilliant blue waters of Cheakamus Lake on a 5.8-mile circuit. Have lunch on the mountain at the **Roundhouse** and take the gondola back down, or hike the **Singing Pass Trail** all the way back to the village and build your own burger at **Splitz Grill** (splitzgrill.com).

If you still have some time in the afternoon, check out the **TreeTrek Canopy Walk** (ziptrek.com/whistler-canada). These guided interpretive tours take visitors up to 200 feet into the treetops in the wooded valley between Whistler and Blackcomb Mountains. This interactive experience highlights woodland ecology and composition, from ancient old growth to more recent second-generation forest, along a series of suspension bridges, boardwalks and viewing platforms. For a more thrilling treetop experience, try a **Ziptrek Adventure** and soar like a bird as you whiz down a series of ziplines high above Fitzsimmons Creek. For a little downtime and a lesson in British Columbia's cultural history, visit the **Squamish**

**Lil'wat Cultural Centre** (slcc.ca). Here you can learn about Canada's aboriginal peoples through a self-guided tour and a variety of interactive and interpretive displays examining language, legends, art, natural resources and technology.

Finish your day with a truly memorable dinner at **Kypriaki Norte** (kypriaki.net; reservations recommended). This Greek and Mediterranean restaurant has been a Whistler favorite for more than seventeen years, with an extensive wine list and sumptuous dishes prepared by chef-owner Kike Redondo. Meat eaters will want to try the Roast Lamb a la Cypriota—a house specialty that is absolutely delicious. For something more casual, or dinner with the kids, drop into **Caramba!** (caramba-restaurante.com), and order from a selection of sure-to-please pizzas, pastas and seafood.

Enjoy an all-natural pizza baked in a primitive wood-fired oven at Creekbread; photo by Todd Lawson

## Big Time Alpine

By day three you're probably ready for a big hike and a taste of the best that B.C.'s Coast Mountains can offer. Of the myriad opportunities to head into the alpine, two trails are a step above. Between Squamish and Whistler, **Garibaldi Lake** (7) is the 2,460-acre turquoise jewel of Garibaldi Provincial Park. An 11.2-mile round trip journeys up Rubble Creek, and passes The Barrier, Taylor Meadows and Parnasus Creek en route to the lakeshore with views of the Battleship Islands, Sphinx Glacier and numerous volcanic peaks. North of Whistler, **Joffre Lakes Provincial Park** (8) offers a 6.8-mile round trip to three teal-colored lakes and a close-up view of Mattier Glacier that will leave you, as one guidebook puts it, "gobsmacked." Climb more than 1,300 feet from the Cayoosh Pass trailhead into a towering amphitheater of stone, ice and water below Joffre Peak and Slalok Mountain.

After your long day on the trail, you're probably ready for some comfort food and a cold brew. Back in the Village, settle in to a fireside table at Whistler's **BrewHouse** (markjamesgroup.com/brewhouse.html) and sample one of their handcrafted beers while dining on a selection of rotisserie and barbecue meals. Or, if you're feeling Irish, drop into the **Dubh Linn Gate Pub** (dubhlinngate.com) for a cold pint and hearty servings of shepherd's pie and fish-and-chips while enjoying live music. After dinner, wind down for the evening and stroll the summer **ArtWalk** (artswhistler.com; July–August), featuring the works of local artists, dancers and musicians, and call it a weekend well spent.

As you begin your homeward journey the next morning, make a quick stop in Squamish at the **Sunflower Bakery Cafe** (sunflowerbakerycafe.com) for coffee and fresh pastries. You might also want to grab one of their gourmet sandwiches prepared on fresh-baked bread for later. Enjoy the drive back down the Sea-to-Sky Highway, and consider where you'll go the next time you come to frolic in Canada's Coast Mountains.✦


### Village Lodging

**Summit Lodge & Spa**
Whistler Village (6)
(888) 913-8811
summitlodge.com

**Tantalus Resort Lodge**
Whistler Village (6)
(888) 633-4046
tantaluslodge.com

**Nita Lake Lodge**
Whistler Creekside (5)
(888) 755-6482
nitalakelodge.com

### Local Camping

**Paradise Valley**
North of Squamish (9)
(800) 922-1486
paradisevalleycampground.net

**Riverside Resort**
South of Whistler (5)
(604) 905-5533
whistlercamping.com

**Nairn Falls Provincial Park**
South of Pemberton (10)
(800) 689-9025
bcparks.ca

### Other Activities

**WildPlay Whistler**
North of Whistler (11)
(888) 297-2222
wildplay.com

**Bear Viewing Tours**
Blackcomb Base (6)
(866) 218-9684
whistlerblackcomb.com/todo

**Farmer's Market**
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# Inspired by Adventure

We started Mazama Bar out of a simple desire to get the most out of life and live with passion. Stuck behind desks all week, we longed to be exploring the mountains, lakes and trails of the Northwest. We took every opportunity to go hiking in Washington, skiing in Oregon and backpacking across the High Sierra, crossing experiences off our ever-growing life-list.

It takes energy to power across all these trails our beautiful country has to offer, and hiking is more enjoyable when we treat our bodies right. But the more time we spent on the trail, the more we found the food options lacking—too heavy, unhealthy, inconvenient and packed with highly processed fillers. We wanted real food with great taste, without sacrificing performance.

The goal was simple: create a tasty, compact, healthy, meal replacement that would last on the trail, and satisfy better than just a snack. Using high-quality natural ingredients, we crammed more than 400 well-balanced calories into each bar, making it a solid meal in just 3.25 ounces. Tasty, convenient and portable, we started using them for our trail lunches while hiking and backpacking. Less planning, less packing, and less weight in our packs!

We shared them with friends and hiking companions—and they wanted more! We said good-bye to the desk jobs and began devoting our time to making the highest-quality and best-tasting energy bars. And to pay homage to everything we love about the Northwest—good food, a healthy lifestyle and spectacular outdoor opportunities—we named it Mazama Bar.

**What people are saying about Mazama Bar:**

"This is the best tasting energy bar I've ever eaten, and I've tried them all!"
*– Wayne W. , trail runner, ultra-marathoner*

"Perfect for lunch on the trail or when I'm stuck inside."
*– Jeff J. Wonderland Trail thru-hiker*

**Brittany and Derek Manwill, creators of Mazama Bar.**

**Go farther and lighten your own pack.** Try Mazama Bar—high-performance nutrition to help you get out there and do the things you love.

**Available online at**
**mazamabar.com**


All-natural, Mazama Bar is preservative-free, GMO-free, and cold-pressed to retain the highest nutrient content. Mazama Bar supports Washington's growers and economy so it sources as many ingredients as possible from right here in the Northwest.


Map illustration by Julie Cassata

"The greatest thing about geocaching is that anyone can do it, regardless of age or physical ability. It's a fun family activity."

# HIKE AND SEEK

By Abby Wolfe

## "Now, this is what geocaching is all about!"

I hustled up the last few feet of Wedge Mountain and joined my friends in awe of the panorama before us: the Snow Lakes at our feet and sweeping views westward into the heart of the Enchantments. We made quick work of locating the nearby cache, then relaxed over lunch and enjoyed yet another amazing spot discovered through geocaching.

There's something about geocaching that holds special appeal. Maybe it's the quest for "hidden treasure," or the ability to sign a log showing I was there, much like a summit register. Or maybe it's that geocaching shows me places that aren't in hiking guides, where I can experience something new and special. Whatever the reason, I was hooked on geocaching from the first time I tried it. I dubbed it "goal-oriented hiking," and it became a great way for me to learn about Washington's outdoors.

Thanks to my geocaching adventures, I've explored countless parks, pioneer cemeteries and fire lookouts; climbed Mount St. Helens and Mount Aix; hiked every part of the state from the Olympics to the Salmo-Priest Wilderness; and wandered back roads in national forests from the Cascades to the Umatillas. Nine years and 8,300 caches later, I probably know Washington better than most—yet I'm still discovering new places!

### A NORTHWEST PHENOMENON

Born right here in the Pacific Northwest just twelve years ago, geocaching is one of the fastest-growing recreational activities around, far outpacing its older cousin, letterboxing. It is essentially a game of high-tech hide-and-seek using a GPS receiver. Players hide containers and post the coordinates on a geocaching website. Geocachers locate the caches with their GPS device, sign the logbook, trade trinkets, then log their experiences online.

The first geocache was placed May 3, 2000, the day after the U.S. government turned off "selective availability," the intentional degradation of the GPS (Global Positioning System) signal available to civilians. Consumer GPS units instantly became 10 times more accurate. An Oregon man tested the new capabilities by hiding a container in the woods outside of Portland. He posted the coordinates on an Internet newsgroup and challenged others to find his "GPS stash."

Within a year, hundreds of geocaches appeared around the world. Today there are more than 1.7 million active geocaches worldwide—27,000 in Washington state alone—with more than 5 million people calling themselves "geocachers."

The first caches were placed by hard-core hikers, who shared favorite locations and hidden wonders. While geo-hiking remains a key draw, especially here in Washington, geocaches can be found just about anywhere, from local parks to remote fire lookouts. There are caches for city slickers and mountain climbers, for boaters and scuba divers, for bicyclists and snowshoers. There's even a special designation for accessible caches.

While many caches simply provide an excuse to get outdoors, others share local history or geology. A selection of Cougar Mountain caches highlights the mining, railroad and logging history of the park. This is information not available on park signs. A special category called "earthcaches," supported by the Geological Society of America, teaches about area geology. Through earthcaches, one can visit the spires of Palouse Falls or the eelgrass meadows of Puget Sound. Some of the best earthcaches are the ice age floods caches by renowned geologist Bruce Bjornstad, which describe specific features carved out by the massive floods.

### ANYONE CAN DO IT

The greatest thing about geocaching is that anyone can do it, regardless of age or physical ability. It's a fun family activity—kids love gadgets and treasure hunts, so what better way to get them unplugged and outdoors? While many aficionados may have already been hikers, geocaching has encouraged folks who've never explored nature to venture off the pavement.

For serious geocachers, a dedicated GPS unit with mapping capabilities is a must. But thanks to the geocaching apps now available for smartphones, anyone can try geocaching or do it occasionally without making a major investment. (See this issue's Gear Closet for more on GPS devices.)

The leading geocaching website is geocaching.com, run by Seattle-based Groundspeak. This site provides information on available geocaches, which players can load onto their GPS devices. After finding the caches, players log their finds online and share their experiences.

Geocaching.com does more than simply list caches, however. It governs the activity through a set of guidelines and volunteer reviewers, which together encourage responsible participation and prevent cache placements in off-limits areas.

