

» Table of Contents

Nov+Dec 201

Volume 47, Issue 6

News + Views

The Front Desk » Karen Daubert

Passionate about access to beauty.» p.4

The Signpost » Lace Thornberg

A lot to be thankful for.» p.5

Trail Talk »

Debating the tricky issue of fees» p.6

Hiking News »

You'd pay more to hike in 25 other states; plus, a newly restored lookout.» **p.8**

WTA at Work

Trail Work » Sarah Rich, Ryan Ojerio

A Volunteer Vacation seen through fresh eyes; a legend unfolding.» **p.12**

Action for Trails » Jonathan Guzzo

Why we can't let RTP expire.» **p.17**

Youth and Families » Krista Dooley

Teens learn to be resourceful.» p.18

Membership News » Rebecca Lavigne

Rebecca gives her top 10 list.» p.20

On Trail

Northwest Explorer » Lauren Braden

Where to play and stay in the Columbia Gorge this winter.» **p.21**

Feature » **Joan Burton**

For these four landscape artists, the hike is just the beginning of the outdoor experience.» ${\bf p.25}$

Feature » **Janice Van Cleve**

If you've worked on Taylor Mountain or Grand Ridge, you've met King County trailbuilder Jack Simonson. Find out why he went to Honduras to build a trail.» **p.30**







Backcountry

The Gear Closet » Cheri Higman

WTA's annual gift guide: 24 presents that won't be "regifted."» **p.32**

Nature on Trail » Sylvia Feder

What scientists know—and don't know—about the Cascade red fox.» **p.35**

Trail Eats » Sarah Kirkconnell

Recipes to warm your belly.» p.38

Take a Hike

Day Hikes and Overnights »

Suggestions spanning the state.» p.39

Further Afield » Charles Emlet

A week in Idaho's White Clouds, plus tips on how to keep a hiking tradition going.» p.48

Featured Landscape » John D'Onofrio

Peer through the Hole-in-the-Wall.» p.51

Washington Trails
Association's mission
is to preserve, enhance
and promote hiking
opportunities in
Washington state through
collaboration, education,
advocacy and volunteer
trail maintenance.

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1ews News

The Front Desk »

Washington the Bountiful

t was a magical moment in a summer of many such moments. We'd left the Stuart Lake Trailhead early in the morning, hiked to Colchuck Lake at a determined pace, then climbed through boulders and talus until we reached Asgaard Pass. As we descended into the heart of the Enchantments Basin, we were awestruck by its beauty. There were four of us-all women on this particular journey-and our goal on this day was to scramble up Enchantment Peak and return to the car by dark. As we moved beyond Asgaard Pass, the lakes turned from icy glacier blue to dark green. Snow disappeared, rocks changed formation and streams gushed from the mountains above. In this evolving landscape, we shared the senses of joy, adventure, perseverance and friendship.

Throughout the day, I had many hours to reflect. I thought yet again of the work done by so many that had made this adventure possible: those who carefully placed cairns precisely where they were needed and those who cleared every blown-down tree. I thought about trails representing creativity, advocacy, health, recreation, exploration and grand adventures.

I contemplated my last year, a year between jobs when I was able to spend precious time with family and friends. I realized that, of all the possible ways I could have spent this time, I ended up being completely focused on the main thing that WTA makes possible: accessing pristine mountains and forests. I spent two weeks hiking in the mountains with my parents, who first introduced me to the joy of hiking with a "climb" of Skyscraper Mountain when I was ten. I spent five days backpacking in the ChelanSawtooth, scrambling peaks with my adventurous husband. And I enjoyed over 70 other hikes, in the rain and sunshine, all memorable.

I realized the importance of feeling passionate about work, and I remembered the first time I talked with Elizabeth Lunney and how she literally glowed with enthusiasm for her job.

I thought of all of this as the four of us returned to the trailhead just after dark, having covered more than 16 miles pursuing and elatedly reaching our goal.

All of this is to say that I am absolutely thrilled to be the next director of WTA because I believe so wholeheartedly in the WTA mission. On the practical side, I bring ten years of experience as executive director of another successful nonprofit (Seattle Parks Foundation), along with organizational and advocacy skills. And on the passion side, I bring an intense love of Washington, its spectacular beauty and its pathways that allow us to access all that beauty. And I relish hard work and teamwork. To me, this is what WTA is all about.

I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible in the coming year-in the office, on a work party, or simply enjoying a day on the trails. In the meantime, please never hesitate to let me or any of us in the office know your thoughts.

Karen & Dankert

Sincerely,

Karen



Daubert Executive Director karen@wta.org

The Signpost »

On Becoming a Hiker

It's been nine years, but I can still and quite vividly recall my first WTA work party. Alyssa Kreider and Bill Sunderland picked me up from the Bainbridge Island Ferry Terminal. After breakfast at Shari's in Renton, we spent the day digging in the dirt in a wilderness oasis just minutes outside suburban Seattle. All of the regulars—Susan, Joe, Pete, Chad, Marli and Slow Jo—took a moment to tease me about having a personalized hard hat even though this was just my first work party. I had to assure each of them that I was good for four more trips. And Pete had to assure me that I didn't need to worry about hacking away so many ferns. They'd grow back, he promised.

Looking back on that November day, I never would have guessed that, nine years later, I'd be on hand to celebrate Pete Dewell's 1,000th work party. Alyssa and Bill didn't know then that someday they'd be married and raising a son together. And nothing at all about that day of trail work suggested that I would spend the better part of 2012 living in the Philippines. And yet that is just what I am about to do.

By the time you read this column, I'll be in the thick of last-minute preparations, packing up my museum studies textbooks along with my sunscreen and snorkel gear. This month, I am a hiking magazine editor in Seattle. Next month, I'll be a museum researcher in Manila. You never know where the trail might take you.

When I started at WTA, I was a total hiking newbie—a person who went on hikes, but definitely not yet a "Hiker." I'm grateful that Elizabeth Lunney saw some promise in me then. I'm thankful that Jonathan Guzzo was willing to spell out the full name of every land management agency until I understood what we were talking about at staff meetings. From the ONF to the MBS to the GP, I can now speak in wilderness shorthand with the best of 'em.

I have a dresser-drawer full of wicking clothes, and I can navigate winding dirt roads. But at what point can you really call yourself a Hiker? Well, according to the theory that I am just developing now, I think you become a hiker when you've developed three qualities. I'll call the first one trailside ingenuity.

You must have developed a collection of finely honed skills that are not particularly useful in other settings but come in danged handy out in the wilds. One example would be the ability to judge a mountain—to estimate the hours between your current position and the summit. Another example: fashioning twigs into chopsticks when you've forgetten to pack any eating utensils.

You should also have a deep appreciation for raw natural beauty. Yes, I love the grand vistas, but what I've come to enjoy even more are the subtle, almost secret, pleasures of spending abundant stretches of time outdoors. Like what? Like flat-topped yarrow flowers as they catch and hold the first rays of dawn, or the way a talus field that looks gray from a distance reveals itself to be a mosaic of muted tones when you set off across it.

Finally, you have to be willing to give a little back. My own evolution from prairie chicken to mountain goat hasn't always been smooth, but it has always been fun, and that's why I am especially glad to be a member of WTA. I have never once lacked for protected places to explore. I've picked up countless tips from the hiking community, and I've been awed time and again by the landscapes our members evoke through words, photographs or paint.

While I am excited about this opportunity to live amidst coconut palms and cashew trees, I already miss Washington. I miss the squishy sound of moss in March and June's generous daylight. I miss sitting on the tip-top of a large rock on a hot July day, looking down on nothing but wilderness radiating out for miles. Luckily for me, I'll be back soon enough. Earning my crosscut saw is among my top goals upon my return. I'm looking forward to building trail in the crisp September air and exploring high basins lit by blazing gold larches in October.

Best.

from the



Our Next Editor
Starting with the
Jan+Feb 2012 issue,
Eli Boschetto will be
leaping from our gear
pages to take the helm
of this publication.



Lace Thornberg Editor editor@wta.org

Hike-a-Thon Highlights »

On September 25, WTA celebrated our most successful Hike-a-Thon yet at ExOfficio.



Team We Trip, We Fall hiked 379 miles and raised more than \$4,000.



Team Pathfinders took second place in number of family outings.



Liz Ulloa raised more than \$1,000. Along with gear, she won first pick of a Volunteer Vacation.



Captain Kirk and the Redshirts raised the Most Money by a Team in the entire universe.

Trail Talk »

thoughts

After the Discover Pass came on the scene this summer, WTA took the pulse of the hiking community to see how hikers felt about having this new vehicle parking pass in place for use of state lands.

Nearly 3,000 hikers took our survey, and, as you'll read in our news story on p. 8, the majority of our survey respondents supported the pass concept. But not all hikers agree. 68 percent is not everyone. Here are some of the reasons we heard for not supporting a pass:

Access fees "send a message that the outdoors are only accessible to the well-to-do ... public lands should be accessible to the public, not gated off like some commercial amusement park."

"When we encourage people to visit public lands, they are more likely to appreciate and want to protect them. Fees are only a minor inconvenience but send the message that unspoiled nature is only for those who can afford it, not a basic value of our society."

"In the long run, user fees will contribute to the eventual privatization or virtual privatization of public lands. I don't want my grandkids to have to pay a private company to take a walk on public property!"

"As residents of the state of Washington, we believe that state public lands should be open to everyone regardless of the ability to pay. Funding for state parks should come from all residents of the state through fair taxation. Further, funding for state parks should be made a priority in the state budget. When we, as a nation, are trying to get a grasp on the problem of obesity, people should be able to hike on public lands without being charged."

"User fees simply allow strapped city, state, and federal governments to cut budgets for recreation and other programs, on the assumption that monies generated by user fees will fund the programs. The initial cash infusion may sound good to desperate agencies but it's a losing proposition in the long run."

Washington Trails Association agrees that recreation is a core public service, and the state should pay for it. At the same time, we know that the massive budget gaps that the state of Washington has faced in the past several years mean that the if we don't have a reasonable user fee system, we won't be able to visit those places at all.

In 2012, WTA will be working with the Department Natural Reources, State Parks and the Department of Fish and Wildlife to make the Discover Pass transferable between vehicles and to ensure that the pass honors volunteer commitment.



WTA's Krista Dooley chats with Jourdan Keith, a woman who's changing the world, one teenager at a time.



You work with diverse communities that aren't always seen out hiking. What do you think Washington's hiking community could do to make trails more accessible or welcoming to people of color?

The biggest barrier in this region is not being able to get to the trails. I think an alliance of outdoor organizations could come together to create public transportation to trails. The alliance could meet the needs of different user groups.

If you can't get to trailheads because you don't have a car, it's difficult to go hiking. There are wonderful urban trails, but access to Snoqualmie Pass or Rainier is very limited. Bus access to trails could be "The Green Line."

Another issue is gear. Everyday clothing is not suitable for our climate, so having something available to make it easier for people to have appropriate clothes is good. Programs like ours that provide both transportation and gear are essential for getting people out.

Please share a story about a youth you have worked with that had an "ah-ha moment" on the trail or outdoors.

This story has kept me going for years. A young girl was on a trip in the North Cascades. We climbed out over a ridge and as we sat looking across to a mountain, she said, "Why would God put this here, if not to teach us to treat each other better?" What a mountain can teach is different for everyone. She came back the next year to participate in the seventeen-day trip and last year, she worked for Urban Wilderness Project.

Where are some of your favorite places in Washington to visit with youth and why?

I like Alki Beach for kayaking, to experience wilderness and urbanized wild places close to home. Discovery Park is great because you can take the 33 bus. It offers a quiet place that kids can find. And in the North Cascades, Ross Lake and Hozomeen Lake are so beautiful.

Jourdan Keith is the founder and director of Urban Wilderness Project. She believes that connecting to the natural world is critical to restoring communities, reducing domestic violence, building relationships and acknowledging and healing historical injustices.

Learn more about Urban Wilderness Project at www.urbanwildernessproject.org.

What a mountain can teach is different for everyone.

Urban Wilderness Project works to restore and encourage positive communities by providing environmentally and culturally based service-learning projects rooted in social change. Your organization serves 200 youth from South Seattle and the region. As the Founder and Director, is there such a thing as a "typical day" for you?

Every day is quite different. I'll connect with partner organizations about opportunities to collaborate. I talk with youth about projects we are working on and spend time with volunteers planning to get the word out about our programs. And I read a lot of emails. There are always emails.

Was there a moment or experience when you realized you wanted to work in the environmental field?

I knew in my twenties, after my first canoe trip, that I wanted to work in the outdoors. Some of my friends didn't have the same enthusiasm, but I knew. I remember my first experience at a marine ecology center, an experiential learning center. I saw crayfish up close in their natural environment and I really connected with crayfish in a tank back in my classroom. I got excited about decomposition. I kind of turned into an environmental geek. I thought using writing combined with environmental issues would blend my interests.

You have an extensive background in the arts, as an award-winning poet and writer, and you also have skills and training in the outdoor field. Your program incorporates both artistic practices and outdoor experiences. Why both?

The arts allow young people to reflect on outdoor experiences. When they return to their concrete environment it reminds them of that experience so different from their daily life. Art gives youth a place to not forget about the rest of the natural world. It is a tool for reflection.

How have trails played a role in your life, personally and professionally?

Personally, without trails, I wouldn't have access to beautiful wild places. I'm thankful for hiking trails. They bring a sense of renewal and calm to me.

Professionally, building trails offers young people a story to tell. They feel an incredible sense of accomplishment. After youth build trails, and they hike on them, they realize how big a project building just a small section of trail can be. It requires a lot of effort and hours of work and teambuilding to complete trail projects.



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Hiking News »

How the Discover Pass Stacks Up

WTA's survey finds strong support from recreation users, identifies areas for improvement; Discover Pass is a good value compared with other states. Story by Lauren Braden, research by Jaal Mann

Washington's new Discover Pass has not yet brought in buckets of cash for strapped land management agencies, but it's not for lack of public support. Our survey of outdoor recreationists in Washington found that 68 percent support the Discover Pass to keep state recreation lands open and funded, and just 17 percent oppose it.