Despite being described as a "treasure hunt," one of the cardinal rules is that a geocache cannot be buried (and the trinkets have no real value). No disturbance or defacement of natural or manmade objects is allowed, and caches cannot be placed

on private property without permission. Restricted areas include schools, railroads and national parks.

## WORKING WITH PARKS

When geocaching first appeared, land managers were concerned about its potential impact. Some park systems banned it outright (federal), others created a permit process (state), and many took a wait-and-see approach (city, county). But parks at all levels soon discovered that geocaching was bringing in more visitors, and the impact was no greater than hiking and less than mountain biking or camping. Park managers began to see geocaching as an educational tool and potential revenue source.

Geocachers also built positive relationships through the Cache In Trash Out (CITO) program, an environmental initiative supported by the worldwide geocaching community as a way to give back to the parks. A CITO event can be trash pickup, invasive plant removal, trail building—whatever the park needs. "Geocachers are, without a doubt, some of the hardest-working volunteers we get," says Niki McBride, resource coordinator at Cougar Mountain, part of King County Parks.

King County was an early supporter of geocaching, but today, many land managers embrace geocaching and even offer geocaching classes and activities. Richland City Parks launched its third-annual geocaching challenge in June, and the National Park Service has recently revised its geocaching policy to allow geocaching at the discretion of park superintendents. In 2010, Chip Jenkins, superintendent of the North Cascades National Park Service Complex, permitted the first two caches in a western national park. At Mount Rainier, Ranger Kevin Bacher became an avid geocacher and has placed earthcaches highlighting his favorite mountain.

Today, Washington State Geocaching Association (WSGA; wsgaonline.org) represents geocachers across the state. Through their Park Liaison Program, WSGA works closely with park systems to educate them about geocaching, provide caching activities, address issues and create mutually beneficial relationships.

Twelve years after that first "GPS stash" was placed, the Pacific Northwest remains the home of geocaching, with enthusiasts visiting from around the world to find our historic caches in their breathtaking surroundings. As an Indiana cacher once told me, "We don't have scenery like this back home!"✦

*Abby Wolfe, aka "hydnsek," is president of the Washington State Geocaching Association.*

## GEOCACHING RESOURCES

- **Website:** Geocaching.com lists caches and provides in-depth resources
- **Organization:** Washington State Geocaching Association (WSGA) supports geocachers and works with parks; wsgaonline.org
- **Guidebook:** The *Complete Idiot's Guide to Geocaching*, by Alpha Books, is the go-to guide for all levels of geocachers. See how you can win a copy at wta.org/geocache
- **Maps:** Northwest Trails offers a free mapset for Garmin and DeLorme GPS users for hiking and geocaching; switchbacks.com/nwtrails
- **Event:** Seattle's Geo-Days takes place August 18–19 this year. Join hundreds of cachers from around the world for a weekend of geocaching fun; geocaching.com

**Geocacher Stefani Ryan finds a cache in the Salt Creek Recreation Area. Says Ryan, "Our signal was spotty in this area, so we spent a lot of time searching. The hunt was worth it though—we found a geocoin!"**

**Photo by Kelsie Donleycott**

# GEOCACHER QUIZ

Are you an experienced geocacher, or have you ever thought about trying it? Take our geo-quiz and find out how savvy of a cacher you are. After, enter the drawing to win a geocaching starter kit, complete with guidebook, geocoin and travel bug.

1. Who placed the first geocache outside Portland, Ore., on May 3, 2000?

2. Who coined the name "geocaching," and where did it first appear?

3. When geocaching.com launched on Sept. 2, 2000, how many geocaches were there in the world?

4. Which of the following require permission to place geocaches?
   a. Washington state parks  b. National parks
   c. National recreation areas  d. All of the above

5. Why was Washington State Geocaching Association (WSGA) formed?

6. Which of these is not a type of geocache?
   a. multi-cache  b. indoor cache
   c. event cache  d. puzzle cache

7. Which of the following is not part of a cache listing?
   a. Coordinates  b. Terrain and Difficulty ratings
   c. Cache size  d. Street address

8. Caches come in all sizes. What's the smallest listed size?

9. Name three things not allowed in caches.

10. What do these geocaching acronyms mean:
    a. TFTC  b. DNF  c. BYOP  d. FTF

11. Who is responsible for maintaining caches?

12. What does it mean to "archive" a cache?

13. What are Travel Bugs and Geocoins, and how do they work?

14. What's the geocaching term for non-cachers?

15. How many continents have geocaches

For quiz answers, visit wta.org/geocache

## CALLING ALL MUGGLES!

***Washington Trails* has three intro to geocaching toolkits available to help get you started.**

**Visit wta.org/geocache and enter our drawing for one of these free kits (GPS not included). Courtesy of Groundspeak and Gear Aid.**


## On your mark... Get set... Click!

2011 Grand Prize winner *Ruby Beach*, by Todd Mortensen

# Northwest Exposure 2012

Washington Trails Association's annual photo contest is coming. That means it's time to get out on your favorite wilderness trails and start capturing those beautiful landscapes that make us so proud to live and hike here in the Northwest.

**Trailscapes** – Wilderness landscapes, and the trails that take you through them

**Hikers in Action** – Capture the experience with hikers on trails

**Flora & Fauna** – Woods, wildflowers and all things four-legged and furry

**Families Go Hiking** – Fun at your favorite hiking and camping destinations

**Offbeat** – Show us the weird, wild and wacky from your outdoor adventures

The contest kicks off August 15. Look for more info in the next issue of *Washington Trails*, or online at **wta.org/northwestexposure**.

# GPS 101

By Patrick Leahy


**You've probably heard of GPS.** You may have checked one out at your local gear supplier, or maybe have one in your car or on your smartphone. Besides roadway navigation, a GPS can be a very useful tool for backcountry travelers.

At first limited to military applications, Global Positioning System (GPS) technology was first used by the U.S. government in the 1970s. The technology utilizes 24 satellites that are continuously orbiting the earth. Each satellite is equipped with an atomic clock, and each sends out radio signals indicating its exact time and location. When an earth-based GPS receiver picks up at least three of these satellite signals, it can calculate its location based on the positions of the satellites. Add a fourth satellite signal, and it can indicate your elevation above sea level.

As the technology continues to improve and become more reliable and accurate, the general public has access to a wide array of feature-packed handheld GPS receivers with a variety of navigation applications. There's no need to be intimidated by this technology. With a little understanding and a few basic tips, you can begin using your own GPS device right out of the box.

## You Are Here

Before it can be of any help to you in the backcountry, your GPS needs to identify where you are on the surface of the earth. When arriving at your trailhead or starting point and first turning on your GPS, it's important that the device has a clear view of the sky in order to identify your present location. Turn it on and let it make its satellite connection while you're lacing up your boots and prepping your pack. Once connected, most devices have a single button that can be pressed to mark and store your starting position. As you head out on your hike, the device will regularly update its position relative to the satellite transmissions it receives, thereby showing you exactly where on earth you are.

Most GPS devices come preset with some form of basemap. These are often suitable for highway use, but have little to offer backcountry travelers. For many devices, additional software is available to upgrade your basemap. Garmin offers 1:24,000 scale topographic maps on DVDs, SD data cards, or downloads. These maps can be just as accurate as a paper map, showing known trails, contour lines and shaded relief.

Keep in mind that where you keep your device while hiking is important. It should be placed in the top of your pack or attached high on a shoulder strap in order to receive optimal signals. If you find yourself in deeply wooded forests or narrow canyons, your device may not be able to pinpoint your position accurately. If necessary, find a clearing in the forest or climb to a high point with a clear view of the sky to regain an accurate reading.

## Mark Your Path

Marking locations as you hike can be quite useful. These are called "waypoints" or "breadcrumbs," and can help you navigate back to your starting point, tag locations you might want to remember on a return trip, or get you to a sought-after destination. As you hike, you can mark waypoints such as trail junctions, campsites, water sources or land features. On most devices, marking a waypoint is a simple operation and lets you enter a short description of that location.

Similarly, waypoints can be entered before you start a trip, so that your GPS can aid you in getting to that destination. If your goal is a certain summit or pass, you can enter the coordinates of that exact location. These coordinates can be manually entered (from a topographic map), or you can use mapping software to create a waypoint on your computer and then upload that waypoint to your device. Your device will then be able to use these waypoints for navigation, steering you in the direction you want to go.

## Get There

Using at least two waypoints (e.g., starting point, ending point), your GPS can show you the most direct route to navigate to your destination point. It's very important to understand that this route is "as the crow flies," and does not consider obstacles—cliffs, rivers, glaciers, etc. In this case a detailed map is critical to help you understand exactly how to get where you want to go.

## When comparing GPS devices:

- **Touch-screen models:** Larger maps, intuitive interface
- **LCD models:** user-friendly, more affordable
- **Operating system:** Mac vs. Windows
- **Memory:** Fixed internal, expandable SD card slot
- **Batteries:** Rechargeable or lithium batteries recommended; shorter battery life for touch-screen models
- **Basemap:** Area of coverage and detail without adding additional mapping software or downloads
- **Other features:** Digital compass, altimeter, wireless data sharing, 2-way text messaging, water repellency
- **Camera:** megapixels and storage capacity

Some mapping software, like National Geographic's TOPO!, or online mapping tools, like TrimbleOutdoors.com, allow you to create GPS tracks to upload to your device. In these tools, you can mark a starting point, a route to take, any points of interest along the way, and a destination. Some even have preset trips already available. Once uploaded to your device, you simply follow your digital path.

## Track Your Trip

If you want to track your entire trip and see everywhere you went on your journey out and back, then you want to take advantage of the track log of your GPS. This feature tracks your entire day and can be useful for analysis of your trip afterward. If you export the information your device captures to your computer's mapping software, you can see where you were at all points along the journey. How long did it take to get to the lake? How much elevation was gained? Where did you make that wrong turn?

Bringing back a track log of your trip can also be a fun way to show off to friends and family where you went. But remember to turn off the track log feature when your trip is over—the last thing you want is the 150-mile car trip home captured by your device.

Bear in mind, as convenient and helpful as a GPS device can be in the backcountry, it should still be considered a supplement to a traditional map and compass—not a replacement. Like any electronic device, a GPS is very sensitive to the elements and is useful only as long as its batteries last. Maps will show you specific trails that can be used to avoid crosscutting sensitive wilderness or treacherous topography.

And finally, a GPS may show you a shorter route, but trails allow hikers to move faster and easier through the backcountry while preserving wilderness. So always use trails when they're available!✦

**GPS UNITS PICTURED: Left, Garmin's eTrex 20 is an affordable entry-level unit with expandable micro SD memory, advanced tracking and paperless geocaching, $185; Right, Garmin's Oregon 450 touch-screen model offers an enhanced display, expandable micro SD memory and numerous hiking and geocaching features, $300.**

## App-Tastic!


The *WT* gear team recently previewed the new **ViewRanger GPS Smartphone App** and was very pleased with this integrated navigation package. At the top of the list of super-cool features was the trip tracker, allowing you to record your hike, from start to finish. Also pleasing were the quality of maps available, and the ability to cache them on their phones and continue using when outside of cellular and data range—even as far as Nepal, where one of our testers took this. The only downside—and this is true for any GPS-enabled app—is the tremendous drain on the battery, cutting use time by more than half. Barring that, this handy, user-friendly app makes a perfect companion for long or short outings, or geocaching, at a fraction of the price of a dedicated GPS device. Available for both iPhone and Android smartphones. $8; **viewranger.com**

## Handy High-Tech

It may be small, but the **Tech4o GPS Watch** is no slouch when it comes to full-function navigation features. Packed with features, this device lets you track your progress on a trail, navigate by waypoints, monitor mileage, calculate waypoint distances, and track your speed and altitude. It even comes with a heartrate monitor. Uplink the watch to your PC and configure your own settings and usage profile with software that is straightforward and easy to use. With the GPS on, our team clocked more than 20 hours of continuous use. That's pretty good. Without GPS on it lasted well over 3 weeks. And best of all—it's rechargeable! So take it out, use it up, then plug it in and get ready to go all over again. And did we mention it's water-repellent? Perfect for the Northwest. $199; **tech4o.com**

# Minimizing Muscle Soreness—Naturally

By Dennis Graver

*Every hiker probably wishes that their day-after soreness could be reduced.* A little ache helps us feel like we accomplished something. However, serious soreness can—and should—be prevented. And instead of relying on artificial painkillers after an intense hike, a regimen of pre-hike warm-up and flexibility practices, proper on-trail diet, and post-hike conditioning can alleviate your strained muscles' tension and soreness.

A major factor in avoiding muscle strain is being physically fit. This means that you have the capability to perform a particular activity for a prolonged period without severe physical stress. The primary aspect of fitness is the ability of your circulatory system to meet the demands of the activity. In this way, your body is able to deliver oxygen to cells and remove waste products effectively. This helps your muscles develop and toughen and minimize tiny tears that cause pain after the activity.

But being fit for one activity does not necessarily make you fit for another. You may be able to work out in the gym, but that does not make you fit for backpacking or extended hikes. The best way to develop fitness for any activity is to engage in that activity frequently. If you want to be fit for hiking and reduce delayed-onset muscle soreness (DOMS), hike often. This is a great excuse to help you get out on the trail more frequently. You will quickly find that you will not be as sore if you hike every week.

A little ache helps us feel like we accomplished something.

Serious soreness can—and should—be prevented.

## Before Your Hike

Proper warm-up improves performance and reduces the risk of injury, while good stretching and flexibility practices increase strength and improve posture and breathing.

Warm-up is the process of preparing your body for a physical activity. Many people associate warming up with calisthenics and stretching. It turns out that these activities may be detrimental according to the Cochrane Library. The best warm-up occurs when you engage in the activity that you intend to pursue, gradually building up the intensity. The results are threefold: increased muscle temperature, allowing your muscles to contract with more force; increased body temperature, helping expand your range of motion and reducing the risk of strains and sprains; and increased blood temperature, making it easier for oxygen to be released from the blood to the cells. The process also boosts mental confidence.

Methods to increase flexibility include stretching and yoga. Both are excellent, yoga even providing many physiological and psychological benefits, but neither will reduce DOMS. Stretching should be avoided before exercise because it sends false signals to the body. It disables muscle stretch receptors, confusing muscles and reducing efficiency, which could result in injury. Instead, flexibility exercises are best done in the late afternoon when your body temperature, hormones and circadian rhythms are at their peak. Stretching gently after exercise reduces muscle shortening. Stretch regularly to increase flexibility, and stretch gently after hiking to prevent muscle shortening, but skip stretching as a warm-up routine for hiking.

Photo by Eli Boschetto


## During Your Hike

"You are what you eat" applies to your muscles. By eating and drinking correctly, you can keep your system balanced and reduce muscle soreness.

Form the base for good muscle development by eating protein before your next adventure. Close the protein loop by ending your day with an additional protein serving. Sources include chicken, fish, pork, beef, eggs and cheese. Put peanuts and sunflower seeds in your trail mix. Potassium-rich foods are also beneficial. Snack on dried banana chips or raisins, and eat rehydrated potatoes with dinner.

Antioxidants and polyphenols are excellent in reducing muscle soreness. Antioxidants help to eliminate free radicals (volatile molecules that damage cells and cause them to age by oxidative stress). Polyphenols and antioxidants stabilize free radical molecules, turning them into harmless waste byproducts. Berries, such as blueberries, cranberries, raspberries and blackberries—dried or fresh—have polyphenols and are highly desirable. Another great source of polyphenols, and an excellent snack for reducing DOMS, is dried, tart cherries.

Next, choose foods with anti-inflammatory properties. Salmon, available in sealed pouches, has fatty acids to fight inflammation. Chicken noodle soup has a rightly earned reputation for the same. Many spices are natural anti-inflammatories, including ginger, garlic, basil, cinnamon and turmeric. To help reduce joint pain, snack on dried pineapple, which contains bromelain, an anti-inflammatory often found in pain relievers for arthritis.

Even more important than what you eat is staying hydrated—but you need more than just water. Sip an electrolyte drink frequently to keep your body chemistry balanced. Powdered or tablet-form electrolytes are available to add to filtered water. Avoid caffeinated drinks, which are diuretics that cause you to lose more fluid than you gain.

The next time you finish a hike, try consuming a bottle of mineral water. Mineral water contains sodium bicarbonate, which neutralizes lactic acid in your system. Many of us return to the trailhead, get into our vehicle and drive for hours. During this time, lactic acid in the blood and tissues contributes to soreness. Drinking a bottle of mineral water can lessen DOMS and help you feel better. You can also dissolve a teaspoon of baking soda in your favorite post-hike drink to obtain the same effect. You should limit your intake of baking soda to two teaspoons per day.

Finally, don't forget your vitamins. Vitamins C, D and E help with calcium absorption. Calcium without a means to facilitate absorption just passes through your body.

## Vitamin I: Not What You Think

Hikers love ibuprofen, often referring to it as "Vitamin I." However, ibuprofen has been found to cause serious health problems. Numerous research studies have determined that ibuprofen can cause gastrointestinal problems and increase the risk of heart attack and stroke with extended use. Taking ibuprofen before exercising can cause kidney failure, and exceeding the recommended dosage can cause liver damage. So even though ibuprofen and related medications relieve muscle soreness, the long-term side effects could be detrimental if abused.

If you choose to use ibuprofen, avoid taking it on an empty stomach or before exercising, and do not exceed the number of recommended doses per day. Stop taking it if you develop a rash or blisters. For more information on ibuprofen and its associated risks, visit drugs.com/mtm/ibuprofen.html.

## After Your Hike

Returning to the trailhead or rolling into camp doesn't end your muscle maintenance. Use a combination of massage, heating and cooling, and rest to rejuvenate strained muscles.

According to the Journal of Athletic Training, massage reduces DOMS by 30 percent. A massage thirty minutes after exertion and again a few hours later is recommended. Unfortunately, not many massage therapists have office space at trailheads or in backcountry locations. But you can take a massage roller with you and use it thirty minutes after your hike to help keep your muscles from getting sore. Stop at a rest station or park on your way home, where simple exercises for your legs and back can be done quickly and easily. If camping in the backcountry, use a rolled-up sleeping pad. The process displaces toxins from tissues and replaces them with good fluids.

Another massage technique of note is rubbing extra-virgin olive oil on any areas that are sore. Olive oil contains oleocanthol, which mimics the performance of ibuprofen—without the potential harmful side effects.

Applying ice to painful areas of the body is an excellent way to reduce DOMS. Avoid applying ice packs directly to the skin, but place a thin, wet cloth between the ice pack and your skin. Keep the ice on the painful area until it feels numb, which usually takes about twenty minutes. Remove the ice and allow that region of your body to rewarm. If pain persists when the area is warm, reapply the ice pack. In the wilderness, cold water dipped from a stream into sealable bags can be effective.

The day after treating soreness with ice, apply heat to any residual soreness. The heat will increase circulation to the area and speed the healing process. Soaking in a warm bath of Epsom salts after a multiday trip can be extremely beneficial; in the wilderness, heat water in a pan, then soak a shirt or sock and apply to the sore area.

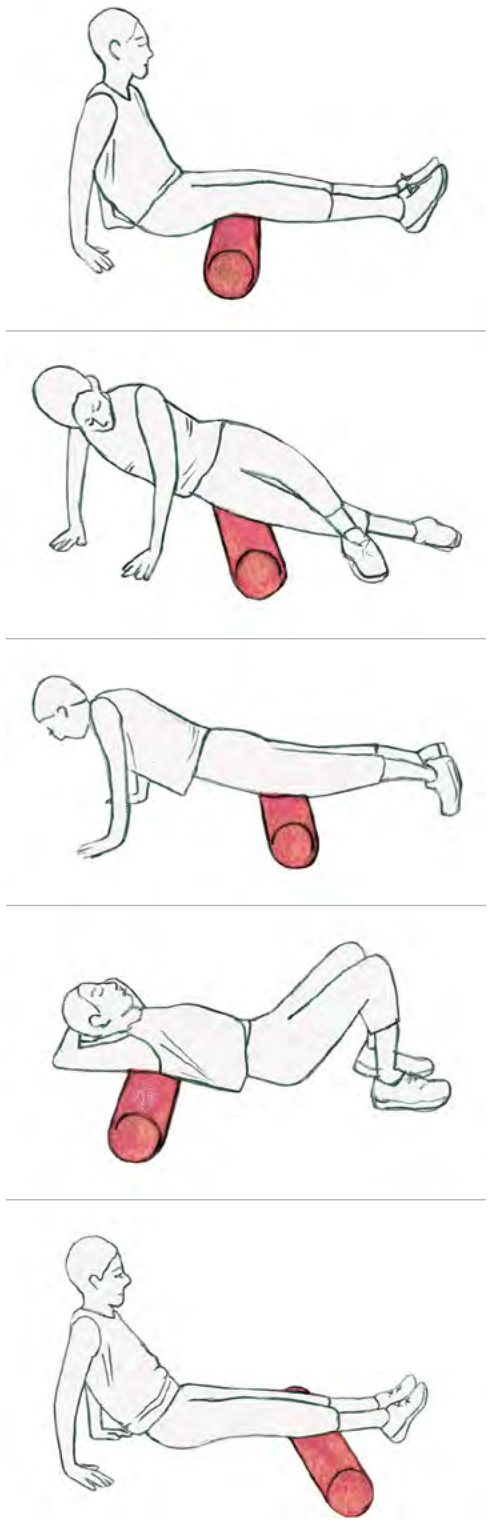
And do not discount good old-fashioned rest. A sore body requires more rest than normal. After several days of strenuous hiking or backpacking, it is a good idea to take a day off to rest and allow your body to recover from the physical stress that it has experienced. This principle becomes more important as you age.