"People feel connected to their state parks, and that's reinforced by the strong support that the Discover Pass enjoys," said Jonathan Guzzo, WTA's director of advocacy. "The ongoing state budget crisis might have forced State Parks to close iconic places like Wallace Falls and Beacon Rock. We had to find a sustainable funding source to keep them open this year, and while the Discover Pass is not a perfect solution, it's a big step in the right direction."

July 1 marked the beginning of Washington's Discover Pass. This \$30 vehicle-access pass is now required for entrance to state lands, including all state parks, Department of Natural Resource (DNR) lands and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) lands.

After the prime hiking season, WTA wanted to hear from hikers. We asked them, "Have you purchased a Discover Pass? Do you support the Discover Pass? What changes would you like to see implemented in the pass administration?" After crafting survey questions that would give us solid data, we cast a wide net using social media to reach respondents, and in just one week, nearly 3,000 Washingtonians took our survey.

While supportive of the pass overall, hikers did have one common gripe about the Discover Pass. They don't like that it is a single-vehicle pass and not transferable between vehicles. Users must pay full price for an additional pass if they use a second vehicle. Our survey found that 87 percent do not think that one pass per vehicle is a reasonable structure for the Discover Pass.

"We heard from a lot of families who use

Do you personally support the Discover Pass to keep state recreation lands open and



Sixty-eight percent of 3,000 respondents said they supported the Discover Pass.

more than one vehicle for recreation. For example, they might take their sedan out for a picnic or a day hike, but load up their truck for fishing trips," said Guzzo. "Since 87 percent of our respondents opposed the one-pass-per-vehicle structure, it's a priority for us to work with the Legislature and the agencies to come up with commonsense solutions that both serve the public and satisfy the funding needs of our public lands."

Inspiration for those solutions may be provided by other states' models. South Dakota, for example, charges more for a transferable pass. Idaho, Wisconsin and others offer a discount for a second vehicle pass.

The bottom line, however, is money.

"We expect this issue to continue to be a part of public and legislative discussion, though the bottom-line problem remains that we need to make a certain amount of revenue to keep operating," said Virginia Painter, public affairs director with Washington State Parks.

Washington state is forecasting another deep revenue shortfall in 2012, which will likely lead to more budget cuts. And the Discover Pass is not yet on pace to bring in the \$54 million it needs to raise on a biennial basis to fully support the recreation budgets of State Parks, DNR lands, and WDFW lands.

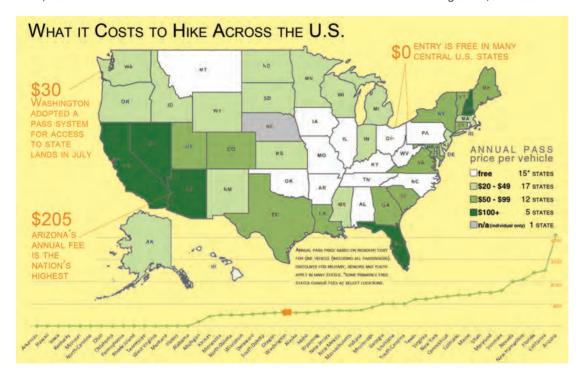
"As we gear up for the next legislative session, early indications are that we could be \$2 billion in the red next year. That's on top of multi-billion dollar deficits in the previous three sessions. The legislature is not talking about cutting fat anymore. We're dealing with the bones and connective tissue of state government." said Guzzo. "Even with the Discover

There are more than 600 vendors through Department of Fish and Wildlife's license purchasing system, so we hope that is very convenient."

November + December 2011 » Washington Trails

Along with the Discover Pass survey, WTA researched the state lands access fee structure in all 50 states to determine how Washington's Discover Pass stacks up.

We discovered that most states charge a fee for people to access their state parks and other state-managed recreation lands. Fifteen states have no fee at all. Washington's \$30 Discover



Pass in place, state lands could be threatened with closure, particularly if the Pass is not generating enough revenue."

WTA asked respondents if they'd be willing to pay even more for a Discover Pass should Washington State Parks and DNR lands again face closure, and 58 percent of respondents said they would pay more.

The state agencies that administer the Discover Pass are also continually seeking ways to help users purchase the pass in ways that are convenient to them.

"We have QR codes on all of the signs which will take you to a website. When you buy the pass, you get a confirmation number that serves as your pass for the day," Painter said. "We also have lots of other options, such as self-registration at the park for those who want to buy a one-day pass. But we really recommend that people buy the pass ahead of time.

Pass is on the lower end in terms of cost, of states that have a fee. We believe that the Discover Pass stacks up pretty well and appears to be a good value.

Some may even argue the value of access to our public lands cannot be measured in terms of dollars.

"Had the Discover Pass not been in place, most of the parks in the system would have been closed," said Painter. "So buy a pass. Tell your friends. Tell them why it's needed."♦

For five state parks that offer superb winter recreation opportunities, see p.42.

MORE SURVEY RESULTS

Do you think the one-pass-pervehicle structure is reasonable for the **Discover Pass?**



If Washington State **Parks and DNR** lands face closure again in early 2012, would you be willing to pay more for a Discover Pass?



Secret Trail Revealed

In the January-February issue of *Washington Trails*, Kim Brown hinted about a "top secret new trail outside of Skykomish" in her article "Brave New Trails." Since then, many hikers tried to get her to spill the beans about the destination, but sworn to secrecy, she kept the details from the hiking public.

You may have seen it announced online this fall, but if not, we are pleased to be able to tell you all about this new trail now. On Saturday, September 17, the Jennifer Dunn trailhead and the Beckler Peak Trail were officially dedicated by the U.S. Forest Service.

At the trailhead dedication event, former Undersecretary of Agriculture Mark Rey was present, as were family members of former Rep. Dunn, who was instrumental in getting the Wild Sky Wilderness bill approved. The trail is adjacent to

Hike It»

Beckler Peak Trail Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest

Distance: 7.4 miles **Elevation Gain:** 2,263 feet **Highest**

Point: 5,063 feet

Driving directions available on wta.org.

the new wilderness, and hikers look into the heart of the Wild Sky from the summit.

Forest Supervisor Robert Iwamoto, Skykomish District Ranger Joe Neal, Skykomish District Trails Specialist Tom Davis and Wilderness and Trails Coordinator Gary Paull of the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest were all on hand to unveil the new trailhead sign. Dunn's son Reagan cut the ribbon, and the Dunn family walked a portion of the trail—the first official hikers of the Beckler Peak Trail.

The initial stretch of the trail is lined with bigleaf maple and alder, while in the old logging landing, vine maple and huckleberry shrubs take over. The trail then dives deep into an ancient virgin forest of silver fir, mountain hemlock, western redcedar, Douglas-fir, Alaskan yellow cedar and noble fir. Near the top, brilliant white granite sparkling with mica adorns the green slopes.

From the summit, hikers will enjoy views down to the Skykomish Valley, the west summit of Beckler Peak, Mounts Index and Baring, the Monte Cristo Range, Alpine Baldy and Glacier Peak. In autumn, the slopes below Beckler, recovering from past logging, are awash in color. Even on a cloudy day the forest takes on a mysterious glow, and clouds swirl and sweep across the summit.

WTA is very excited to see a new trail in this area, and thanks Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest for making it a reality.◆

Get Out West

Gov. Gregoire looks to expand recreation-based tourism as head of the Western Governors Association

Gov. Chris Gregoire has turned to the private sector to help grow the Western region's recreation and tourism sectors. Gregoire assumed the chairmanship of the Western Governors' Association this year, and she and her colleagues have launched an initiative called Get Out West! to strengthen the Western economy by growing the outdoor recreation and tourism sectors. They're also aiming to encourage youth to take up outdoor pursuits.

With those goals in mind, the governors have pulled together industry experts from across the West. This advisory group will help identify policy barriers and actions related to job creation, increased volunteerism, and greater conservation of and access to open lands and waterways. REI's Vice President of Public Affairs Mike Collins is one of the local stakeholders involved in the advisory group.

Gregoire spoke at the Outdoor Industry Association's annual meeting held in Portland, Ore. in early October. As she told the event's attendees, "We in the West have a God-given asset to show the rest of the country and the world, but the time has come when Washington and other states can no longer afford to do it all," adding that the public and private sectors have to count on each other "to better connect to a national and worldwide market to show people there is simply no better place to recreate than the Western United States."

The governor believes that growing recreation and tourism will be particularly important to rural communities, where jobs are often even harder to find. As Gregoire said. "I can't overstate how much rural communities could use the jobs that would come with more people seeking recreation."

"As big as drawing in more outdoor enthusiasts and tourists is, Get Out West! is as much about our young people and instilling in them an inherent love and appreciation for the outdoors," she said. "Our children, for whatever reasons, are losing the connection to our great land and our great outdoors. We need to figure out how to get them outside and away from their smart phones to experience the solitude of an empty desert and the roar of a great river.

"With the help of this outstanding group and others, we will work to make sure our open lands and waterways stay that way," said Greoire, adding, "we will engage volunteers in conservation efforts, such as maintaining our trails."

Washington Trails Association looks forward to seeing more specific proposals as this initiative takes shape. The Get Out West advisory group will deliver preliminary recommendations to the Governors at WGA's Winter Meeting in December and final recommendations and strategies in June at WGA's Annual Meeting in Cle Elum, Washington.

To learn more about Get Out West!, visit the WGA Web site at www. westgov.org.♦

A Lookout Restored

WTA volunteer Bob Adler steps up to reach a lofty goal: restoring the historic Kelly Butte Lookout. Story by Kim Brown



When the Forest Fire Lookout Association tapped Bob Adler to help save a crumbling old lookout in the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, he said, "Sure." Though he had never worked on restoring a fire lookout before, Bob, a WTA member and volunteer, quickly stepped up to the task of coordinating supplies, recruiting volunteers and a host of other administrative tasks, all while contributing his own muscles to the effort.

On Sunday, September 11, five years and 3,000 volunteer hours after Adler first took on

the work, the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest hosted a reopening ceremony to thank the volunteers for their hard work restoring the Kelly Butte fire lookout, a building originally built in 1926.

The celebration had all the right sort of pomp and circumstance. The Forest Fire

Lookout Association (FFLA) sent their chairman, Dr. Keith Argo, from Washington, D.C. He joined the FFLA's local chapter representative Forest Clark, in expressing the FFLA's appreciation for the work. They installed a commemorative plaque marking Kelly Butte as lookout 916-59 on the National Historic Lookouts Register. (There are 916 lookouts in the register and Kelly Butte is number 59 of the listed Washington lookouts.) And two former lookouts—John Sandor, who was stationed at Kelly Butte in

1943 and Daniel Leen, who manned Kelly Butte in 1967—came back to see the restored lookout.

Daniel Leen's application to man a lookout was inspired by the beat novel *The Dharma Bums*, in which Jack Kerouac recounts the summer he spent as a lookout on Desolation Peak, and by the work of lookout and poet Gary Snyder. Leen actually met Snyder twice by chance—once in Japan, and another time at Pike Place Market, where Leen owns a jewelry-making business. He fondly remembered the "lookout hours," actually the ten minutes of

social communication between neighboring lookouts that were allowed to ease the deep isolation a lookout experiences.

Sandor was just sixteen when he first arrived at Kelly Butte. After a hard day of hauling equipment up and over steep terrain by hand, he was ready

to prepare his first hard-earned fire lookout meal. Coming from a family of eight children, and having watched his mother prepare many meals, Sandor was confident that he could whip up a pretty good dinner for himself. After fits and starts, his spaghetti dinner turned out to be a "glob of sticky pasta noodles in the



Kelly Butte Lookout Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest

Distance: 3.4 miles **Elevation Gain:** 900 feet **Highest Point:** 5,400 feet **Map:** Green Trails 239 Lester **Best Season:** July to October **More Info:** *Best Rain Shadow Hikes: Western Washington*



Bob Adler

First WTA Work Party: Pratt Lake Trail, May 1998

Most Recent Work Party: Independence
Lake, September
2011

Favorite Trail:

Chelan Summit Trail

Favorite Work Party:

Moore Point weeklong

Most Unexpected Discovery Made During the Lookout Project:

"I learned that volunteers will come out of the woodwork when there is work to do.

"I was able to recruit a huge number of volunteers just by putting my name and number up in the lookout."

Continued on p.45

WIA at Work

Sarah enjoying the heart of the Cascades while climbing Cathedral Rock on her day off



My First Volunteer Vacation WTA's new intern gets a taste of mountain camaraderie



Sarah Rich Program Assistant sarah@wta.org

Sitting in a dark car, zooming away from the city toward the shadowy early-morning Cascades for my first Volunteer Vacation, I envisioned myself a lone bush-whacker, machete in hand on the side of a mountain—clearing trails with only nature to keep me company.

It didn't take me long after leaving the trailhead to realize that this Thoreauvian

portrait of trail work was complete hogwash. As I came to discover that week at Deep Lake, the purpose of trail work is to engage not only with the land, but with other people as well.

As a new yearlong volunteer in the WTA office, I was eager to get out and see what trail maintenance was all about. I had only just emigrated from Indiana, the land of cornfields and NASCAR, where the highest elevation stands on Hoosier Hill at a whopping 1,257 feet. So my weeklong at Deep Lake quickly became part trail-vocabulary school and part love affair with those dramatic craggy peaks that dominate the Washington landscape.

As the week progressed, I learned from my

colleagues' conversations the definitions of trail-related terms like "switchback"—words I had never had occasion to use before then. My crew leader would ask me to hand him a Pulaski, and I would hesitantly pick some tool up, hoping that I wasn't giving him a rock bar.

By the end of the week, though, I began to throw around terms like "culvert" and "tread" with much more nonchalance than I could have mustered if I had just read these terms in a manual without actually engaging them. When I returned to my house in Seattle on that last Saturday, my housemates were surprised to find me, smelly and smudged, standing in the living room chattering on about "scree" and "lopping."

That week I came to appreciate well-maintained trails—something that I had taken for granted before. On our day off a few of us decided to try to climb Cathedral Rock, a jagged peak with no real trail leading to its tip. This was probably the most intense hike of my life. We scrambled up loose scree fields and steep rock faces, moving at a painfully slow and cau-

tious pace. As we descended the mountain, rocks slipping everywhere around us, I realized that if volunteers hadn't been creating and maintaining the trail that we were working on that week, it could be just as difficult to traverse as Cathedral Rock.

More than anything else I learned that week, however. I came to understand WTA volunteers as builders of wilderness community. I won't soon forget how, after dark one evening as we stood around in the clearing near our camp, our group of ten applauded for a PCT thru-hiker called Dewey, who was spurred on through the night by our clapping. I won't forget all of those conversations we had with hikers as we worked on the trails and all of the thanks we got for our work.

And I won't forget all of the bonding that occurred that week between the 10

strangers on my crew who had all happened to sign up for the same work party. Somehow, when people are in the wilderness together, I think they are able to release their inhibitions—let down their guards in a way that they can't do as readily in the rest of civilized life—and show themselves in a more vulnerable light

than they might otherwise. And this, I think, is the backbone of that grand invisible network of wilderness community.

Because what is a trail, after all, but a channel of communication—a way for people with a similar passion to connect with each other? Amidst great expanses of wilderness, a trail as I see it is a narrow corridor along which people can enjoy nature, yes—but along which they can also encounter other people. I've seen this sort of wilderness community in the trail magic that people leave for thru-hikers, and in the chance conversations between hikers traveling the same trail, and in the group bonding on WTA trips.

Eager to join in this wilderness community, I decided to talk to a few of WTA's more seasoned crew leaders about their own trail experiences. Each of them regaled me with great stories of wilderness community. Through these conversations, I've begun to understand how WTA volunteers give back to the same community in which they spend so much of their leisure time.



Taking a break, Gary Zink headed up the trail one day with a few other crew members to catch some mountain views. But as they rounded a corner, they ran into more than just mountains. Just ahead of Zink, two black bear cubs scampered across the trail, their mother following a few feet behind.

More scared than their human counterparts, who were merely amused by the sighting, the bears scrambled up some nearby trees. To avoid scaring the bears more than necessary, Zink and his crew left the cubs and their mother to their playground. "Had we had pictures," says

Zink, "that would have been outstanding, that would have been a smashing incident."

Zink helped maintain trails even before he knew WTA existed. In the late 1980s he saw a need for trail work and decided to do something about it; he started taking tools out with Can't wait till summer for a Volunteer Vacation? Neither can we.

New in 2012, WTA will host springtime Volunteer Vacations. Watch wta.org for details.



him and working on trails solo. When he told the Enumclaw rangers what he was doing, they said, "Thanks, but you shouldn't be doing this by yourself. Why don't you join WTA?" And Zink said, "What is WTA?"

Now, twenty-two years later, Zink is a blue hat-though he doesn't let the color of his hard hat go to his head, so to speak. After his first weeklong trip, the crew leader noticed Zink's positive attitude and diligent work habits and promoted him to an orange hat. Zink said, "I've got a white hat that I'm wearing, what's wrong with that?" After years of crew leading, Zink now understands that hat colors on WTA trips "don't designate a badge, or a status symbol. All they designate is responsibility."

Zink leads numerous Backcountry Response Trips (BCRTs) for WTA and, now that he has retired, is sometimes out crew leading for 12 to 14 days a month. On Volunteer Vacations he is known to work through the day off. His hard work is partially motivated by his love of the outdoors, but he also likes to think of trail work as a patriotic deed; he sees working on the physical land of his country as a non-militaristic way of serving that country.

Zink, for one, has long appreciated the community aspect of trail work as well. "I like being with people, working with people, watching people," he says.

WTA assistant crew leader Scott Metzler contemplates his next move. Photo by Mason White.



One evening on a BCRT, Scott Metzler was sitting around camp at the top of a ridge with the rest of his crew when a fellow volunteer whipped a bag of popcorn kernals, a stove and a bottle of olive oil out of his pack and started popping popcorn. "We're sitting here at 5,000 feet," recalls Metzler, "no one in sight, and we're eating popcorn as the sun sets on this ridge."

For Metzler, meeting people who share his love of the to help out."



outdoors is one of the perks of being a volunteer crew leader. "The quality of people who come out on these volunteer work parties is very high," says Metzler. "They're very motivated, and they all want

He was introduced to crosscut sawing on the Dungeness River Trail a year or two later and found that he loved it. He loved that in this age of hypertechnology, of cell phones and Internet, that there were volunteers chopping down trees in the wilderness, using the same sort of saw that loggers used in the 1920s and 1930s.

green hat with WTA six or seven years ago.

Metzler-who jokes that he would show up to work in a horse and buggy if he could—was hooked on crosscut sawing. "You're doing something that people eighty or ninety years ago were doing the same way," he says. "It brings up a nostalgia, like this is the way things used to be."

So when asked if he wanted to be crosscut certified and become an orange hat. Metzler promptly responded that he did.

Since then, Metzler has become a staunch supporter of WTA's mission. As the government makes budget cuts, he explains, there is less that the Forest Service can do to maintain trails. When trails fall into disrepair, people tend to use them less, which then prompts the government to place trail maintenance as a lower priority. It's important, then, in Metzler's eyes, to improve access to the trails for everyone, "not just the few hardy souls who can scramble over or under anything."

By helping to maintain trails, Metzler hopes to broaden the wilderness community. Thinking of the many times when he has been sitting under a tarp, some 4,000 feet up, eating a hot meal in the rain, Metzler says, "You have to take the bad with the good. It's part of nature, and if you embrace other aspects of it, you accept that, too. You grow in some kind of weird way to like moments like that, too."

STEVE HERTZFELD

Steve Hertzfeld hiked out of Hart Lake with a youth crew and a few llamas in tow on the Fourth of July one year, just in time to witness the preparations for Holden Village's annual Fourth of July parade. Hertzfeld and his crew were waiting around in Holden for the bus that would take them to the ferry when Barbara Budd, their Forest Service contact, brought them all ice cream. First she said, 'You guys could go check out the parade," Hertzfeld remembers. "And then she looked at us with our llamas and asked, 'Do you want to be in the parade?"

So it happened that WTA stole the show at the Holden Village Fourth of July parade that year. Hertzfeld and his crew wore their matching WTA T-shirts and hard hats and carried tools, leading the llamas behind them. Most of the spectators knew who they were and

Metzler himself started volunteering as a



This photo of crew leader Steve Hertzfeld on a Volunteer Vacation deserves a funny caption. Send your idea to alyssa@wta.org.

clapped for WTA as they passed.

Hertzfeld started crew leading as an intern in 2005, soon after he had graduated from college. Since then, he has been crew leading Volunteer Vacations with WTA every summer and coaching rowing at Lakeside Academy in the winter.

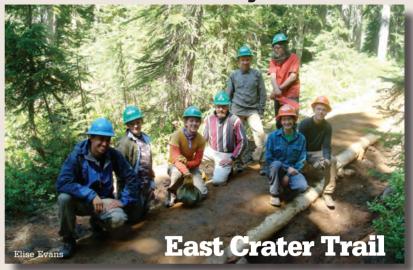
Hertzfeld's main goal in crew leading is to educate people about maintaining trails. The work that volunteers do for the trails is good, he explains, but it's even more important to raise trail-maintenance awareness among hikers, who sometimes take trails for granted.

He leads some day trips with WTA, but prefers leading weeklongs because he personally gets more work done. On day trips, the new volunteers have gotten the hang of their work by one or two in the afternoon and can proceed without Hertzfeld's supervision, which means that he can work on his own project for only an hour or two before calling it quits and starting all over again the next day. On weeklongs, Hertzfeld enjoys having volunteers whose experience grows throughout the week, providing him with more time to work alongside the volunteers.

Hertzfeld also enjoys the sort of community that is especially pronounced in weeklongs. "You get to know people really well and get a good bond with the group," he says. "Essentially, you're like a family."

WTA's full 2012 Volunteer Vacation schedule will be released in early February. Amazing scenery and great trail projects, guaranteed.

Featured Trail Project »



For around 10,000 years, thousands of Native people have traveled to the area known today as Indian Heaven Wilderness. WTA's trail maintenance crews have been visiting this place for only 15 years, and its been only a few hundred folks, but our time spent here has been quite memorable. I imagine both groups enjoyed taking in the awesome natural beauty of this area, picking berries, meeting up with old friends and making some new ones, getting some work done, and coming back feeling better about life, just for having been there.

Hike It»

East Crater Trail

Gifford Pinchot National Forest

Distance: 5 miles Gain: 900 feet High Point: 4,900 feet Map: Green Trails 365 Lone Butte Best Season: June to

October

The East Crater Trail is a heavily used connector to the Pacific Crest Trail that also provides relatively easy access to the heart of the Indian Heaven Wilderness. The trail ends at Junction Lake, where WTA's Volunteer Vacation crews have worked to alleviate a chronic problem spot for the last few years. The original trail had been constructed too close to a seasonal stream, and each summer, without fail, this stretch of trail turned into a nasty muck pit. Our crews' mission was to construct turnpikes that would bring users out of the mud and onto a safe, dry trail surface.

Our crews peeled huge logs, "the biggest I've ever used" according to WTA assistant crew leader Lee Young's description, and moved them into place to create the stringers. To do so required thoughtful preparation, good communication, strong backs and sheer willpower. In this culturally sensitive area, with the potential for Native artifacts, we paid special attention to the location of our borrow pits, which meant that we often transported fill material for a significant distance. Volunteers carried in hundreds of buckets of rock and mineral soil to fill up the turnpike. The local Backcountry Horsemen (BCH) chapter also provided gravel pack support for a day. After much hard work, we met our goal of providing a durable trail surface for users to enjoy.

While we have constructed more than 100 feet of turnpike in the past few years, work remains to be done on this trail. And on the next trail over and then on the trail that connects to it. And so on and so on. If you haven't been to Indian Heaven with us, you haven't missed your chance.

Thanks to all who helped this trail restoration project to be a success. This includes the awesome volunteers who worked in the field, WTA's much appreciated members who help finance the work, the great U.S. Forest Service staff who provide technical support, and the BCH packers. When everyone works together, great projects are accomplished.

—Tim Van Beek

Where rural culture meets urban expansion and private property abuts public lands, conflict blooms like fall mushrooms after an October rain.



Once upon a time, a faint path meandered through the woods. This not-so-secret route took its wanderers through fascinating terrain, past an enchanting waterfall and up to a fabulous vista.

Though it was undeniably beautiful, this trail—the Cape Horn Trail—had some serious issues. It wasn't legal, wasn't safe and wasn't environmentally appropriate. Today, with Forest Service guidance, WTA volunteers are helping with many of the trail improvements to make this trail safer for hikers today and more sustainable for the future.

When the Forest Service officially adopted the Cape Horn Trail in 2010, it was a mere wisp of illicit trail. This fall, WTA volunteers closed another chapter in the story of the Cape Horn Trail when they completed a 30-foot-long footbridge. Acting something like fairy godmothers, the South Gifford Pinchot Resource Advisory Committee, National Forest Foundation, American Hiking Society, and Friends of the Gorge and many private individuals have all provided invaluable support, allowing WTA to complete a new reroute, improve and maintain much of the 7-mile route, and coordinate classes in trail design, construction and maintenance in just two years.

But for the full Cape Horn Trail story we have to look further back in time, a quarter century earlier. The impetus for the Cape Horn Trail is just as old as the legislation that created the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area in 1988. At that time, the Friends of the Gorge included the Cape Horn Trail in their proposal calling for 40 new trails in the Gorge.

Several other trails on that original list have

now been developed, including the Klickitat Trail and trails at Coyote Wall and Catherine Creek, but new trail development in the Gorge has never come easily. This is a diverse area, both biologically and politically. Where the wet western Gorge mingles with the dry eastern Gorge, unique habitats are formed, with rare plants and animals that deserve protection from human activity. And where rural culture meets urban expansion and private property abuts public lands, conflict blooms like fall mushrooms after an October rain.

Many of the Gorge's now-official trails have been preceded by the appearance of user-built trails, made through illegal construction in the case of Cape Horn, or simply by a multitude of hikers beating a path to desirable vistas, as at Hardy Ridge at Beacon Rock State Park. In most cases, the process has been plagued with controversy, and too often, progress has been made at a snail's pace. This is the pattern that has been set in the past twenty-five years. Given the prediction that this region will attract another 1.6 million residents in the next twenty-five years, the question becomes this:

how can the Forest Service, State Parks and Department of Natural Resources meet the growing demand for new places to hike in the Gorge?

WTA's work at Cape Horn provides a clue. If we can leverage grant funds with volunteer time and expertise, we can help these agencies complete trail projects more quickly and efficiently. Our efforts to train volunteers through events like the Columbia Cascades Trail Skills College each spring boost not only WTA's capacity, but also that of our partners in the



Ryan Ojerio Southwest Washington Regional Coordinator ryan@wta.org

Continued on p.45

Action for Trails »

A Six-Month Reprieve

The Recreational Trails Program lives to fight another day

This bridge on the Fish Creek Trail was made

possible by RTP funds. RTP also supports

most of WTA's Volunteer Vacations.

I've been holding my breath for months now, watching both chambers of Congress play chicken with the future of trails and recreation, as the surface transportation bill inched closer to its expiration date of September 30. On Friday, September 16, I let myself exhale.

On that autumn Friday, the House and Senate passed a six-month extension of the surface transportation bill. Why is this passage so important to hikers? This bill includes funding for Transportation Enhancements, and within that funding lies the Recreational Trails Program (RTP). RTP sends money to states to

disburse as grants to agencies and nonprofit organizations committed to trail maintenance. Washington state organizations typically receive between \$1.8 million and \$2 million annually from RTP. In 2010, WTA received \$175,000 to support our youth program, our Volunteer Vacations and our Backcountry Response Teams. That figure represents nearly 20 percent of our total trail maintenance budget, and it is the funding we use for our

work in state parks and national parks. These are agencies with whom we don't have any other cost-share agreements. If I haven't driven the point home quite hard enough, RTP dollars are fundamental both to WTA's program and to trail maintenance efforts statewide.