## The Plan

By employing techniques such as these before, during, and after hiking, you can reduce DOMS. Warm up your muscles gradually before attempting maximum exertion, and maintain flexibility using stretching or yoga. Drink and snack frequently on fluids and foods that contain healthful properties. Try mineral water and massage muscles after your hike, especially any sore areas. Practice the proper use of ice and heat to reduce swelling and pain. And remember that rest is good for a sore body and aids in recovery.

In this way, you can spend your outings enjoying the splendor of nature in all her beauty, without muscle soreness distracting from the greatness of your adventure.✦

*Dennis Graver, aka Geezerhiker, is an EMT Instructor for Skagit Valley College and a Wilderness EMT Instructor for National Park Service Rangers. A WTA Top Ten Trip Reporter for 2010 and 2011, Dennis does up to 90 hikes and backpacking trips per year. He hikes every week of the year, regardless of weather. An award-winning underwater photographer, Dennis is now focusing his lens on the wilderness. His "Wild Turkeys on Parade" picture was a recent Featured Photo on WTA's website.*



Use a massage roller to loosen sore muscles. For example, if your calves are tight after hiking, place the roller beneath them and roll from the back of your knees to your Achilles tendon. Hold tight spots for 30 seconds or until pain subsides. The principle applies to all muscle groups. This is a great way to obtain quick relief for tight muscles after a hike—simple, quick and inexpensive.

Illustrations by Kristen Sapowicz

# SIMPLE SOLO SAFETY

As with any hiking trip, the basic rules of safety still apply: pack the Ten Essentials and know how to use them, check trail and weather conditions ahead of time and stay hydrated while on the move. By taking a few additional safety measures before, during and after a solo hike, you will be able to enjoy many fulfilling and rewarding trail experiences.

## BEFORE YOUR HIKE

The single most important thing you can do to ensure your safety when hiking solo is to be well prepared. Research and choose your destination carefully. Opting for a well-traveled trail means that if you do get injured, a fellow hiker is likely to pass by before too long to provide assistance. Selecting a seldom-used trail could result in a lengthy wait before help arrives. If you are new to solo hiking or feel hesitant when it comes to hitting the trail without a partner or group, it is a good idea to choose a trail with which you are familiar. Knowing what to expect minimizes the fear of the unknown, which in turn helps you feel more confident.

After your plans are made, be sure to share those plans with someone else. A good plan should include the name and location of the trail, the exact route you plan to take, and your intended return time. When calculating your return time, be sure to consider the pace at which you typically hike, including stops for lunch and breaks. Also factor in driving time. Due to spotty cellphone coverage in the mountains, you may not be able to call your contact person until you've returned to a more developed area. The Snohomish County Sheriff's Office has a printable hiking plan available at http://sheriff.snoco.org/forms/hikingplan.pdf. The more details you provide, the quicker search-and-rescue crews will be able to locate you in the unlikely event that you require their services.

## DURING YOUR HIKE

Upon arriving at the trailhead, take a moment to identify a turnaround time. This is the time at which you will turn around and head back whether you have reached your intended destination or not. Setting a turnaround time ensures that you will have ample time to return safely before you find yourself in a risky situation—and before your contact person gets worried.

While hiking, be acutely aware of your physical limitations. Pushing yourself beyond your comfort zone can leave you in a hazardous situation. Is that stream running higher than you are comfortable with? Does that snowfield look too steep to tackle? Do you have the stamina to climb the last 500 vertical feet up a rocky slope? Asking yourself these types of questions—and answering yourself honestly—is the appropriate action to keep you out of harm's way when you are traveling the trail alone.

And always follow the plans you made. Unexpected events happen—trail conditions deteriorate, storms develop and hazards force you to turn back. When these things happen, it can be tempting to hike a different trail instead. But unless you have a way to communicate changes to your contact person, you should either stick with your plans or head home. While it is disappointing to turn back before reaching that stunning lake, waterfall or scenic overlook, keep in mind that you can always return another time.

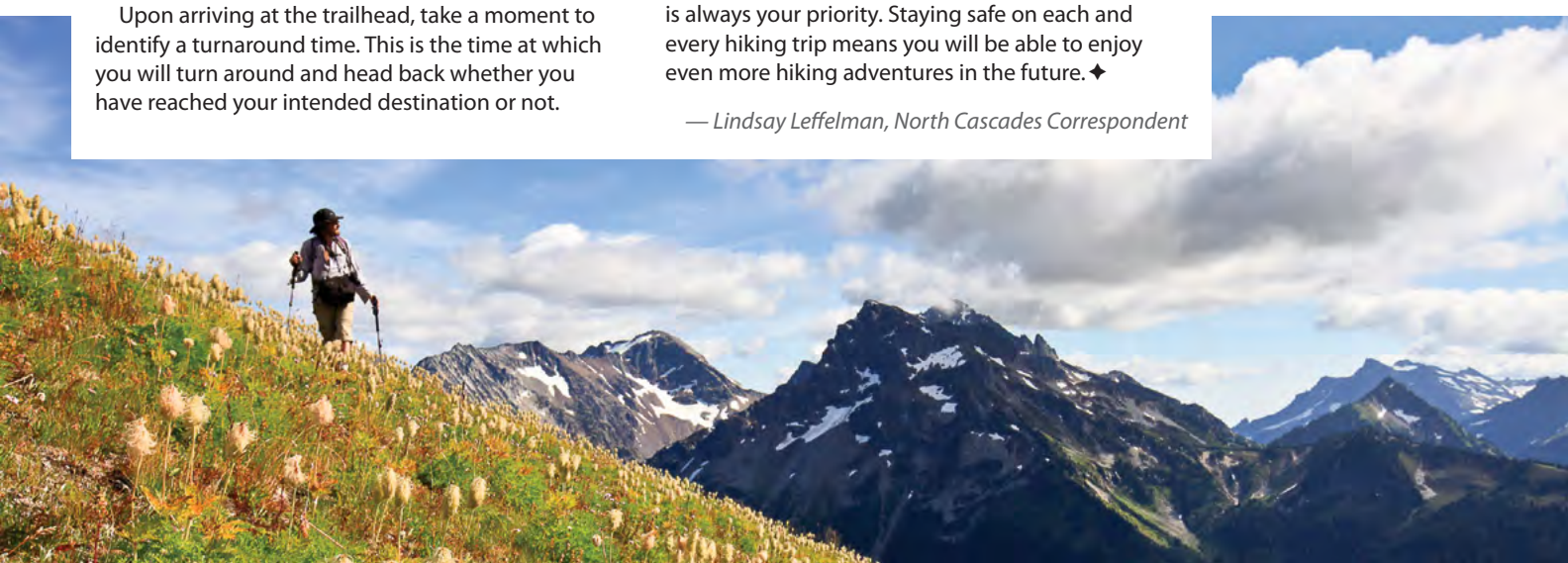
## AFTER YOUR HIKE

Upon the successful and safe completion of your hike, remember to check in with your contact person. Take time to reflect on the trip by thinking about what actions you took that kept you feeling safe, and what aspects, if any, made you feel unsafe. Consider what you could do differently next time to feel more comfortable and content hiking by yourself.

"Safety first" and "better safe than sorry" are two commonly used phrases that are especially applicable to solo hiking. Spending quality time on your own in nature is certainly a worthwhile and valuable experience, so long as your personal safety is always your priority. Staying safe on each and every hiking trip means you will be able to enjoy even more hiking adventures in the future.✦

*— Lindsay Leffelman, North Cascades Correspondent*

*Solo hiking has its advantages: solitude, time to think and the ability to be in complete control of your hiking plans. However, solo hiking also has one major disadvantage: no one is there to help you if you get into trouble. By employing a few simple tactics, you can feel confident and safe when hiking alone.*



**Hiker on Miner's Ridge in Glacier Peak Wilderness**

**Photo by Buff Black**

# The Most Mysterious Beast in the Forest

*By Tami Asars*

> "Suddenly, a movement ahead caught my eye... a cougar crossed the trail!"

It was a beautiful September morning and the sun had done a fine job of being my alarm clock. Beside my bed, my German Shepherd, Summit, was licking my hand, practically begging me to take him out walking, ready to enjoy the first few rays of the day. Still sleepy, we headed a few miles down the road to the John Wayne Trail. The crisp morning presented itself in a wonder of enchantment, with dewy trailside foliage creating a mystical fog through the sunlight.

My quiet peace was shattered when Summit started barking in loud ferocious *woofs*, startling me out of my morning reverie. He seemed confused and stuck his long snout into the air, obviously tracking a scent. I detected nothing myself. Resolving that he'd had a case of mistaken identity, we continued on. Ten minutes later we turned around to head back. Summit curiously sniffed and poked around on the trailside.

Suddenly, a movement ahead caught my eye. Near the spot of Summit's earlier outburst, a cougar crossed the trail, paused for a moment on the other side and melded into the underbrush. Summit, completely oblivious, still poked around, unaware of what had just transpired. "Some guard dog," I thought. The forest's most mysterious beast had just materialized from the deep, manifesting its graceful body and long tail to my unsuspecting eyes. I raced back home to share my excitement with anyone who would listen.

## Peaceful Coexistence

Cougar, mountain lion, puma and catamount are just a few names for the great cats that roam the Northwestern forests. They have long been a source of fear, legend and fascination for those of us who use the backcountry as our playground. But have we reason to worry? While cougars do walk among us, they are typically shy, wary creatures with a

**This months-old cougar kitten explores life outside of mother's den in the Snoqualmie Forest.**

**Photo by Dr. Brian Kertson**

preferred diet that consists of animals other than hikers frosted with Gore-Tex, sauteed in deet, and served with a side of ripstop nylon backpack. In fact, even seeing or hearing a cougar in a lifetime spent on the trail is rare. But can we coexist peacefully with creatures that have destructive potential, can sprint 40 miles per hour and can leap 20 feet into trees in a single bound?