This six-month extension is a reprieve, and it provides a little more certainty to organizations like ours as we plan for the next year. But the big prize would be a six-year extension, and that's what Congress will be working on over the next several months. I'm going to use some weasel-words in the next sentence, since I want to hedge this prediction. I think it is unlikely that Congress will take up a six-year extension in March, but could pass another six- to eight-month extension to get past the 2012 elections. I may be surprised, but I suspect that both parties want to get on the other side of election-year politics before tackling a long-term extension of the surface

transportation bill.

The votes this fall did not go down without shenanigans—that's a technical D.C. term—and I'm always happy to pass on some juicy D.C. gossip. The biggest existential threat to RTP came from Sen. Tom Coburn, R-Okla., who continued his crusade against Transportation Enhancements funding by threatening, for the second time, to introduce an amendment that would have eliminated those dollars. Sen. Coburn had threatened to filibuster over his amendment, which could have pushed the surface transportation bill past its September

30 expiration date, resulting in massive job loss and economic uncertainty. After being prevailed upon by members of his party and by Sen. Boxer, D-Calif., who agreed to reforms in Transportation Enhancements, Sen. Coburn relented, and the House-passed extension cruised through the Senate—92 in favor, 6 opposed.

I'm very gratified to see this six-month extension passed. While it is not a long period, six months is significantly better than the

four-month window previously discussed by Sen. Boxer, because it gets us past some important grant deadlines. That certainly provided more comfort to the budget-writers in WTA's trail maintenance and youth programs. This fall, WTA was on the horn with members of Washington's delegation to make sure that they were in support of a six-month extension, and across party lines, they were. Of special note is Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler, R-Wash., who circulated a "Dear Colleague" letter which outlined her support of RTP. Every time a member takes action to protect this program, I feel a little more secure about the future of our trails.

Of course, it's your voice speaking out that ensures that our legislators are in the know about issues that matter to hikers. We'll keep you informed as the next deadline approaches.



Help Out>>> Watch our blog, The

signpost, as well as our Facebook page, Trail News and our Trail Action Network alerts for opportunities to help preserve the Recreational Trails Program.

Fish Creek Bridge photos by Martin Barney.



Jonathan Guzzo WTA Advocacy Director

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Youth & Families »

WTA's Youth Program Inspires

Teens learn to be resourceful, creative and self-reliant in the backcountry

"When my son looked at me and said those were the best five days of his summer, I was thrilled. He had an even better time than we anticipated," wrote Erin Fleck, whose son Sam took part in our Youth Volunteer Vacation at French Creek. She added, "I can't thank you enough for everything you do with these kids to teach them the value of hard work, being outside, helping save our most precious resource, and living without electronics! Thank you for putting yourself out there for our kids and our trails."

From all of the stories we've heard from

volunteers, parents, crew leaders and staff, we can safely say that 2011 has been another successful vear for WTA's youth program. And as we plan for the year ahead, we are inspired to provide new opportunities to get youth outside, to introduce the joys of hiking trails and to engage the hikers, outdoor leaders and environmentalists of tomorrow.

In 2011, WTA witnessed our highest-ever re-

turn rate of youth volunteers in the Volunteer Vacation program. Several of our participants have taken part in a WTA trip each summer of their high school years. Sally and Arian joined WTA's first all-girls' youth vacation back in 2008. Now seniors at Mount Si High School, both girls have done several backcountry trips since their first trip and have been sharing their reflections through a blog.

"There's a reason we keep returning, more excited than ever," Sally and Arian explain in one post. "The entire experience, in every way, is elevated: spending over a week far away from any road or civilization is a wonderful back-to-nature experience, and the challenge of it all is invigorating!" The girls have gained

valuable experience in being resourceful, as they explain: "Bringing more spikes to a frontcountry site isn't too difficult, but if you run out of supplies needed in the backcountry, creativity and self-reliance are the only ways to get yourself out of the situation. You get to learn how to handcraft wood stakes."

Washington Trails Association's youth program strives to provide positive volunteer experiences for each and every participant. Sherry, who joined a work party co-hosted with the Student Conservation Association this spring, enjoyed her experience because she "was not

only taught how to do the project, but the leaders told us what our project's purpose was and even showed us the progression of the project." She appreciated seeing exactly where her work fit in, and knowing what would happen next.

After spending a week in the woods on trail during a Youth Volunteer Vacation, many high school students appreciate trails and how much work goes into maintaining them so much more. And their parents tell us that they notice a change in their child's

attitudes after returning from a trip. As parent Susan Aloof told us of her son Jonathan, "Each expereince has made him more mature and independent."

Whether they joined a day work party with their parents, volunteered through one of WTA's community partners or joined a Youth Volunteer Vacation over the summer, our young trail stewards learned firsthand the benefits of working together. The feeling of accomplishment that they get by day's end is palpable.

No question about it, the youth WTA brought out into wilderness this year have truly made a difference.◆



Teens Sally and Arian have volunteered with WTA since our first all-girls weeklong in 2008.



Krista
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Inside WTA »

Changes on the Board

Ever wonder who makes the big decisions at WTA? Should we advocate for this road to be reopened or to remain closed? How will we engage youth in trail stewardship? Should we buy a new pickup truck or what? That would be our board of directors.

With one commonality-everyone is a hiker-the exact skill set of our board is always evolving. This fall, WTA said good-bye to four tremendous board members, and we welcomed four new board members.

We greatly appreciated the sage advice that **Peter Barrett**, a longtime Fireside Circle member, was able to provide. Melissa Strauch was a consummate professional as she headed up fundraising efforts, and her warm personality made her fun to work with, too. Tim Gould was not only a committed, perceptive advocate for trails, but a staunch carpooler. With an unwavering commitment to saving the earth's resources, he never arrived at a WTA event alone. Richard Johnson's enthusiasm for trail work and getting people outside was rivaled only by his financial acumen. His efforts to help fellow board members understand our balance sheet were greatly appreciated. We extend our thanks to all of them.

And we're looking forward to getting to know the incoming crowd, the WTA members who joined our board in September. Here's what we know so far.

Amy Csink is taking a hiatus from her career as a research geneticist and giving back to the issues that she cares most about. Hiking was at the top of the list, specifically making sure that access to natural areas is maintained and expanded. Her favorite hike is Grasshopper Pass in the North Cascades.

Laurie Hartshorn serves as a procurement director for T-Mobile. She's an avid hiker and has participated in WTA's Hike-a-Thon since 2006. Her favorite hike is Cougar Mountain's Licorice Fern Trail, a delightful little romp that is right out her back gate.

Spokane ophthalmologist **Ken Mondal** has hiked all of the trails in the guide 100 Hikes in the Inland Northwest by Rich Landers. This is his second term on the WTA Board of Directors; during his first term he started the Mondal Youth Endowment, which helps support WTA's youth program. His favorite hike is to the Enchantment Lakes.

Bill Pope is a former Microsoft lawyer, an avid backpacker, and one of the owners of the Mazama Country Inn. Born and raised in Seattle, Bill sits on a number of environmental nonprofit boards, including the Wilderness Land Trust and Washington Conservation Voters, as well as on the advisory boards of the Cascade Land Conservancy and the Methow Conservancy. His favorite backpacking trip is along the Boundary Trail.

Finally, the WTA staff would like to extend our special thanks to board member Craig McKibben. He had been enjoying getting outdoors more often during his retirement-that is, until he became WTA's acting executive director. He volunteered for the role this past spring and we kept him behind a desk through the prime hiking and climbing season. (Fortunately, he has the ski season to look forward to.) With Karen Daubert's arrival as executive director, Craig will resume his position on WTA's board of directors.◆

Meet Our Members!



Angella Weiben

In 2008, while researching an upcoming trip, Angella Weiben came across the WTA website and learned of Hike-a-Thon. Though she grew up with Signpost, Angella had only recently gotten back into hiking. She made an impulsive decision to register for Hike-a-Thon, thinking it would inspire her to get out more often ... and she's been an avid hiker ever since. WTA's trip reports remain her go-to source.

After participating as an individual for a couple of years, Angella decided to head up a Hike-a-Thon team by asking three close friends and family members to get out more with her. Team "We Trip, Few Fall" took the second place prize for Most Miles Hiked in 2010 and came back strong with two more members in 2011. Angella was impressed with how well her team did this year, saying, "We managed to hike as a full team twice. And everyone had great time, too."

But making her miles count through Hike-a-Thon wasn't enough for Angella. After her first Hike-a-Thon, she decided to give trail work a try, too. And by a "try," we mean a week! "Why sign up for a day trip," joked Angella, "when I could jump in with both feet and do a weeklong?!" She's been a South Fork Skokomish crew member twice now. In October, she camped in style during our weeklong trip at Cape Disappointment. "Trail work has given me a different appreciation of how much work goes into keeping a trail maintained, open and safe. Plus, it's lots of fun."

Thank you, Angella, for being a wonderful WTA member, volunteer and ambassador!

—Kara Chin

Membership News »

Ambitious trip reporters Bob and Barb Griffith

My Top 10

Sometimes beautiful wild places inspire us to give, sometimes it's the hikers

One of the best parts of my job is keeping abreast of the great people and projects at WTA, and I regularly find new answers to the question, "Why should I give to WTA?" Before I made my own personal contribution to WTA this year, I thought about the people who have inspired me to give as generously as I can. Read on for the top 10 people on my list.

- 10. **Emily Schlieman**: This WTA youth program alum brought her skills back on trail as a second-year intern this season. She dedicated her summer to camping and working with high school volunteers on trail maintenance projects throughout the Cascades and Olympics.
- 9. **Bob and Barb Griffith**: Nearly 1,700 people have written a trip report on the WTA website this year, and Bob and Barb's continue to stand out as some of the best. Week after week, they share great photography, fascinating tidbits about flora and fauna and everything I need to know about current trail conditions
- 8. **Craig Romano**: This guidebook author turned 50 this year. To celebrate the milestone, he decided to participate in the legendary White River 50-Mile Trail Run and turned the challenge into a fundraiser for WTA. Craig completed the run in 12 hours, 58 minutes, and 55 seconds and raised more than \$4,200 from 70 different donors to support WTA's work for trails. All this in a year when he published two new guidebooks, *Day Hiking: Columbia River Gorge* and *Backpacking Washington*.
- 7. **John D'Onofrio**: John is one of dozens of WTA members who contribute to each issue of this magazine. These volunteers generously share inspiring stories, amazing nature photography and useful hiking advice with us. I always remember John's luscious photographs, like last issue's Olympic Coast cover shot or his Sahale Arm photo essay.
- 6. **Lace Thornberg**: As you have probably read by now, this is Lace's last issue at the helm of *Washington Trails* before she sets off to do research in the Philippines. What you may not know is that Lace has been quietly working for hikers since joining the WTA staff in 2002. You can find Lace's creative drive and can-do attitude at work in all of WTA's programs today.



- 5. **Ted Klump**: Ted is a rising trail maintenance star. In his second season volunteering as an assistant crew leader, he helped lead more than 30 work parties in the Columbia Gorge. Not content to stop with trail maintenance, he raised \$720 for WTA's Hike-a-Thon and took home the prize for Most Trail Work Parties by a Hike-a-Thoner (nine).
- 4. **Glacier Basin Trail volunteers**: There are 400 individual WTA volunteers who deserve credit for helping to rebuild this popular Mount Rainier trail after it was destroyed by flooding in 2006. The monumental project took them a staggering 17,450 hours over the course of four seasons.
- 3. **Craig McKibben**: This board member stepped up in a big way to become WTA's acting executive director last spring while an executive search got underway. He dedicated himself to the job—as a volunteer, no less—with a climber's tenacity. Though he recently handed the reins to incoming Executive Director Karen Daubert, you will continue to find him advising staff and serving in the boardroom.
- 2. **Sam Thompson**: Sam literally ran from Seattle to Olympia to attend WTA's Hiker Lobby Day back in February. Thanks to his efforts and the voices of thousands of other hikers, WTA helped keep our state recreation lands open when they were threatened with closure earlier this year due to budget cuts.
- 1. **Pete Dewell**: Pete recently completed his 1,000th day of volunteer trail work with WTA, and at age eighty he shows little sign of slowing down. Year after year, he has devoted himself to clearing downed logs, building rock walls and training new volunteer leaders—all to keep your favorite trails safe and accessible.

Who is on your top 10 list for trails this year? Drop me a line at rebecca@wta.org, and don't forget to make your own special contribution to WTA by December 31. You can make your tax-deductible gift online at www.wta.org/donate or mail a check.



Rebecca Lavigne WTA Development Director rebecca@wta.org

On Trail



Are you looking for snowy escapades or would you prefer a snow-free hike? Either way the Columbia River Gorge has you covered.

Here, a snowshoer enjoys the easy terrain at Trillium Lake. Photo by Eli Boschetto.

Map courtesy of Explore the Gorge.



Stay Close, Play More

Soft beds and day trips in the Columbia Gorge

If the mere mention of taking a "staycation" this winter sends you straight to your laptop in search of the cheapest flight anywhere out of town, hang on. I think you're going to like the Gorge.

My family takes our vacations in small, weekend-sized chunks close to our home base of Seattle. With our energy-filled toddler in tow, we combine outdoor activities like day hiking with exploring small towns or visiting local wineries. Local travel saves us money, we get to know our beautiful region inside and

outside, and we still get our much-needed time off together.

Near the top of our list for winter weekend getaways is the mighty Columbia River Gorge—the only sea-level passage through the Cascades and a bona fide four-season destination for hearty hikers. Trails for all abilities lead to dramatic waterfalls that are always beautiful and occasionally frozen. As you move up from the river on both the Washington and Oregon sides, you will find plenty of opportunities for snowshoe hikes and cross-country skiing. In between your daytime outdoor pursuits, rest your head on a soft bed in one of the gorge's small-town hotels or bed-and-breakfasts.