Consider the number of people enjoying the backcountry in Washington state on any given week. We far outnumber the approximately 2,000 to 2,500 cougars that, according to the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, cruise our local mountains. At Mount Si alone, with its 30,000 to 50,000 hikers per year, a cougar could have the hottest rotating sushi belt in town. If they wanted to attack humans, they no doubt would have their share of opportunities.

Yet attacks are rare in Washington. In 112 years, there have been 17 non-fatal attacks and only one fatal attack, which occurred in 1924 in the scarcely populated area of Okanogan County. With a hearty population of people in the backcountry, why are these numbers so low? It comes down to two simple reasons. The first: cougars don't enjoy the taste of humans and prefer their diet of ungulates, such as deer and elk, along with small rodents and birds. Luckily for them, even in winter, Washington provides a healthy all-you-can-eat buffet of prized creatures for their hungry palate. The second reason is that cougars struggle with the same challenge as all carnivorous beasts: being a fairly shy animal that is greatly misunderstood.

## Understanding Cougar Behavior

Dr. Brian Kertson, a leading cougar biologist in Washington, has spent years doing the most in-depth study to date on cougar-human behavior and interactions. Cougars were fitted with tracking collars and followed for years using radio telemetry. The result of the study revealed that cougars spend more time in our presence—hunting, breeding and raising young—than we ever realized. Despite the tracking devices showing the great cats near homes, strip malls and populated suburbs, very few were ever sighted or reported. The study proved that humans and cougars can and do coexist peacefully with little trouble.

Also during his study, Dr. Kertson and his research colleagues had many opportunities to learn behaviors by observing them firsthand. Face to face with dozens of cougars in the wild, they never once felt threatened. Most times when researchers moved in on a den or a cougar kill, the cougar moved off quietly and did not show signs of aggression. Occasionally, a cougar doubled back out of curiosity, but not to ambush or stalk them. Even when researchers came upon cougars with kittens, the big cats were often timid and apprehensive, choosing to flee instead of fight.

Hearing stories like these may ease some fears and perhaps help us understand that we needn't be overly worried about cougars when we enjoy the hilltops. However, being vigilant and using common sense to never approach wildlife is always wise. Typically, media sensationalism over cougar attacks is elevated, simply because incidents are uncommon and play on our own instincts of fear.

To this day, I think back on my own cougar encounter with excitement and fascination. A simple brush with one of the world's most elusive cats filled my spirit with wonder and made me grateful to call the Pacific Northwest—and all the creatures that live in it—my home.✦

*Tami Asars is an outdoors writer and photographer who teaches recreation classes throughout the Northwest.*

### Should a cougar materialize, taking the appropriate precautions can help.

* Cougars rely on stealth, so foil its plan by maintaining eye contact. **Note:** this is opposite of bears - do not look a bear in the eye as it's perceived as a threat.
* **Never run!** Cougars possess the instinct to chase moving objects.
* Make yourself as large and formidable as possible by shouting, yelling, waving your arms over your head or opening up your jacket. The cat will usually decide you are too intimidating to challenge.
* Pick up children and hold them or place them on a stump where they appear larger. Cougars usually pick on the easiest prey, so don't let children run ahead, but keep them close.
* If it is safe to do so, back away slowly and never turn your back.
* If a cougar does decide to attack, fight back! Punch it, kick it, jab it in the eyes. Use what you have near you to fight it off - rocks, sticks, your trekking poles. **Never play dead!**

Illustrations by Sylvia Feder

# Trail Eats

## Stay fueled up on trail with these quick and easy heart-healthy snacks made with all-natural ingredients

### Blueberry Almond Bars

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 1 cup Medjool dates, pitted (15 to 20)
- 1 cup raw almonds
- 2 Tbsp. unsweetened shredded coconut
- 1/2 cup dried blueberries
- 1 1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon

**DIRECTIONS:**

1. Chop the dates up roughly; add them and the remaining ingredients into a food processor. Pulse until chopped up, then run on high for 3 to 4 minutes until finely diced and starting to stick together.
2. Line an 8 in. x 8 in. glass dish with parchment paper on the bottom. Knock the mixture into the dish and flatten out, pressing down hard to compact it.
3. Cover and refrigerate. Cut into bars of desired size; wrap each tightly.

### Pistachio Truffles

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 3/4 cup almond meal
- 1/2 cup natural prunes
- 3 Tbsp. pure maple syrup
- 1/4 cup peanut or other nut butter
- 2 Tbsp. dark chocolate chips
- 1/4 cup unsalted pistachios

**DIRECTIONS:**

1. Finely chop prunes and chocolate chips. In a bowl, stir all ingredients but the pistachios together until well mixed.
2. Chop the pistachios and put in a shallow bowl. Use a tablespoon disher (scoop) to make balls of prune mixture. Roll gently in your hands to smooth out, then roll in the nuts, gently pressing them in.

*For all snacks, store wrapped in the refrigerator until trip time. Use within three weeks for best taste.*

### Chocolate Chia Bars

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 1/3 cup chia seeds
- 1 cup slivered almonds
- 1 1/2 cups pitted Medjool dates
- 1/3 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1/2 tsp. pure vanilla extract
- 1/4 tsp. pure almond extract

**DIRECTIONS:**

1. In a food processor pulse the almonds a couple of times; transfer to a small bowl. Add the dates and process until a paste forms. Add the nuts and remaining ingredients; process until mixed.
2. Line an 8 in. x 8 in. glass baking dish with plastic wrap. Knock the mix out and flatten into the dish, until even, press down firmly.
3. Cover and refrigerate till cold; cut into bars and store tightly wrapped.

*Sarah Kirkconnell is the author of* Trail Cooking Made Simple. *Find more trail-worthy recipes for your next adventure at trailcooking.com.*

# HAVE TRIPOD, WILL TRAVEL

In the thirty-plus years that I've spent making photographs, I have learned many invaluable lessons about composition, technique and gear. Of these, perhaps the single biggest learning was this one: always use a tripod.

Let's face it: tripods are a big pain in the butt—especially for the backpacker. They're heavy and cumbersome. They really slow you down. But they're indispensable if you are serious about photography.

First and most obviously, tripods allow the photographer the ability to take slow exposures and shoot in virtually any lighting conditions. A slow exposure needs a steady camera. A steady camera demands a tripod. By combining these two elements—slow exposures and steady camera—you are free to expand your creative vision.

Equally important, tripods make it possible to control your depth of field, the amount of foreground-background distance that is in sharp focus. This is vital for compositions that include a nearby element, say, a patch of lupine, and a distant subject, the mountains rising behind them. Without sufficient depth of field, the mountains (or worse yet, the lupine) will be soft. Depth of field is achieved by stopping the camera down to its smallest aperture, reflected by a larger f-number, for example, f.32. By setting your camera to this tiny aperture, you in turn need to allow for a longer exposure. Hello, tripod.

And then there's water. Water tends to move. In many environments with water—waterfalls, rivers, the ocean—this movement can be captured visually by utilizing a slow exposure to blur the motion. Your three-legged friend allows you to set that slow shutter time, letting you capture the water in motion while keeping your camera perfectly steady in order to keep everything else in sharp focus. (Check out Buff Black's column in the March/April issue for more on photographing waterfalls.)

But perhaps the most important benefit of using a tripod is more subtle than you would think. When you take the time to position the camera on the tripod you become more attuned to the framing of your images, more aware of the compositional elements. The methodical act of positioning the tripod helps refine and clarify this process. The drawback of slowing you down thus becomes a benefit. You become focused, in every sense of the word. And when you get right down to it, photography is about awareness, about seeing.

So sure, tripods are heavy and bulky, and the constant setting up and breaking down means fewer miles on the trail each day. The trade-off will be the results in your photography you're bound to see—when you actually see. Don't leave home without it.

*John D'Onofrio is a professional photographer and writer based in Bellingham. His photographs have appeared in numerous publications, calendars and galleries as well as materials for North Cascades National Park and Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. Visit his website at jdonofrio.com.*

### *Olympic Twilight*

**Don't stop when the sun goes down! This image of the beach in Olympic National Park was captured a few moments after the sun dropped below the horizon. This "afterglow" often yields deeply saturated colors unavailable when illuminated by direct sunlight. By using a tripod, I was able to capture these vivid colors while blurring the water and also achieving the requisite depth of field.**

**ISO 50, f.22 at 33 seconds (70mm lens)**

# Big View

Get this amazing front-porch view of the North Cascades from the Sahale Glacier Camp, above Cascade Pass. (See page 49)

Photo by Andy Porter

# Take a Hike!


## *Get a Natural High on these* ***Big View Hikes***

As hikers, we love the big views, and everything that comes with them—alpine meadows, gads of wildflowers, lakes, glaciers, and more peaks than we can count. Here's twelve trails sure to get you excited for summer hiking.

❶ **North Cascades:** Cascade Pass and Sahale Arm; 7.4 mi. day hike*

❷ **Puget Sound:** Oyster Dome; 6.5 mi. day hike

❸ **Glacier Peak:** Spider Gap–Cloudy Pass–Buck Creek loop; 40 mi. backpack

❹ **Mount Rainier (east):** Palisades Lakes; 8.8 mi. day hike or backpack

❺ **Mount Rainier (west):** Emerald Ridge; 14.2 mi. day hike*

❻ **Olympic Nat'l Park:** Grand Valley; 12.6 mi. day hike or backpack

❼ **Mount St. Helens:** Coldwater Peak; 12 mi. shuttle day hike

❽ **Kettle Crest:** White Mountain; 28 mi. backpack

❾ **Okanogan Nat'l Forest:** Tiffany Lake; 3 mi. day hike*

### WEB BONUS!

Visit **wta.org/bonushikes** for three more stunning trails!

⑩ **North Cascades:** Skyline Divide; 9 mi. day hike*

⑪ **Mountain Loop:** Crystal Lake; 9 mi. day hike*

⑫ **Mount Rainier (east):** Summerland; 8.6 mi. day hike or backpack

* Longer backpacking option also available.

## Leave No Trace

**ALPINE CAMPING** As you trek into the higher elevations this summer in search of solitude and fantastic views, keep in mind that these fragile ecosystems are extremely sensitive to booted feet and where we place our gear.

**When choosing a campsite**, always look for an area of bare ground, sand or rock. Never place your tent on vegetation, especially in meadows. Look for areas that may have already been used as a campsite before creating a new one. Campsites should be at least 100 feet from trails and water.