Lauren Braden

Lauren is WTA's
Director of
Communications.
She also runs
Northwest
Tripfinder. Get
inspriation and
advice for Pacific
Northwest travelers
at nwtripfinder.com.

Safety Tips

The Columbia River Gorge is gorgeous in every season, but it's subject to some wild weather in winter. Although most of the Gorge roads and trails sit at pretty low elevation, erratic weather patterns and intense wind can deliver blustery conditions. Have an emergency kit in your car, carry tire chains and pack extra blankets. Make sure your boots have good traction, dress in layers and bring head-to-toe rain gear. Hiking poles can be helpful on wet, slippery trails.

Poison oak is common on the Lyle Cherry Orchard Trail and other trails in this area of the Gorge, and the allergen oil, urushiol, is still present on plant stems that have lost their leaves for the winter. Wear long pants and wash up thoroughly with soap and water after your hike.

Winter Waterfalls

When the mighty Columbia River cut a deep canyon through the Cascades, it just wanted to get to the ocean. But hikers have been reaping the benefits for years, as the river's urgency gave us dramatic scenery with a plethora of cascading waterfalls enveloped by mossy canyons. These waterfall hikes below are all accessible off of the Historic Columbia River Highway or its east-west parallel route, Interstate 84. You can stay overnight on either end of this waterfall route.

Where to Play

Latourell Falls Loop. 2.3 miles RT, 540 feet gain. Oregon State Parks. Two falls, and upper and a lower, compete for star attraction status on this easy state park hike close to Portland. The first of the falls, tumbling off a basalt cliff, is just 300 feet up the paved trail.

Bridal Veil Falls. 1.2 miles RT, 175 feet gain. Take this quick and easy paved-to-gravel path to a two-tiered cascade that is viewed from a platform.

Multnomah – Wahkeena Falls. 5.4 miles round trip, 1,550 feet gain. The 620-foot Multnomah Falls is the highest of the 77 waterfalls on the Oregon side of the Gorge. In just a quarter mile, you'll be standing on the breathtaking and historic Benson Bridge, which crosses Multnomah Creek between the two tiers of the falls. To get the full view, keep hiking up to the top of the falls, a 600-foot climb from the parking lot. You can turn around here as most tourists do, or keep hiking for the Wahkeena Loop Trail and several more cascades along the way, some big and some small.

Eagle Creek. 12 miles round trip, 1,100 feet gain. t's a stunning and dramatic hike with so many falls along the way that most any





In winter, the fine mist coming off of Multnomah Falls frosts the nearby rocks and trees. Photo by Josh McCullough.

turnaround point will satisfy. This breathtaking route is blasted into the side of a rockface in parts and takes hikers behind the scrim of a plunging waterfall. Hike with sure footing, bring hiking poles and utilize the handrails.

Where to Stay

Hood River BnB. Want a soft bed a few blocks from the shops and brewpubs of downtown Hood River? Enjoy a hot breakfast on the house, a hammock on the deck, and plenty of room to stow your gear. The friendly owner is happy to share her knowledge of local attractions and recreation. Rooms start at \$85. hoodriverbnb.com

Hood River Hotel. Stay in an historic inn right downtown with charming rooms, ensuite baths, some with kitchens. Amenities include a sauna and free wifi. Rooms start at \$99. hoodriverhotel.com

McMenamins Edgefield. Set on a lush 38-acre parcel of farmland on the Columbia River in Troutdale, the Edgefield has its own onsite brewery, winery, distillery and spa. Live music and the onsite glassblower and potter will keep you entertained. An overnight stay here is a lively experience; bring earplugs if you head to bed early. Hostel beds available. Private rooms start at \$50. mcmenamins.com



Kim Brown ambling through the Lyle Cherry Orchard. Photo by Susan Elderkin.

Open Vistas

Sunshine draws explorers to the east end of the Gorge. Vistas open up. Oak trees dot the landscape. The sky is big. Many of the hiking opportunities in this region are relatively new, and not all trails are well signed. The best way to ensure you're on the right trail is to have a topo map and good hiking guidebook with you (I recommend Craig Romano's Day Hiking: Columbia River Gorge, which includes all of the trails below). Stop at one of the region's local wineries after your hike for a different kind of taste of the landscape.

Where to Play

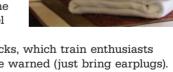
Lyle Cherry Orchard. 5 miles round trip, 1,100 feet gain. Looking for winter sunshine? Head into the rain shadow. The Friends of the Columbia Gorge own and manage this stunning preserve, where you'll find traces of a century-old cherry orchard. Gnarled garry oak clump into pockets of forest too, providing habitat for diverse birdlife on the other side of winter. This little-known hike is a hidden gem, one of the best finds on the Washington side of the east Columbia River Gorge. Views of the Columbia River toward The Dalles are spectacular. Keep in mind that with those wideopen views can come blustery wind, so dress warmly.

Coyote Wall. 6 miles round trip, 630 feet gain. The stunning wall is a rising columnar basalt ridge, and the main trail will take you through scattered ponderosa pine atop its cliff to enjoy panoramic views of the river. Avoid the user-built spur for both safety and ecological reasons, and keep a close eye on children around the steep cliffs.

Catherine Creek Labyrinth. 4.3 miles round trip, 780 feet gain. If basalt is your thing, the Catherine Creek area rewards with outstanding rock formations. User-built trails can be confusing (and damaging) here, so take care to stick to the main loop trail. For a longer hike, the labyrinth trail can be combined with Coyote Wall.

Where to Stay

Lyle Hotel. Old and charming, Lyle Hotel has great touches like fluffy robes and down comforters, but they keep room rates reasonable. Bathrooms are shared. Some rooms are on the side of the hotel that is nearest



the railroad tracks, which train enthusiasts will love, but be warned (just bring earplugs). Rooms start at \$65. lylehotel.com

Bingen School Inn Columbia Gorge Hostel.

Sleep on the cheap in this historic Civilian Conservation Corps construction school house, complete with chalkboards in the rooms. A cool amenity is its classic wooden gymnasium with indoor basketball and a rock climbing wall. Dorm bed \$19, private rooms from \$49. bingenschool.com

Northwest
Explorer articles
describe backpacking trips in
the Northwest
and beyond.
Want to write
about your trip?
Email editor@

wta.org.





Go Deeper

Want to learn more about the Columbia River Gorge? Here are a few helpful resources—from websites to check out to the ultimate way of getting to know a place, building a trail with WTA!

Visit Waterfalls
Northwest. An online
resource for waterfall
lovers, this website
maintains a database
of cascades throughout Washington,
Oregon and Idaho.
waterfallsnorthwest.
com

Read Day Hiking: Columbia River Gorge.

Craig Romano's wellresearched guidebook features 100 hikes on both side of the Gorge. mountaineersbooks. org

Join Friends of the Columbia Gorge. This nonprofit organization that protects the scenic, natural, cultural, and recreational resources of the Columbia River Gorge. gorgefriends.org

Volunteer in the Gorge. Washington Trails Association hosts work parties on Columbia Gorge hiking trails year-round. Visit wta.org for more information.



Winter Wonderland

For some, a mid-winter getaway is only complete with plenty of beautiful white snow. Just to the south of Hood River in the Columbia Gorge you'll find one of the Pacific Northwest's most iconic winter wonderlands, the slopes and valleys around Mount Hood. Downhill skiing at Timberline Ski Resort draws thousands of powder-seekers and it is possible to ski there nearly year-round. The national forest trails listed below are best explored on snowshoes or cross-country skis. All of these opportunities and lodgings are congregated around the small community of Government Camp on the south flank of Oregon's mighty mountain.

Where to Play

Trillium Lake. 5 miles round trip, minimal elevation gain. You won't see any of the namesake trillium while snowshoeing here, but you will see plenty of Mount Hood as you stomp through these snowy meadows 40 miles from Portland. The mostly flat, wide trail area makes it an excellent choice for beginners, but all levels will enjoy the views. Mount Hood is the main attraction, but the frozen lake and meadows have considerable charm, too. Weekends can be very busy and parking is limited.

Barlow Pass. 6 miles round trip, 600 feet elevation gain. Snowshoers and cross-country skiers follow the Pacific Crest Trail to Barlow Pass to explore the rugged wilderness of Mount Hood's lowlands.

White River West. 3 miles round trip, . Hike toward breathtaking views of Mount Hood's imposing summit as you parallel the White River canyon. About a quarter-mile into the hike is "the pit," one of the most popular sledding spots near Mount Hood. Once you pass this steep bowl, you can enjoy the majesty of the mountain before you in more peace and

Barlow Pass snowshoers. Photo by Darryl Lloyd.

Timberline Lodge, one of the Pacific Northwest's classic winter destinations



tranquility. Hike up and along the ridgeline until you reach the overhead powerlines, a good turn-around point.

Where to Stay

Timberline Lodge. Where the lodgepole pines end, the permanent snowfields begin. Timberline Lodge is one of the best examples of depression-era WPA-built mountain architecture in the United States. The setting is dramatic any time of year, but never more so than in winter when thick white snow blankets the lodge and surrounding terrain. History buffs, take note: throughout the lodge you will learn its rich story of creation. Local carpenters crafted everything from the wall panels to bedside tables from hand-hewn Douglas-fir, while blacksmiths welded ironwork to adorn each drawer and door. But it's the world-class recreation, from mountaineering to downhill skiing, which draws most visitors to this mountain getaway. Winter rates are a splurge, but even if you don't stay the night, stop in for a drink at the bar or coffee by the fire. timberlinelodge.com

Laughing Bear Cabin. One of several cabins built by the Steiners, prolific cabinbuilders in the 1920s and 1930s. This one has all the original furniture, bear locks, bent wood and Dutch doors. laughingbearlogcabins.com

Cascade Huts. Snowshoe or cross-country ski from cabin to cabin. These huts offer the opportunity for self-guided, multi-day trips. \$150 a night for a hut that sleeps up to eight. (Barlow Butte hut shown above left.) cascadehuts.com

So, have I convinced you to stay and play close to home this winter?◆



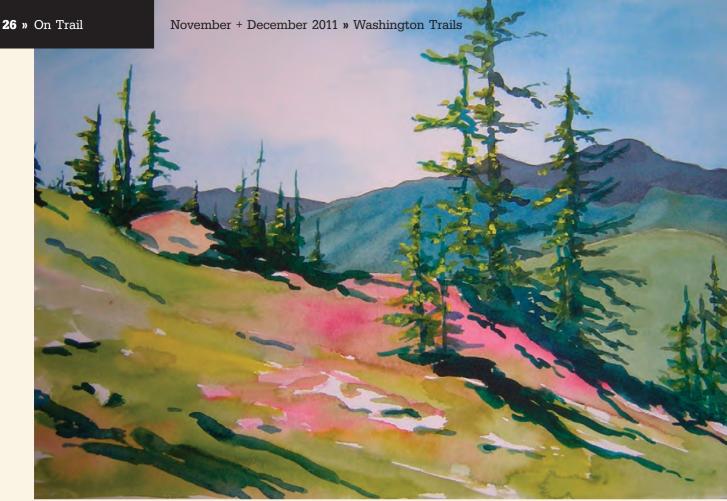
Nature's Painters

Have you ever wondered whether landscape artists successfully paint from photos or from their direct vision of the wilderness itself? It turns out that the answer is both.

WTA members share a common love for the trails that take us into wilderness. Some express that appreciation artistically, through landscape painting.

In this feature, Joan Burton talks with four landscape artists who translate their outdoor experiences onto canvas.

Above: "On Marmot Pass" by Niki Sherey



Cecile Disenhouse

Cecile Disenhouse carries paper, a few brushes, and a small palette of paints along with her to paint in the wild. She seats herself in a beautiful spot, makes a preliminary pencil sketch to determine the composition and range of values, and then takes out her paints. This technique, used for years by painters such as the Impressionists, is termed plein air painting. Of course the beauty of the surroundings influences her, and photographers can capture it with a quick click, but she insists, "To really see a landscape, you've got to paint it."

She relishes the immediacy and sparkle of painting in the wild, but confesses that she often also takes a photo and paints the same scene again at home, using the original painting and her photo to craft an improved final version.

Cecile studied art in New York City from when she was twelve, and also as a college student. She didn't study painting again until she retired thirteen years ago and took up watercolor painting, but has painted since while backpacking with her husband, David Jette, better known to some *Washington Trails* readers as "Mountain Man Dave." Watercolor supplies are perfect to take along on a backpacking trip because they are lightweight and because the painting dries within minutes. She carries her painting materials in her pack along with her. She says she doesn't wait for an inspiration, but starts out anyway. The inspiration comes from being there.

"I have to sneak up on it," she insists. "If I try to get the perfect painting by preparing too carefully, I am doomed to fail. My best paintings are often on the back of another painting that I was going to toss. You don't get a second chance with watercolors. If a watercolor gets overworked and loses its transparency, it cannot be salvaged."

"You have to get the light on the sky and water right the first time," Cecile says. "People who don't paint don't understand. Painting is like all the arts, requiring hard work, high discipline and good technique. Inspiration is only a small part of it."



"You have to get the light on the sky and water right the first time."



Above: "Baker River;" at top: "Park Butte"

Niki Sherey works with acrylic paints to cre-

ate her landscapes, but her paintings could also be considered to be photographic collages. Niki takes outdoor photographs, brings them into her studio and embeds them in a corner of her paintings. If you look closely, you can see the photos adhering to the paintings.

Her technique, she says, came about nearly by accident. She had always painted from photos, and one day she realized that the photograph sitting next to the painting she was working on really made her colors "pop." Without much thought, she glued it into her painting, painted around it, and liked the total effect. Today, Niki says, her paintings spring from the photograph to create an altered landscape; the photo is the seed. She looks to the photo for color and structure, and then allows her painting to break free from the confines of the photo.

She calls her most recent series of paintings "The Whole Picture." She believes that in photographs things seem smaller than the

grand reality. She hopes to capture the complexity of the total scene, as opposed to photographic reality, in her paintings. She does not want to represent just a documentation of the scene, but an addition of the passage of time and the feelings the landscape evokes.

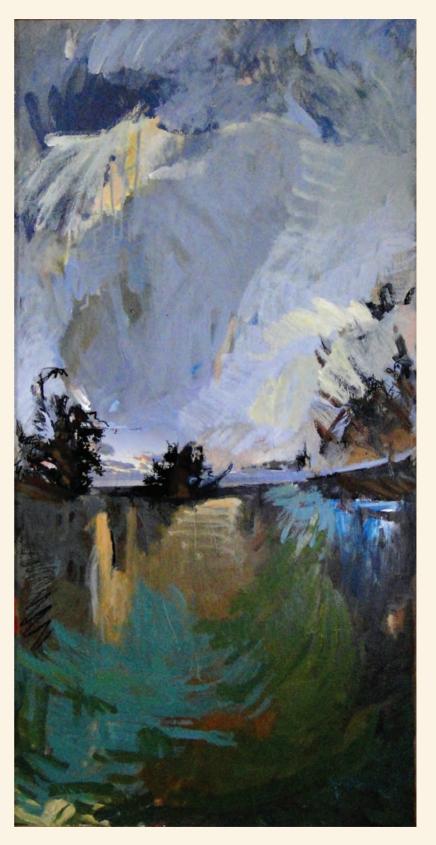
Growing up in Texas, expansive skies and endless horizons influenced Niki's perception of the natural world. She says



Niki has also been influenced by her experiences rowing on Lake Washington for more than ten years. While rowing, she feels she becomes a part of the landscape. On the water, the horizon expands in every direction, encompassing the viewer. She wants her paintings to provide that same sense of being surrounded by the view.

"I give space to these photos in my work to highlight the parts I like, to expand on what's at the core, and to create a new scene rooted in reality."





"Vortex at Land's End"

David Bobroff

David Bobroff is a painter with a message. All of his work is about the relationship between the natural world and the manmade world. He believes he is making an editorial statement and

telling a story with his paintings.

His work "Hamma Hamma Dream" shows a distant vista of The Brothers on a summer day between buildings, city streets and large signs. The story is about the temptation to go hiking when the viewer cannot do that. If we are trapped in mun-

dane and banal everyday routines, at least we can dream of hiking in the Olympics.

His painting "Our Sacred Way" is a scene of the Issaquah Highlands and West Tiger Mountain. Two long rows of earthmovers in the foreground are tearing up land for a new housing division. He calls it a lament.

David says yes, he uses photographs, but they only help him customize and alter the composition and time of day in his work. His painting style is called photographic realism, which means the details are so meticulously rendered that a photograph or computer could portray the scene in the same way. But David insists it is his individual interpretation of the events that makes them uniquely his own.

All of David's paintings are in oil. Each one takes from nine months to two years to complete. They are large—generally 4 feet high and 5 to 7 feet long. He says painting them slowly in oil gives him enormous personal satisfaction and he likes to think he is continuing in the use of materials and techniques that are 800 years old.

David is an active member of the Washington Trails Association who skis, backpacks and bicycles. In 2009, his work was featured in a one-man show sponsored by Everett Community College. He hopes to exhibit his work to the public again in that way but in the meantime, his paintings can be seen in private collections.



"Hamma Hamma Dream"

"Spending many months on the details of a scene heightens my awareness of its particular narrative."



"Our Sacred Way"

Find More Work by These Artists

Cecile Disenhouse's paintings are on view and available for purchase at Gallery North in Edmonds, Washington.

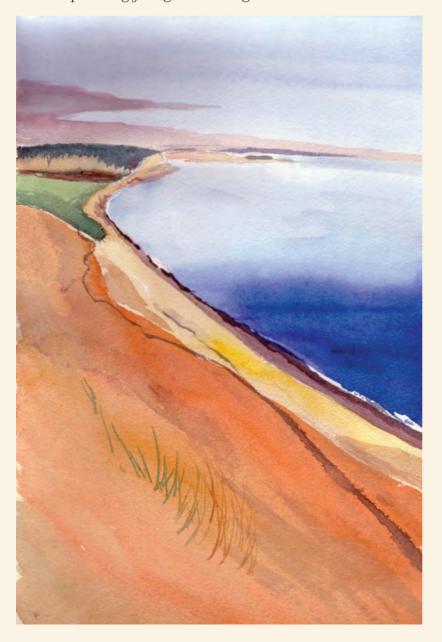
Niki Sherry's work is available directly through her. Visit her website, **www.nikisherey.com**. Niki also creates custom paintings for patrons seeking a representation of a favorite scene.

To connect with David Bobroff, call the WTA office. We'll pass your message on.

Sally Rawlings's work may be seen at Art Stall Gallery in the Pike Place Market, at her home studio by appointment or online at artstallgallery.com. To see a video of her paintings set to music, search for "Night Songs From Around the World by Rawlings-Cantilena" on YouTube.



"I like to be outdoors whenever I can. Maybe painting just gives me a good excuse."



Sally Rawlings

Sally Rawlings believes one of her roles in life is to share the scenes of beauty she sees around her. She says that when she is with other people, she's the one most often calling out, "Look!"

Sally wants to stop viewers with her art, draw them into the painting and provide an aware-

ness of what is right with the world. As a painter, she says she is also saying "Look!" by pointing out the sights she has enjoyed. If the viewer's mind can travel ahead to new places or back to beautiful places visited in the past, she believes she has done her job.



Sally always wanted to be an artist but was afraid to declare herself as an art major in college. Only when she was in Steamboat, Colo., did she finally take a watercolor class. She has since studied at the Chicago Art Institute, Fort Lauderdale Museum of Art, Colorado Mountain College and Coupeville Arts Center, as well as with various teachers.

Watercolors became her medium of choice because, "as in life, it cannot be completely planned. There are happy accidents and unhappy ones you can make work for you." She likes plein air painting and carries her pad and palette with her in a small sandwich bag while she hikes. She admits she also takes photos to capture the light and record the scene, and of subjects she has no time to paint on location. Later she studies the painting to see what additions may be required.

Making the painting simpler and more abstract is part of this artist's goal, one that the photographer usually cannot achieve. Sally likes to work with the challenge of getting the shapes, rhythm and the contrast of lights and darks right.

"A painting can have special effects a photo can't convey," she says, "and at the same time a painting can add feeling that might not be obvious to other viewers of the same scene." She admits to moving mountains or rivers if it improves the composition.

Sally is a member of a hiking group that hikes in the Cascades once per month. She also sails in the Sound, so many of her paintings portray Northwest water scenes. Skiing and walks around Green Lake have provided painting inspiration, too.

Sally belongs to the Northwest Watercolor Society, the Art Stall Gallery Coop and Seattle CoArts.

At left, above: "Simply Snowy;" at left, below: "Ebey's Amber"

Members of El Dorado's ecotourism committee learned trail-building skills during a three-day workshop. Here they are improving the grade on a switchback in Montana Santa Barbara National Park.



A Transformative Trail

A King County Parks employee helps build a path to ecotourism in a rural Honduran village

f you've ever had a hankering to help people in distant lands by building trails, you need to talk to Jack.

Jack Simonson is a world adventurer. He has lived with the indigenous people of Madagascar, climbed mountains in Ethiopia and hiked in Peru. His day job as a backcountry trails and forest assessor for King County Parks and Recreation Division keeps him out where he loves to be—immersed in the wild, and away from office paperwork. I caught up with him after he came in from a day of measuring tree trunks for the county's urban forest health evaluation.

Through King County Parks colleague Tina Miller, Jack met Alicia Ward, a Peace Corps volunteer home for the holidays last December. She described her work in El Dorado, Honduras, and asked Jack if he would be interested in teaching the village's residents how to build trails that would attract bird-watchers and other tourists in an effort to bring new money into the local economy. Jack leapt at the chance.

Honduras is the original "banana republic." Chiquita and Dole dominated the banana plantations ever since the U.S. Marines invaded the country in 1925. Coffee, cotton and beef were introduced in the 1950s, and later some apparel and electronics firms moved in to capitalize on the cheap labor. Still, 60 percent of the population lives in poverty, and government salaries alone consume most of the GDP. So it is quite a challenge to get local farmers and politicians to embrace the value of hiking trails.

The land above the village of El Dorado in southwest Honduras is steep and densely forested. Farmers cultivate coffee in small plots up on the mountain slopes, while the cloud forests higher up are held by better-off landlords. In these forests, the rare quetzal and multitudes of other exotic birds make their home, and deep caves call out to be explored. The Peace Corps is working there to develop an ecotourism industry in order to diversify the economy and raise the living standards of the people. This effort, according to Jack, is appreciated by the locals, but few really grasp the potential of ecotourism or the changes that will be required to accommodate it. This lack of understanding is the biggest challenge faced by the foreign volunteers.

Janice Van Cleve

Janice Van Cleve is a Fireside Circle member who also works as an archaeologist in Honduras. Learn more about her work at www. mayas.doodlekit. com. tourism field. Pablo could find his way through

the thickest jungle and identify birds by their

calls alone. He always knew where the birds

With his help, the trail was designed to reach

sites with good potential for wildlife spotting

were and how to get where he was going.

In this rural part of the country, the women remain largely at home in the village while the men climb up into the hills to tend their coffee plants. Their objective is to get to their fincas, or farm plots, by the shortest way possible and the trails show it. Their paths are rocky, rutted

boot tracks that struggle straight up the mountainsides. They present no problem for the sturdy Hondurans, who are unfamiliar with the concept of a broad, smooth, 10 percent grade, but these trails obviously would not appeal to elderly bird-watchers from New York.

The forest surrounding Montana Santa Barbara near El Dorado, Honduras



larly tall trees and eniov impressive views. Pablo is now training as a guide and will probably lead bird watching expeditions when this project is completed. Others, too, began to catch on to the tourist-friendly trail standards. With a bit more training, they could form a cadre of a good trail maintenance crew.

and to allow its hik-

ers to see spectacu-

uring his monthlong sabbatical in Honduras, Jack found that El Dorado's better-off landowners were generally agreeable to having WTA-standard trails built through their holdings in the cloud forests, but between the clouds and the visitor center in the village lie the coffee fincas. For the small farmers, connecting trails would mean the loss of crops. As Jack said, "I had to listen to them. I wasn't about to cut through their crop land just to get my 10 percent grade. We had to work around that and find a compromise."

A general lack of materials presented further challenges. The Honduran government provided Pulaskis, grub hoes, shovels and McLeods but no nails or rebar. Steps and turnpikes had to be wood-staked in place. There is good mineral soil, but the limestone rock is not as durable as Cascade granite.

Labor, on the other hand, came more readily. Jack worked with 5 Peace Corps volunteers and 15 local residents, and across the board, everyone worked hard. With an intimate understanding of local trees, the Hondurans knew which timber would serve best in each situation. The Westerners brought great project direction skills. Together, they built swales and water bars, steps and drainage. The Westerners were continually amazed at how much the locals could accomplish just with their machetes, and by their staggering endurance. Some days, the team would complete 600 feet of trail in only eight hours.

Jack found that several of the workers, like Pablo, showed real promise for work in the ecoWhen I first heard about this ecotourism project, I admit to being suspicious. Was building trails to suit foreigners' tastes an imposition of North American desires upon a small Central American community? All too often these kinds of projects are implemented from the outside, and local residents may or may not be consulted. However, according to Alicia, it was the community's idea to start this ecotourism project in the first place, and she and Jack were there to listen, learn and help. Jack's earnestness and the enthusiastic response of the local Hondurans both point to a comfortable and positive cooperative effort.

If you still have a hankering to do this kind of work, talk to Jack. You can find him on a a Grand Ridge work party or call him at (206) 236-0806.♦



Tips for Ecotourists

Ecotourists strive to appreciate, nurture and enhance—not exploit—the countries and cultures they visit. Here are six tips.

Travel in a spirit of humility, with a genuine desire to meet and talk with the local people. Acquaint yourself with local customs and respect them.

Listen and observe, rather than merely hearing and seeing. Ask questions and seek to understand, not to convert.

Realize that people in the country you visit often have time concepts, thought patterns and cultural preconceptions different from your own. Not inferior, just different.

Remember that you are a guest. Do not ask for or expect special treatment.

Spend wisely. Shop at local establishments and pay fair prices rather than seeking out bargains.

Be aware of the effect you inevitably have as a visitor, and reflect daily on your experiences.

—adapted from tips by travel journalist Don George, www.geoex. com/recce

Peace Corps volunteer Alicia Ward with Jack Simonson

Backcountry

The Gear Closet » Read, scan, shop!



2011 HOLIDAY Gift GUide

The very coolest gear for all of the outdoor enthusiasts on your shopping list

Summer's blooms have gone to seed, the larches' needles have blown off in the wind, and snow is just around the corner. Yep, it's time to start thinking about your loved ones, and maybe a little about yourself, as the holiday season approaches. WTA's gear team has spent hours consulting elves, in-laws, your loved ones and your favorite gear companies to generate a broad list of holiday season gift picks. From stocking stuffers to pure gear bling, our 2011 Holiday Gift Guide gives you a cheat sheet for all the best gear out there.



Better Than Coal

These useful items make great stocking stuffers and small gifts.