**Many wilderness areas prohibit campfires** above certain elevations. Be aware of the regulations for the area you're visiting. If campfires are allowed, find a campsite with an existing fire ring and don't build new ones. Extinguish fires completely when done.

# Hike: Cascade Pass & Sahale Arm

***You'll have plenty of company, but the payoff will make all the trail traffic worth it: a spectacular North Cascades view, guaranteed to leave you breathless.***

The trail begins on the north side of the parking area and heads into the trees. The climb to Cascade Pass is fairly moderate, and you will no doubt have to cross a snowfield just below the pass. Trekking poles are recommended. Along the way, you'll likely spot numerous marmots and deer. Cascade Pass has wooden benches where you can relax, have lunch and just soak in the view—Mount Johannesburg, Mixed-up, Pelton, Hurry-up, Cascade Peaks, Magic Mountain and Pelton Basin Valley below. During the high season, a ranger is usually present in the area. This is where most day-trippers call it good, but from here you can head up the Sahale Arm Trail to Sahale Glacier Camp.

Continuing upward, the trail gets steep in spots and the rock can be loose, so take your time and watch your footing. You'll be breathing hard climbing the next 2 miles. Along the way you will see Doubtful Lake far below and lots of late-season wildflowers. Once above the tree line you'll get an unobstructed view of the surrounding mountains and valley.

The base camp at the toe of Sahale Glacier is where the trail comes to an end. Climbing Sahale Glacier requires glacier travel experience and equipment, such as crampons, ice axe and safety rope. For day hiking, it is recommended that the base camp be your turnaround point. Bask in the alpine scenery for a time, then make your way back via the same route.

The parking area can often be full by 9 a.m., with vehicles parked up to a half-mile down the road. And watch your speed on this road as there are lots of hidden bends.

*Big Views: See Sahale Arm, Pelton Basin, Doubtful Lake, Hidden Peaks, Mount Baker, Mount Shuksan, Snow King Mountain, Boston Peak, The Triplets and Canada.*

*Hike by Mike Morrison; Photo by Andy Porter*

## NORTH CASCADES

**LOCATION:** North Cascades Nat'l Park

**TOTAL MILEAGE:** 7.4 or 11.9 miles RT

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 1,600 or 3,600 feet

**HIGHEST ELEVATION:** 5,200 or 7,200 feet

**MAP:** Green Trails 80: Cascade Pass

**PERMIT:** none

**DIRECTIONS:** From Marblemount, drive 23 miles over partially gravel Cascade River Road to its end at the trailhead.

**POST-HIKE:** Drop into the Buffalo Run Restaurant in Marblemount for hearty servings of Western-style grub.

## PUGET SOUND

**LOCATION:** Bellingham

**TOTAL MILEAGE:** 6.5 miles RT

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 1,900 feet

**HIGHEST ELEVATION:** 2,025 feet

**MAP:** USGS Quad: Bellingham South

**PERMIT:** Discover Pass

**DIRECTIONS:** From Bellingham, take Chuckanut Drive (SR-11) south for 11.5 miles to parking and trailhead.

**POST-HIKE:** Hit up the Oyster Bar, a local favorite, for their fresh, seasonal menu featuring Northwest-sourced ingredients.


# Hike: Oyster Dome

***Hikable year-round, this section of the Pacific Northwest Trail rewards diligent hikers with expansive views of Samish Bay, the San Juan Islands and beyond.***

Just south of Larrabee State Park, the Oyster Dome on Blanchard Mountain in the Chuckanut Range is a geologic oddity. Polished and fractured by past glacial activity, the "dome" is an exposed cliff of bare rock facing the sea. Far below, the debris of all that glacial scouring creates the pile of talus known as the Bat Caves.

From the Blanchard Mountain trailhead on Chuckanut Drive, start by climbing a series of steep, wooded switchbacks. The forest is a mix of deciduous and conifer, with a thick undergrowth of fern and salal. Approximately 1 mile from your starting point you will come to the first viewpoint. There you'll find a nice bench to sit on and enjoy the view of Anacortes and the San Juans while taking a break for snacks and water.

Now the work really begins. Continue upward, over roots and rocks, hopping little streams. After a half-mile, choose the left fork at a junction; then another half-mile, another junction, choose the right fork, now on the Oyster Dome Trail. Enter a section of thick woods before the trail opens up, exposing large erratics (boulders) left behind by glaciers, and peeks of Chuckanut Bay waters glistening far below. Pass a junction with the Talus Trail to the junction with the Rock Trail, veer left and proceed to make the final ascent to the summit.

What little breath you have upon reaching the top will quickly be taken away by the view before you: south Chuckanut, the San Juans, the Olympics, Bellingham and Samish Bays and the Canadian Coast Range. There is a nice, open rock bench good for setting up a picnic or stretching; however, the edge is sheer and hazardous, so be sure to keep an eye on children and animals.

*Big Views: Enjoy wide views over Puget Sound, including the San Juan Islands, the Olympics and Canada's Vancouver Island.*

*Hike by Hannah Norberg; photo by Kristen Sapowicz*

# Backpack: Spider Gap-Buck Creek

***With wide meadows, high passes, alpine lakes and a nontechnical glacier crossing, this 40-mile loop in the Glacier Peak Wilderness travels through some of the most stunning wilderness in all of Washington.***

Starting counterclockwise at the Phelps Creek Trailhead, enjoy a leisurely 5-mile warm-up hike to spectacular Spider Meadows at the head of a wide glacial valley. For your first night, grind 1.5 miles up to Larch Knob and camp at the base of Spider Glacier. The views overlooking the meadows are surreal.

The next morning, head up the relatively low-angle "glacier" towards Spider Gap. While technical glacier-crossing skills are not required, an ice axe and crampons may be beneficial for early-season ventures. From Spider Gap, look down on Lyman Glacier and the deep turquoise Upper Lyman Lakes. Descend a half-mile to the lake (again, crampons and ice axe can assist during icy conditions), pause for a lake-and-glacier view, then meander 2 miles down to equally turquoise Lower Lyman Lake. Campsites abound in the area. Alternatively, push on another 1.5 miles to Cloudy Pass, where excellent campsites, easy water access and eye-popping views await.

On day three, head towards Suiattle Pass where you will temporarily join the Pacific Crest Trail. An optional 8-mile side trip heads west to Image Lake, with picture-perfect views of Glacier Peak. To continue the loop, round the flanks of Fortress Mountain to find picturesque campsites on Middle Ridge or 2 miles farther on Flower Dome. Enjoy unobstructed views of Glacier Peak while basking in the alpenglow.

On day four, hike up and over Buck Creek Pass. If you're inclined, take a 3-mile side trip and bag 6,760-foot Liberty Cap. Finally, complete your loop with a steady 9-mile descent alongside Buck Creek. When finished, you'll understand why every guidebook claims this hike as one of Washington's best.

*Big Views: Take in Chiwawa Mountain and Upper Lyman Lakes from Spider Gap, Plummer and Sitting Bull Mountain from Cloudy Pass, and Glacier Peak from Middle Ridge*

*Hike by Stacy Czebotar; Photo by Doug Diekema*

## GLACIER PEAK

**LOCATION:** Lake Wenatchee

**TOTAL MILEAGE:** 40 miles RT

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 7,200 feet

**HIGHEST ELEVATION:** 7,100 feet

**MAP:** Green Trails 113: Holden

**PERMIT:** NW Forest Pass

**DIRECTIONS:** From US-2, 15 miles west of Leavenworth, drive SR-207 toward Lake Wenatchee; turn right on Chiwawa Loop Road for 1.3 miles, then left on Chiwawa River Road for 22 miles. Turn right on FR-6211 for 2.3 miles to trailhead parking.

**POST-HIKE:** Drop into the Leavenworth Pizza Company for cheesy pies and refreshing salads and beverages.

## MOUNT RAINIER

**LOCATION:** Sunrise

**TOTAL MILEAGE:** 8.8 miles RT

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 1,600 feet

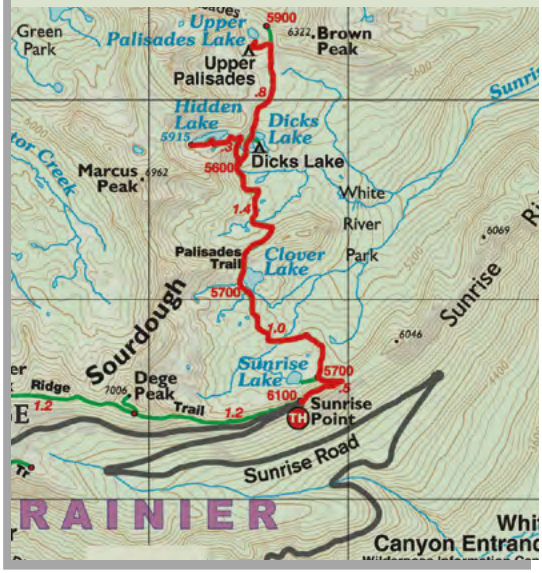
**HIGHEST ELEVATION:** 6,150 feet

**MAP:** Green Trails 269S: Wonderland Trail

**PERMIT:** National Park Pass

**DIRECTIONS:** From Enumclaw, drive SR-410 38 miles to the White River park entrance. Turn right onto Sunrise Road for 13 miles to viewpoint and trailhead parking.

**POST-HIKE:** Stop at Wapiti Woolies in Greenwater for a pre- or post-hike latte.




# Hike: Palisades Lakes

***Seven lakes, seas of wildflowers, summer huckleberries, a bevy of wildlife and a good chance of quiet solitude await you on this 9-mile out-and-back. What more could you ask for?***

While the throngs of summer visitors are heading to the end of the road at Sunrise Point, pull off into the corner viewpoint parking area near the top. The trail starts across the road and heads downhill to Sunrise Lake, the first of many you'll encounter. It's nice, but keep going. Passing over rocky sections of trail, listen and look for pikas; if you're quiet you'll be able to spot them. At 1.5 miles is Clover Lake. Here you'll find an array of wildflowers surrounding the lake. Again, nice, but you'll want to keep going.

Continue past a small grove of skeletal silver trees and come to Tom, Dick and Harry Lakes' Dick Camp. It's often buggy here, and the camp is nothing spectacular. The real gem is the 0.5-mile side trip to Hidden Lake—you will not be disappointed! In the morning light the reflections of the Upper Palisades rocks and Marcus Peak are a sight to behold—and you just might have this place all to yourself. Camping is not permitted here, but you can take a dip in the lake or scramble up Marcus Peak for higher vistas.

After you've had your fill at Hidden Lake, return to the main trail and continue to Upper Palisades Lake, less than a mile farther. Along the way you will cross a field of lupine with the Palisades rocks towering above. If you start early enough to get here during morning light, the scene is especially magical. Now on to Upper Palisades Lake, the prettiest of all the lakes, replete with lots of wildflowers, big boulders and sandy shores. The water is crystal clear and refreshing—but *cold*! Several marmots live here. Look for them sunning on the boulders or near their burrows.

*Big Views: Scramble up to Brown's Peak from Upper Palisades Lake to see views of Mounts Rainier and Adams and the Enchantments Range.*

*Hike and photo by Janelle Walker*

# Hike: Emerald Ridge

***Ever wanted to hike the Wonderland Trail, but have time for only a sneak peek? Here's how to enjoy a sampling of the Wonderland's spectacular scenery—in a single day!***

Begin by hiking or biking 1.8 miles up the Westside Road to the unmarked Tahoma Creek Trail. Lock up your bike if you brought it, as it is permitted only on the road. A sign indicates that this trail is not maintained due to numerous washouts in recent years; however, it is still navigable thanks to markers and cairns leading the way. Hike up the trail for 2.1 miles, pass a small waterfall and join the Wonderland Trail.

Head north on the Wonderland on a gentle, forested ascent. The trail turns from dust to pebbles, and the scenery moves from forest to volcanic and subalpine terrain. As you approach Emerald Ridge you'll discover the reason for its name—the wildflowers and grasses make this high alpine meadow a vision in green and offer visitors a wonderful packs-off opportunity to sit and take it all in. Aster, harebell and western anemone thrive in the volcanic earth, while the odd view of The Mountain from this angle makes it seem decrepit, fragile and ancient.

The descent from Emerald Ridge is arguably the loosest rock footing on the whole trail, so go slow and use caution. In the next 1.5 miles the volcanic rock gives way to more forested canopy. Turn west on the South Puyallup Trail, watching for some interesting andesite columns, named the Colonnades. Continue descending through shrubs and thimbleberry, choreographed to the rumbling song of the South Puyallup River. At the next junction divert onto the Round Pass Trail and climb through woods for 0.6 mile to reach the Westside Road and the top of Round Pass.

Spot a stone memorial dedicated to a group of Marines whose plane went down on South Tahoma Glacier. Turn south on the road for the 2-mile descent to the Tahoma Creek Trail, grab your bike or walk back to your vehicle, and celebrate a wonderful day!

*Big Views: Get intimate views of The Mountain, including Pyramid Peak, Glacier Island and the Sunset Amphitheater.*

*Hike and photo by Tami Asars*

## MOUNT RAINIER

**LOCATION:** Longmire

**TOTAL MILEAGE:** 14.2 miles RT

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 3,100 feet

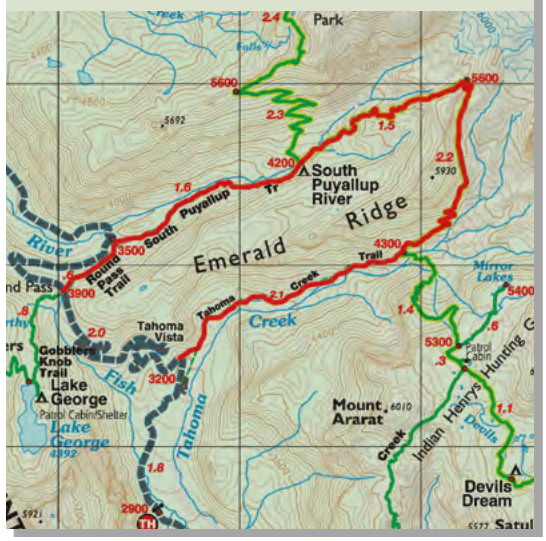
**HIGHEST ELEVATION:** 5,600 feet

**MAP:** Green Trails 269S: Wonderland

**PERMIT:** National Park Pass

**DIRECTIONS:** Enter the park using the southwest Nisqually Entrance. Continue 1 mile to the unsigned Westside Road; find trailhead at road's end.

**POST-HIKE:** Check out the interpretive displays at the Longmire Museum, or go for a bite at the Longmire Lodge.



## OLYMPIC NAT'L PARK

**LOCATION:** Olympic North

**TOTAL MILEAGE:** 12.6 miles RT

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 4,070 feet

**HIGHEST ELEVATION:** 6,450 feet

**MAP:** Green Trails 134S: Elwha North

**PERMIT:** Nat'l Park Pass, Wilderness Permit*

**DIRECTIONS:** From Port Angeles, drive the Hurricane Ridge Road 17.5 miles. Turn onto Obstruction Point Road for 7.7 miles to parking and trailhead.

**POST-HIKE:** Visit Webster's Woods Art Park and discover more than 100 whimsical and delightful artistic works.


# Backpack: Grand Valley

***Discover some of Olympic National Park's most inspired alpine scenery among the meadows, lakes and vistas of Grand Valley.***

It is no secret that Olympic National Park's Grand Valley is aptly named. Grand Valley *is* grand. Unquestionably popular, this trail is an unlikely place to find solitude—the views encountered in the first mile alone are enough to draw a crowd. Yet, don't let this deter you. There is enough beauty and splendor to go around.

Although an enjoyable loop can be had by connecting the Badger Valley and Grand Pass Trails, to maximize views and time for exploration, consider entry into Grand Valley via the more direct Grand Pass Trail.

The Grand Pass Trail starts just south of the Obstruction Point parking lot and immediately begins an open traverse of tundra-like terrain. Watch for marmots and wildflowers as you take in the spectacular scenery on all sides. The trail follows Lillian Ridge, in an up-and-down fashion, to a high point at 1.5 miles. From here prepare for the 1,500-foot descent into Grand Valley. Steep at times, the trail switchbacks through scree slopes, meadows and stands of subalpine fir.

Grand Valley contains three lakes: Grand, Moose and Gladys. Opportunities for camping exist at designated campsites near all three lakes; just remember overnight stays require reservations from May 1 through September 30.*

Grand Lake, the lowest lake of the trio, is a short descent from the junction with the Badger Valley Trail at 2.6 miles. Moose and Gladys Lakes are reached at 0.5 and 2 miles beyond the junction. Traveling past Gladys Lake the terrain grows ever more enchanting as the trail roughens and begins the final climb over barren scree slopes to Grand Pass. At 6,450 feet, Grand Pass offers rewarding panoramic views on a clear day. Rest, relax and revel in the grandness.

*Big Views: Enjoy wildflowers and wide panoramas, all the way to Mount Olympus.*

*Hike by Kelsie Donleycott; Photo by Bob Griffith*

# Hike: Coldwater Peak

***Survey Mount St. Helens' recovering Blast Zone and get 360-degree, four-peak views from this high perch along the Boundary Trail.***

Allow plenty of time, carry an ample supply of water (except for occasional snowmelt, it's a dry trail), and expect to return with a dusty coating of ash on your clothing and gear. Goofy sun hats and umbrellas are encouraged to ward off the sun.

Starting at the Johnston Ridge Observatory, head east on the Boundary Trail, where you'll hug the wall on the way to Devil's Elbow. Stay left at the junction with the Truman Trail and cross the pumice plains to the junction with Harry's Ridge Trail, where a short but steep side trip to the base of the ridge rewards you with killer views of massive Spirit Lake. Back at the Boundary Trail, continue onward and upward to St. Helens Lake and "Hole-in-the-Wall" for the only reliable shade of the day.

After 5.5 long miles, you'll reach the Coldwater Peak Trail. Pause to frame a panoramic shot of St. Helens Lake in the foreground, Spirit Lake in the midrange, and Mount St. Helens in the background. For the final push, expect snow patches year-round and bring some patience for the switchbacks. At the top, leave the seismic measuring equipment alone, and admire your accomplishment! The mountain looms large here, as do views across the southern Cascades.

To turn this hike into a semi-loop option, bring a shuttle vehicle and park it at the South Coldwater Trailhead. After bagging the summit, continue west on the Coldwater Trail, ambling along the ridgetop among wildflowers and an assortment of eruption wreckage before descending to your second vehicle.

*Big Views: From the Boundary Trail, take in views of Mount St. Helens, Spirit Lake, Coldwater Lake, the Goat Rocks and Mounts Rainier, Adams, and Hood.*

*Hike and photo by Steve Payne*

## MOUNT ST. HELENS

**LOCATION:** Coldwater Lake

**TOTAL MILEAGE:** 12 miles RT

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 2,000 feet

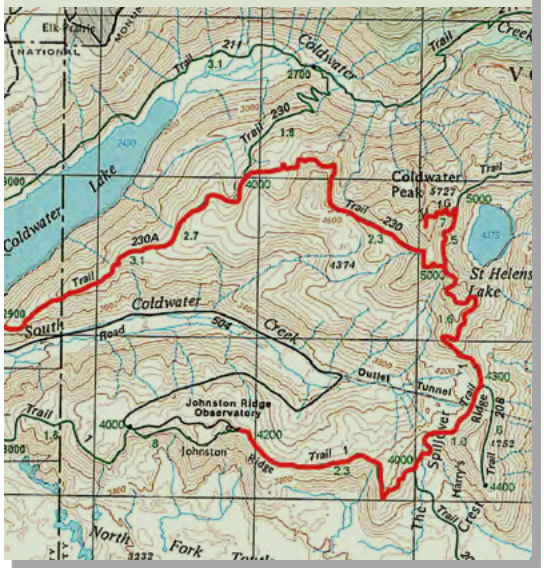
**HIGHEST ELEVATION:** 5,727 feet

**MAP:** Green Trails 332: Spirit Lake

**PERMIT:** NW Forest Pass

**DIRECTIONS:** From Castle Rock, drive Hwy 504 east 45 miles to Johnston Ridge. Trailhead at east end of parking area.

**POST-HIKE:** Visit the Johnston Ridge Observatory and view the short film in the Eruption Theater (fee required).



## KETTLE CREST

**LOCATION:** Columbia Highlands

**TOTAL MILEAGE:** 28 miles RT

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 1,500 feet

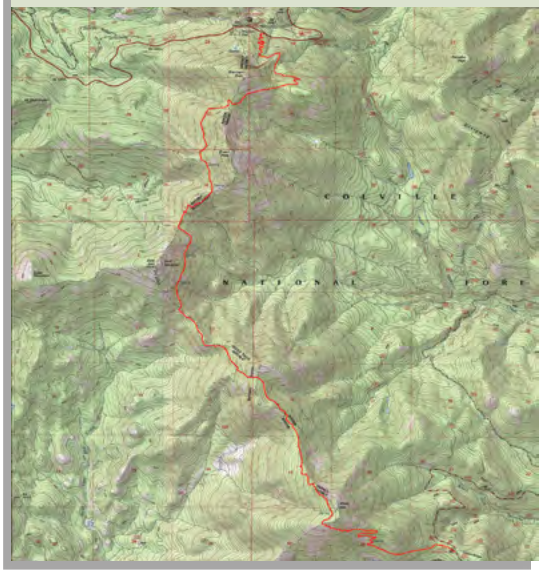
**HIGHEST ELEVATION:** 6,921 feet

**MAP:** USGS Quad: Sherman Peak

**PERMIT:** none

**DIRECTIONS:** From Colville, take SR-20 west for 34 miles, crossing the Columbia, to the Sherman Pass trailhead.

**POST-HIKE:** Visit Kettle Falls, home to 1,665 friendly people and one grouch. Grab a bite at Meyers Falls Market.




# Backpack: White Mountain

***This 28-mile round trip offers the best of the Columbia Highlands as it passes through old-growth ponderosa pine stands, skirts five significant peaks in the Kettle Range, and showcases the effects of the White Mountain Fire of 1988.***