Keep 'em toasty with Sherpa head gear and Mountain Hardwear Gloves. Help keep their noggins warm on chilly hiking days with a **Sherpa Adventure Hat**. Handknit using 100 percent lambswool and lined with cozy Polarfleece, these stylish hats not only make great gifts, they also support the local home knitters of Nepal where they're made. Available in a variety of styles and colors. \$25

cal home knitters of Nepal where they're made.
Available in a variety of styles and colors. \$25

Mountain Hardwear Bandito Fingerless
Gloves provide for supreme dexterity, while
the convertible mitt quickly adds warmth and
protection from the elements. When using your
fingers is critical to the success of your mis-

No more broken fingernails from coaxing out the tools in your multitool. Forward Action Spring Technology make opening the **Gerber Crucial F.A.S.T Multitool** easy. With a bottle

sion, this glove-mitt combo is the answer. \$45

opener, Phillips screwdriver, standard screwdriver and wire cutter, this is a handy tool for camp or home. \$50

Exped Shrink Bags are an amazing storage solution. These watertight, compressible, come in a variety of sizes from 20 to 80 liters. They are specifically shaped to fit better in a pack, so they keep your goods dry without creating extra bulk. \$32 - \$39

Drop some natural protection from the sun into their stocking with **Beyond Coastal Face Stick and Lip Balm.** The Facestick sunscreen offers non-mineral UVA/UVB, water- and sweat-resistant protection in a clean-hands applicator, while the Active Lip Balm keeps lips hydrated and provides SPF 15 sun protection in a variety of natural flavors. \$3 - \$7



Take That, Jack Frost

These apparel solutions will keep ol' Jack at bay during the long Pacific Northwest winter.

The **Isis PDQ Hoodie** is a fashionable and functional layer to add to your collection. Its medium weight adds a lot of insulation without a lot of bulk and will keep you dry in a light drizzle. With a snug hood and thumb loops on the sleeves, this comfy hoodie is perfect for trail running and short hikes. \$115

The **Ibex Woolie Zip T** is a light-weight 100 percent Merino wool baselayer. It's not bulky under your layers—you can move freely! The ability to unzip the neck adds breathability to this excellent base layer. Mens and womens versions available. \$85

Keep them warm, and make them feel good about what they're wearing with an **Icebreaker Sweater**. Made of sustainably-produced Merino Wool instead of synthetic materials, these lightweight sweaters are cool in summer, warm in winter and naturally odor-resistant. Available in men's and women's sizes. \$150 - \$225

Loot Luggers

Your special someone might need a new bag to carry all this new gear. These small packs and sacks will make shouldering the load an easy job.

For short day hikes or just wandering around town, give your friend or loved one an **OverLand Equipment Shasta Sling Pack**. With multiple storage compartments, a water bottle pocket and a front pocket organizer, this low-profile pack is perfect to grab and go. \$75

The summit-bagger on your list will love the **North Face Verto 26 Pack**. This roomy 11-ounce backpack is constructed of ultratough, ultralight 100-denier ripstop cargo chute fabric that compresses into its own pocket! Features include two zippered pockets, a water bottle pocket and a hydration port. \$69

The all-new **Mountainsmith Swift FX Camera Pack** might just be the perfect lightweight solution for the day hiker who wants to carry a digital SLR



Ibex Woolie Zip T



GSI Crossover Kitchen Kit



OverLand Equipment's Shasta Sling Pack

camera kit. This comfy lumbar-style pack has a padded, customizable main compartment and two additional pockets for memory cards, filters and other items. \$69

The **CamelBak Highwire 25** incorporates their tried-and-true hydration system with technical and comfort features for a perfect pack for ultralighters and weekend dayhikers alike. Features include hip belt stash pockets, a ventilated back panel, and ice axe loops. \$115

It's a Wonderful Life

There's really nothing better than a sweet, sweet camp setup. Here are a few items to enhance the base camping experience.

The ridiculously lightweight (8.5 ounces!) titanium **Jetboil Sol Ti** will thrill any ultralight backpacker. Their new Thermo-Regulate Burner Technology and push-button igniter offers reliable four-season use in one of the smallest fully contained cook systems available. \$149

The camp gourmet on your gift list will be singing your praises when you give them a **GSI Crossover Kitchen Kit**. All tucked inside a lightweight tote, this kit includes all the items one needs to prepare—and clean up after—delicious backcountry meals. It is compatible with GSI's nFORM Crossover Cooksets. \$35

They'll be comfy in a new **Nemo Obi Two-Person Tent**. This finely tuned backpacking tent offers ample headroom and vestibule storage space while keeping pack weight down to a mere 3 pounds! Also features GREEN anodized DAC Featherlite NSL poles and a dry bag stuff sack. \$389

Cuddle with your honey and enjoy a good night's sleep with the **Therma-Rest Down Coupler**. This 650-fill quilted down sleeve connects two Therm-a-Rest mattresses into the ultimate backcountry feather bed. Available in three sizes and lightweight enough for base camping or backpacking, \$99 - \$129

Ask the **Experts**

What should my next pack be? Will I be happier with a down bag or a synthetic bag? How do I get this peanut butter stain out of my trekking pants? You have questions about gear. WTA's gear team has answers-or we'll find them.

Send your gear question to gear@wta.org and one of our experienced gear team members will answer. Every issue, we'll select one "Question of the Month" to appear in Washington Trails. If we run your question, you'll get a piece of experttested* gear.

*By this, we mean literally. Gear prizes will be used products field-tested by the WTA gear team

Give the gift of a holiday feast with a gift card from Packit Gourmet. With a wide variety of trail breakfasts, lunches and dinners-as well as bulk ingredients to create your own menu. Packit Gourmet's products offer natural and organic alternatives to store-bought packaged meals. \$10+

Bling for the Holidays

These pieces may be on the spendy side, but they will certainly put a smile on a gear hound's face.

Toast the New Year with a Snow Peak Titanium Flask. Constructed of über-strong, über-lightweight nonallergenic titanium, these pocket-sized flasks won't add a metallic taste to their favorite spirit and will appeal to even the most critical ounce-counters. Available in three sizes, gift packaging includes suede carrying case and a filling funnel. \$140 - \$160

The Suunto Core Altimeter Watch is so much more than an altimeter watch, your giftee will feel lost without it. Quality and function are paired perfectly with rugged, yet stylish presentation to make this an instant favorite. \$249

Are the lights of the New Year's fireworks burning your eyes? Try the Julbo Nomad Photochromic Glacier Sunglasses. Their lenses rapidly adjust to light conditions, so you no longer need to manually swap out lenses, and their anti-fog technology and abrasionresistant lenses make these glasses well-suited for outdoor adventures. \$130

There are less expensive poles out there, but there aren't many better poles than the lightweight Black Diamond Alpine Carbon Cork Trekking Poles. These are a great bet for those with knee and back issues. \$140

Winter Break

Do your loved ones get more out of an experience? Try getting them these unique gifts.

What better gift for your loved ones—and yourself-than the joys and thrills of visiting the most beautiful places in the country with a new America the Beautiful National Parks Pass, Northwest Forest Pass, or Washington **Discover Pass.** And best of all, these are gifts that keep on giving for a whole year! \$30 - \$80

Got a hiker on your shopping list that loves the outdoors but doesn't need anything? Then make a donation to their favorite conservation organization—The Wilderness Society,

> National Parks Conservation Association. Pacific Crest Trail Association or. might we humbly add, Washington Trails Association. \$ANY

Encourage your loved one to cozy up to the fireplace—or campfire—with the new Pacific Crest Trailside Readers from The Mountaineers Books. These two new anthologies-one for Califor-

nia, one for Oregon and Washingtonexplore the history, people, places, humor, traditions and myths of the 2,650-mile Pa-

cific Crest Trail. \$20.

We hope our list makes your holiday shopping a little easier, leaving you more time

to run, ski, hike, snowshoe and drink cocoa this winter. Good luck!







Your Bling, Our Ca-Ching

WTA is part of REI.com's affiliate program. If you shop at REI.com through WTA's affiliate link, we earn a little cash (four percent + commission). The best part: it doesn't cost you anything extra!

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Nature on Trail »

Watching Foxes

Scientists are studying the evolutionary history of North American red foxes



Come with me on a hike to track an elusive wild canid. You won't have to go far. In fact, it might just be a stroll in your own backyard, in Bellevue, Seattle or Auburn.

But you will have to step back about 15,000 years, to the time when glaciers were beginning to recede near the end of the last ice age. Your sea-level backyard will look more or less like Paradise or Sunrise or any number of alpine areas in the Cascade Range do now, only with the occasional bison, mastodon and woolly mammoth.

Megafauna aside, many of our smaller mammals lived then as they do now. Just as in today's world, you'd have to be lucky to spot them because these creatures' survival depended on not being seen. On that hillside destined to become Queen Anne, nose to the ground, moving at an easy lope ... a wolverine. And darting in and out of scattered and stunted conifer trees, leaping up, digging through snow tunnels in search of a pocket gopher ... a red fox.

The red fox is superbly adapted to life in cold, snowy habitats. When glaciers covered the land, its habitat was widespread, and alpine species roamed into the lowlands of the Puget Sound basin and beyond. What became of these species at the end of the last ice age is

an intriguing story with important implications for today's rapidly changing climate.

A team of scientists studying the evolutionary history of North American red foxes is just beginning to unravel this story. Led by Dr. Keith Aubry, a research wildlife biologist at the U.S. Forest Service's Pacific Northwest Research Station in Olympia, these scientists have used a combination of natural history data and field observations; skull measurements of museum specimens; fossil, archaeological and historical records; and modern molecular genetic analysis to reveal a fascinating history.

The story begins about 300,000 years ago, during the Pleistocene epoch, a time when cold, glaciated periods alternated with warm interglacials. During the height of the glaciations, two enormous ice sheets blanketed northern North America, one on either side of the Rockies, extending through the Yukon and British Columbia and into Washington state. So much water was frozen into the ice sheets that the sea level dropped by as much as 300 feet, draining a shallow sea that lay between Siberia and Alaska, and turning it into an icefree land mass-Beringia. At this time, the progenitors of today's red foxes colonized North America from Asia, and their range expanded southward into the contiguous United States during the warm interglacials.

Sylvia Feder

Sylvia once traveled to the Artic to learn more about Inuit dogs. Today she's a musher with her own team.

For this article on wild canids, Sylvia worked with Dr. Keith Aubry to share the latest research.

Nature Nugget »



If you've ever seen a pika bounding across a talus slope, you know these little creatures are perfectly adorable. What you may not have noticed, however, is that these small mammals (*Ochotona princeps*) also employ extremely advanced foraging techniques.

Pikas do not hibernate, and therefore have to store stockpiles of food for the winter. The perplexing part is that the food they store for winter is not the same food they eat during the summer! In summer, they eat plants which are easily digestible, varying their diet based on what is available in the area and how easy it is to harvest. In their winter food caches, however, they tend to collect an array of plants that are much higher in *phenolics*.

Phenolics are compounds found in many plants which exhibit some toxicity when consumed by herbivorous mammals. When plants high in phenolics are left sitting after harvesting, the levels of phenolics decrease over time. Plants higher in phenolics also decompose more slowly, and lose fewer nutrients while stored in winter food caches. The plant making up 91 to 96 percent of the total phenolics in a pika's winter diet is alpine avens (*Geum rossii*).

By storing and eating a plant that is otherwise difficult to digest, pikas are able to eat a wider variety of the plants near their homes and can survive off of a more diverse plant population. Now, it is unclear whether pikas tend to store plants like alpine avens during winter just to broaden their diet, or if they are also interested in the preservative effect of the phenolics. One plausible explanation: it could be both. It makes sense for pikas to store plants that they cannot eat during summer and use easily digestible foods for immediate summer consumption. It's also an added bonus that the foods they store last longer and do not have as much nutrient decay over the winter as their summer foods would.

—Jaal Mann

About these fox images

Tom Kogut is a retired wildlife biologist turned professional photographer. For 35 years, he has traveled around the globe, including frequent trips to India, Nepal and Bhutan, to photograph wildlife, landcapes and indigenous cultures. He currently lives in Packwood in the shadow of Mount Rainier.

Then, 100,000 years ago, the climate cooled again, the glaciers returned, and the red foxes that had migrated into the contiguous United States thousands of years earlier were left south of the margin of glacial ice. Physically separated from other populations located north of the glaciers in Alaska and Asia, this population of foxes began to diverge into genetically unique subspecies that were adapted to the cold, snowy, subarctic environment.

When the climate warmed and the ice retreated as the last ice age came to a close about 10,000 years ago, this isolated population of red foxes followed their primary habitat up in elevation into the modern analogues of their ice-age domains, the alpine meadows and subalpine parklands of the Western mountains.

Today, montane red foxes are found at high elevations in the Cascade Range, Sierra Nevada and Rocky Mountains. Washington's montane red fox, known scientifically as *Vulpes vulpes cascadensis*, the Cascade red fox, is genetically distinct from all other montane red fox populations and represents an irreplaceable reservoir of genetic diversity.

The Cascade red fox is smaller than other red fox subspecies, and despite its name, it is rarely cherry red in color. It is more common in the dark (black and cross) color phases and, in the red phase, it is more yellowish-red in color with gray grizzling on the back.

Cascade red foxes occupy alpine meadows and subalpine parklands near tree line, giving birth to pups in earthen dens at the forest edge. They do not migrate or hibernate during winter, but remain active in what are often extreme weather conditions. Like most red foxes, they are opportunistic in their diet, but likely feed most heavily on small mammals. They appear to specialize on the northern pocket gopher, which is common in alpine meadows and also remains active during the winter.

And for thousands of years, the Cascade red fox has lived this quiet existence in relative obscurity in the high mountains.

Yes, there are red foxes that live at low elevations, and you may have seen them while hiking in rural or even semiurban areas, but data analyzed by Dr. Aubry and his colleagues show that those red foxes are not native to Washington. These lowland foxes are descendants of nonnative foxes that escaped or were released from fur farms in the early to mid-1900s. While they are quite at home in newly disturbed habitats ranging from suburban parks to golf courses, these red foxes do not venture up into the alpine zone.

What keeps the montane foxes in the moun-

tains and the lowland foxes in the lowlands? As adaptable and mobile as foxes are, scientists suspect that significant differences in their physiological adaptations must account for the distinct habitat preferences of each group. Proving that hunch is another matter. Natural history studies have been difficult to undertake, largely due to a lack of adequate funding and little interest in the species from conservationists.