From Sherman Pass, the Kettle Crest South Trail begins across the highway from the trailhead and climbs through a lodgepole pine forest to its first intersection at 0.7 mile. The Sherman Peak Loop Trail is to the west, and the Kettle Crest continues to the east. It doesn't matter which trail you start on, as both form a loop around Sherman Peak; just make sure to take the other trail on the way back so as not to miss the views.

Where the loop trails meet, continue south beneath Snow Peak. The trail reaches the Snow Peak Cabin (available to rent at recreation.gov) at approximately 5 miles. There is a reliable water source along the trail here. Continue south to the intersection with Edds Mountain Trail. More water is available a short distance up the Edds Mountain Trail. Here also begins your opportunity for additional side trips: scramble up Bald Mountain or go tag Edds Mountain (6,550 feet) just a couple of miles west.

Continue south and pass the intersection with the Barnaby Buttes Trail. All that remains of the old fire lookout are the cement steps and some scattered nails; the side trip is an easy mile. Moving on, cross a small stream (often dry by the end of summer), and pass below the summit of White Mountain. Watch for the spur trail that leads to the summit, the most interesting of all the summits in the Kettle Crest—the lower portion is grassy and flower-covered, while the top consists of rocky, fortresslike outcroppings. The remains of an old fire lookout occupy the southern end. Soak in the view of the surrounding peaks and Lake Roosevelt in the valley far below. Good camps can be found in the trees below the summit, but water in the area is scarce.

*Big Views: The Kettle Crest Trail passes just beneath the summits of Sherman and Snow Peaks, Bald Mountain, Barnaby Buttes and White Mountain. 360-degree views include Lake Roosevelt and the Selkirks to the east, Canada to the north and the Cascades to the west.*

*Hike and photo by Holly Weiler*

# Hike: Tiffany Lake

***This short, family-friendly trail with numerous add-on options, visits a pretty lake basin at the easternmost edge of the North Cascades, and provides long-distance views of some of Washington's loneliest country.***

Compared to its jagged and lofty neighbors to the west, the Tiffany Highlands consist of gentle alpine balds cresting atop thousands of acres of arid forest. And as a confluence for the dry Okanogan Highlands and boreal forest that is more common in the far north, the Tiffany Highlands host a unique mix of habitats, where sagebrush and peat bogs rub elbows.

Begin this easy trek amongst scattered lodgepole pine and Douglas-fir before immediately breaking out onto grassy knobs. Thanks to a recent wildfire that left little but ghost snags standing in its stead, shade is scarce. Recovery from wildfires is slow in this unforgiving environment, but myriad wildflowers—western pasqueflower, yellow columbine, lupine and others—provide welcome color. To the south, always in full view, is Tiffany Mountain. A sign, installed in 2004 by the Forest Service and Washington Native Plant Society, explains the history and biological significance of the Tiffany area.

In just over 1 mile, reach glacier-carved Tiffany Lake. The lawnlike shore provides a perfect setting for picnicking and dangling feet in the bracingly cold waters of the lake. However, ambitious hikers can continue clockwise around the shore and climb 600 feet up to Honeymoon Pass, where options await. A short cross-country trek bags Little Tiffany Lake. Parties who leave a second car at Freezeout Ridge can continue over windswept Whistler Pass to Tiffany Mountain's grassy summit and back down Freezeout Trail, an open loop of about 11 miles.

*Big Views: Soak up excellent views of the North Cascades, to the west, and Loup Loup area, including Granite Mountain, to the south. The summit of Tiffany Mountain offers up long-distance views into the Pasayten and Okanogan Highlands.*

*Hike and photo by Aaron Theisen*

## ▶ OKANOGAN

**LOCATION:** Tiffany Roadless Area

**TOTAL MILEAGE:** 3 miles RT

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 200 feet

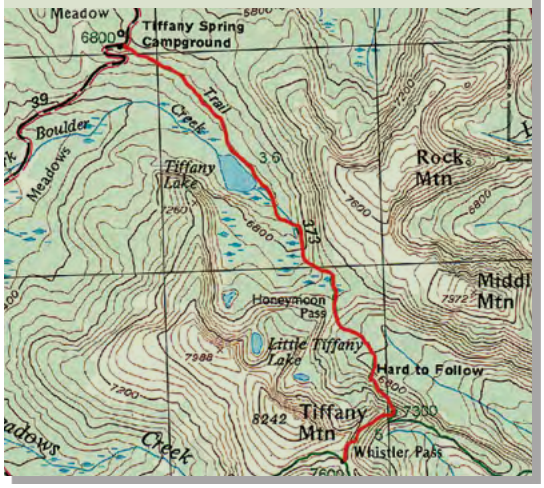
**HIGHEST ELEVATION:** 6,750 feet

**MAP:** Green Trails 53: Tiffany Mountain

**PERMIT:** none

**DIRECTIONS:** From Concully, drive 18 miles north on Concully Road (Co. Road 2017) around the reservoir. Turn right onto FR-37 and continue for 20 miles; cross Bernhardt Creek and turn right on FR-39. Continue 8 miles north to the Tiffany Springs CG.

**POST-HIKE:** Tiffany Springs Campground makes an excellent base for exploring the numerous hikes in the Tiffany Highlands.



# WILDERNESS WOMEN WANDER WASHINGTON

Twenty years ago, Singapore native Vina Donow moved to the foothills of the Cascade Mountains with her husband, Michael. Not being used to the Northwestern climate and eager to know her new surroundings, she decided to just get out and explore. She quickly learned the law of the land: "Don't wait for the weather to improve to do anything."

With a growing passion that begged camaraderie, Donow took her husband's suggestion to start a hiking group through Sky Valley Community Schools (SVCS). In May 1999 the first semimonthly hiking group started with four women. They soon adopted the moniker "Wilderness Women."

As SVCS secretary Kris Johnston notes, it is "amazing to see how the group has evolved from very easy close-to-home hikes to much more challenging adventures."

Members include Marty Witt, who joined the group in 2010 and credits Wilderness Women (WW) with showing her "how much fun it can be to hike 8 to 12 miles in any season of the year." She's enjoyed hikes to Lake Valhalla and Carne Mountain, plus a Kelcema Lake snowshoe.

Longtime WW member Kathy Vos recalls a trip on the Wonderland Trail as "a great adventure, especially on the Tahoma suspension bridge when my backpack got hung up in the middle of the bridge with the strap wrapped around the wire. I felt like I was in an Indiana Jones movie!"

Judy Gribble remembers her first hike with team leader Donna Blake. "It was raining that day and I quickly became aware that I was drenched. My feet were sloshing in my boots! Then I noticed Vina, our fearless leader, hiking with an umbrella!" Judy got a good laugh over that.

For Kelli Young Beach, joining WW "is a way to connect with like-minded people. There is a sense of anticipation" about the hikes and snowshoe trips, which "are mentally and physically energizing." One of Kelli's favorite hikes was to Tuck and Robin Lakes.

Keri Young, who joined WW in 2009, relates, "There will be a flurry of emails as the day approaches, until we choose the perfect destination for the conditions and the group." When the Cascades are looking at rain, the destination moves to the drier east side; snowstorms move hikes from the high passes to the lower country.

Coming from a variety of careers and backgrounds, Wilderness Women all share a passion for the outdoors and the bonds of friendship forged on the trails. Over the years, the WW have embarked on all manner of outings, from camping in yurts on the Oregon coast to overnighting in hammocks and mountain lookouts in Montana.

With the Wilderness Women, no matter where the destination lies, it is bound to be an adventure.✦

*— Cathy Clark, Wilderness Woman*


**Wilderness Women (left to right) Keri Young, Kelli Young Beach, Vina Donow, Donna Blake, Cathy Clark and Marty Witt at Thorp Lake, after a well-spent day climbing Thorp Mountain.**

# Norway Pass

It was a warm, sunny August morning and I was going to hike the Norway Pass Trail in the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument. As I eagerly packed up my camera gear, I noticed that I couldn't yet see the hulking crater of St. Helens—that must come later. I was looking forward to capturing some wildflower shots along the trail.

Making my way up the hillside I was quickly rewarded with the wildflowers I was seeking, as well as views of Meta Lake below, Mount Adams to the east, and Mount Rainier becoming visible to the north. After a couple more miles, I could see Norway Pass ahead—and a jaw-dropping vista of destruction. Mount St. Helens, with its gaping wound, loomed large. Below, the tranquil log-covered Spirit Lake filled the foreground, and the littered remnants of the once-great forest that stood here surrounded me.

The view was overwhelming. I pulled out my camera and started shooting. For this image, I wanted to minimize the breadth of the jumbled scene and put more focus on Mount St. Helens and the eruption's effect on Spirit Lake.

*– Jason Tomlinson*

*Have an amazing landscape photo you'd like to share with* Washington Trails *readers? Send a hi-res sample with a brief description to* ***photos@wta.org****, with "Featured Landscape" as the subject.*

**HIKE IT ▶**

***Norway Pass***

**Location:**
Mount St. Helens Nat'l Volcanic Monument

**Distance:**
4.5 miles RT

**Elevation Gain:**
950 feet

**Map:**
Green Trails 332: Spirit Lake

**Permit:**
NW Forest Pass

Washington Trails Association's

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Janelle Walker/Neil Clemons

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