And yet a better understanding of the Cascade foxes' physiological traits will be crucial, because as the climate warms, the Cascade foxes' cold, alpine homeland is predicted to recede farther up the mountains. With increased fragmentation of their alpine and subalpine homeland, their range could shrink to small, isolated habitat "islands." One more commonly studied alpine species, the pika, is already showing increased extinction in some populations, thought to be due to climate warming. Coyotes and domestic dogs are also a potential threat to foxes due to competition and spread of disease.



Cascade red foxes are extraordinarily hard to observe. Dr Aubry, who has spent several years studying them. has seen only one in the wild. If you do see a fox on a high-elevation hike, consider yourself very fortunate. Photo by Jocelyn Akins.

For these reasons, and because of its unique genetic characteristics, the Cascade red fox was recently designated by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife as a "candidate" species for potential listing as sensitive, threatened or endangered in the state. Hopefully, this designation will spur new surveys and ecological field studies that will help to fill our many significant knowledge gaps about this relic of the ice ages.◆



Hints for Hikers

If you are lucky enough to see a red fox at elevations above 3,000 feet in the Cascade Range, do your best to take a photograph that documents your observation. The distribution and natural history of these foxes are very poorly understood. Sighting reports and other anecdotal observations are of limited scientific value.

In the unlikely event that you come across a road-killed fox, take a photograph of the carcass, record the location as precisely as you can, and immediately notify Dr. Aubry or local biologists.

In some areas of Mount Rainier National Park, especially near Longmire and Paradise, Cascade red foxes have become habituated to humans and are commonly encountered in or near the parking lots. Please, DO NOT FEED THESE FOXES (or any other animals for that matter). Feeding foxes habituates them to humans, exposes them to predation or being roadkilled, and encourages them to congregate and den in areas where their pups may have reduced chances of survival.

Dr. Aubry welcomes any observations, photos or other input you may have on the Cascade red fox in the high country. Reach him by email at kaubry@fs.fed.us.

Further Reading

You can learn more about Dr. Aubry's work on North American red foxes in a recent issue of *Science Findings*. The article "Tracing the Fox Family Tree: The North American Red Fox has a Diverse Ancestry Forged During Successive Ice Ages"can be found at www.treesearch.fs.fed.us/pubs/37702. Science Findings is published by the PNW Research Station and geared toward nontechnical readers.

Or, for more adventurous readers, these are the technical papers that provide the scientific basis for these research findings:

Aubry, K.B., M.J. Statham, B.N. Sacks, J.D. Perrine, and S.M. Wisely. 2009. Phylogeography Of The North American Red Fox: Vicariance in Pleistocene Forest Refugia. Molecular Ecology 18:2668-2686.

Sacks, B.N., M.J. Statham, J.D. Perrine, S.M. Wisely, and K.B. Aubry. 2010. North American Montane Red Foxes: Expansion, Fragmentation, and the Origin of the Sacramento Valley Red Fox. Conservation Genetics 11:1523-1539.

Statham, M.J., B.N. Sacks, K.B. Aubry, J.D. Perrine, and S.M. Wisely. 2012. The Origin of Recently Established Red Fox Populations in The United States: Translocations or Natural Range Expansions? Journal of Mammalogy (forthcoming).

Trail Eats » Sarah Kirkconnell

Forget "Brrr!" and say "Mmm!" with these three recipes for cold-weather trips.

BBQ Chicken Wraps



Ingredients:

- 7-ounce pouch chicken
- · 2 flour tortillas (soft taco size)
- 1/4 cup BBQ sauce
- 2 sticks pepper jack cheese
- 1/4 cup French fried onions

Directions: Open up the chicken pouch and add the BBQ sauce, stirring well to break up the chicken. Divide the chicken between the two tortillas. Dice up a piece of cheese on each tortilla, then sprinkle on the onions. Roll up and enjoy! *Serves 2*.

Notes: BBQ is shelf-stable and can be carried in a leak-proof container or you can use two tubs from a fast food restaurant. Pepper jack cheese can be found at most grocery stores in sticks similar to string cheese. If you cannot find individually wrapped sticks, carry 2 ounces of cheese.

Beef Curry Noodle Bowl



Ingredients, packed in one sandwich bag:

- 1/2 cup chopped regular or peppered jerky
- 1/2 cup dried vegetable mix
- 1/4 cup raisins
- · 1 Tbsp. mild curry powder
- · 4 tsp. lower-sodium beef bouillon
- · 1 tsp. granulated garlic

Ingredients, packed in a separate sandwich bag:

6-ounce package chuka soba noodles, crumbled

Directions: Add 4 cups water to your pot with the first bag's contents and bring to a boil. Add the noodles, return to a boil and let simmer gently for 3 minutes. Remove pot from heat, cover tightly and let sit for 5 minutes. Season to taste with salt. If desired. Serves 2.

Notes: Chuka soba noodles are available in the Asian section of most grocery stores. In a pinch, you can use angel hair pasta. Dried vegetable mix can be found in bulk sections at most local grocers, including Fred Meyer and WinCo.

Double Oreo Pudding



Photos by Kirk Kirkconnell.

Ingredients, packed in a quart freezer bag:

- 4.2-ounce package Jell-O Oreo instant pudding
- 2/3 cup dry milk

Also take:

- 8-ounce package Mini Oreos
- · 2 or 3 new snack size plastic bags

Directions: Add 2 cups cold water to the pudding bag, seal tightly and shake for 5 minutes. Stash in a cold stream or snowbank for 30 minutes. Stir up and divide between the bags. Top liberally with mini cookies. *Serves 2-3*.

Tip: For a more decadent pudding, use full fat Nido dry milk instead of the usual nonfat dry.

Iake a Hike



Best Bets>>

- 1 Cape Alava. A long history and immense beauty. No wonder we recommend it!
- **2** Oyster Dome. Head here for Sound views, and bat caves.
- 3 Bear Creek Waterfalls. A few waterfalls that are sure to impress and please you.
- 4 Turnbull Natonal Wildlife Refuge. These grasslands teem with fauna and fowl.
- **Mount Cleman.** On a quest for sunshine? You'll find it and fall in love with this vista.
- 6 Nook Trail to the Section Line Trail. Short, sweet ... and steep!

Special Feature»

- **Upper Dungeness River.** A beautiful river winding through beautiful trees.
- **Hoh River.** In winter, this Olympic hike is as quiet as a mouse.
- * Lower South Fork Skokomish River. An escape into greenery anytime of year.

Washington Trails Association, nor their personnel accept any liability for accidents or injuries in connection with articles, trail or road reports published in Washington Trails magazine. The reports provide updated information of interest to the region's trail users; readers are cautioned to supplement the reports with other sources of information when planning a trip. Additionally, readers should be aware that reported conditions may change, that there may be errors in the reports, and that certain hazards are inherent in backcountry travel.



The Cape Alava Trail is two hikes in one: a forest stroll and a walk on the beach. Forest by Katrena Gesler, Beach by Tami Asars.





1 Cape Alava

Olympic National Park

Total Mileage: 9.4 miles Elevation Gain: 100 feet

Managed by: Olympic National Park Map(s): Green Trails Ozette 130

When the doldrums and ho-hums of the winter blues come rolling in, hop back on the trail at a most unexpected place- the coast! While snow may be falling in the high country, the shoreline never sleeps and always abounds with life. On a recent trip, sea lions barked from a rocky sea stack, otters frolicked in ocean waves and eagles sat watching from high perches above.

Getting to Cape Alava from the Seattle area can take up to 4 hours one-way considering the drive and waiting for a ferry. Making this trip into a two-day adventure allows you to spend more time communing with seagulls and watching the winter sun set behind the rocky shore, spacing out the time you'll spend behind the windshield.

This hike starts at Lake Ozette. At eight miles long and three miles wide, Lake Ozette is the largest unaltered natural lake in Washington. The Makah tribe named it qa?u•wiq, pronounced *Ka-oo-wik*, meaning simply "the lake."

Cross the Ozette River on a beautiful arched bridge and away you go. At 0.25 mile, come to a trail junction and stay right- the trail to the left will be your return trail if you choose to make a complete loop. Before long your trail becomes a beautiful cedar boardwalk through dense forest of western redcedar, licorice ferns, salal and other evergreen varieties. Use caution on the boardwalk if wet or icy, as the planks can occasionally become slippery. The elevated path gently meanders through the understory, gaining little elevation as you continue onward.

Pass through an area called Ahlstrom's Prairie at 2.25 miles. This giant, soggy meadow was once farmed by two Swedish immigrants, who filled the 160-acre bog with sheep, cattle and vegetable gardens. Today, any evidence of the farming has given way to native plant and animal life.

The roar and smell of the ocean becomes unmistakable as you approach the wild coast of Cape Alava. At 3.3 miles, arrive at the beach and enjoy the views and creatures that live in this isolated place. Tskawahyah Island is not far off, standing as a giant rock guardian complete with freestanding trees adorning the top. Watch the winter sun sink lower in the sky and return the way you came, or head south to make a loop.

For a full loop, turn left and follow the beach south, passing the ancient petroglyphs at Wedding Rocks. Bearing visions of whales, hunters, and sailing ships, these old petroglyphs stand as testament to days gone by and were carved by the Makah tribe using various tools including rocks and bone. From Wedding Rocks, hug the shoreline until you arrive at Sand Point, which boasts some of the most beautiful beaches in the state. From there, look for a large disk indicating a trail near the woods. This is the return trail will take you back to where you started. The complete loop totals 9.4 miles.

Overnight camping is allowed by a permit that may be obtained by contacting Olympic National Park (www.nps.gov/olym/planyourvisit/wilderness-coast.htm). Bear canisters or hard-sided food storage containers are required, primarily to deter the area's clever raccoons, who have figured out how to work toggles, zippers and plastic container lids

Tami Asars
North Bend, Washington



2 Blanchard Mountain - Oyster Dome

Puget Sound and Islands

Total Mileage: 4 miles Elevation Gain: 1,000 feet

Managed by: Department of Natural Resources, Northwest Region

Map(s): USGS Bow

This fantastic hike is easily accessible and hikable throughout most of the year. From the trailhead located at the Samish Overlook, the hike is less strenuous than from the base of Blanchard Mountain or Chuckanut Drive—and you enjoy the same fantastic views. However, if the road to Samish Overlook is inaccessible due to snow, or you are seeking more exercise, starting at Chuckanut Drive (adding 2.5 miles round-trip and about 1,000 feet of elevation gain) is a good alternate route.

Before departing from the Samish Overlook, take in the spectacular views from the parking lot. If you're lucky, you may see parasailers launching. Begin your hike at the trailhead at the north end of the parking lot. After a short distance you will see the trail from Chuckanut Drive intersect with the trail from the Samish Overlook. Continuing straight will lead you towards the Oyster Dome.

A few miles of meandering through beautiful forest, with occasional peeks of Puget Sound, will lead you to a side trail to the bat caves (marked with a sign and Batman logo!). I've never seen bats in these caves, but they aren't very far out of your way and are worth checking out. Several caves found under large boulders are spacious enough to climb in. Be careful though! The holes and cracks here can potentially be dangerous, and the rocks around the caves are covered in moss and can be very slippery.

The bat caves are located just at the base of the Oyster Dome, and from there it's not too much farther to the top. A few steep, root-covered scrambles and you're there. You've reached your fantastic reward of a huge rock dome with a sheer cliff dropping down to the bat caves below, and a great lunch spot with expansive views of Puget Sound and the San Juan islands.

Jaal Mann Olympia, Washington



Protect the Trails You Love

You can protect your favorite trails by making a year-end gift to Washington Trails Association. Make your tax-deductible contribution by December 31 and help us start strong in the New Year. Every dollar you give keeps WTA working year-round to keep your favorite trails open next season and for generations to come.

Make your special contribution online at www.wta.org/donate or mail a check to Washington Trails Association, 705 Second Ave, Suite 300, Seattle WA 98104.

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Washington State Parks: Where to Go This Winter

You already have a Discover Pass (most likely), so why not make use of it all year? The trails in these five state parks should lure you out this winter.

North Cascades

Rasar State Park

With paved trail, dirt trail, and Skagit River beach access, this park has something for everyone. Eagles are commonly spotted along the shores of this powerful river.

Snoqualmie Pass

Cedar Butte Trail in Iron Horse State Park

This scenic jaunt is hikable year-round and located conveniently in the Snoqualmie Pass corridor. Many hikers pass by this hike on their way to more popular trails, but that just means that you'll get the prolific scenery here all to yourself.

Central Cascades

Lake Wenatchee State Park

In summer, this lake is popular for boating, hiking, and fishing. Once the snow falls, it is transformed into a fantastic winter recreation destination. Skiing, sledding and snowshoeing opportunities abound.

Olympics

Millersylvania State Park

This park boasts 8 miles of zigzagging trails, so you can construct your own route. With oldgrowth forest and a lake, Millersylvania is a worthy year-round destination, and its location just off Interstate 5 makes it pretty convenient, too.

South Cascades

Hamilton Mountain Trail in Beacon Rock State Park

WTA has worked in this park for the past several seasons, leading to trails in good condition. This excellent hike is enjoyable throughout most of the year.

—Jaal Mann

Klahanie Falls is one of five waterfalls along a 2-mile stretch of Bear Creek in Skagit County. Photo by Dennis Garver.



3 The Waterfalls of Bear Creek

Region: North Cascades

While usually more of a slog than a hike, the waterfalls of Bear Creek in Skagit County merit the inconvenience. Located about nine miles up Baker Lake Road from State Route 20, the access to this outing, which features five impressive waterfalls and two abandoned powerhouses, is easy to find. Park at the second road on the right after the signed Bear Creek Bridge. The first half mile of the road is drivable, but it is muddy and the hike is short, so park and hike.

The road forks at an opening. Take the low road to the right along the creek. Be prepared for puddles the size of ponds. Waterproof boots are essential. Cross a bridge over a small tributary, follow the path down a hill, and locate Laplash Falls shortly thereafter. The best viewpoint for these falls, which drop more than 50 feet and are 100 feet wide, is frontal from the opposite bank. Continue along the trail and bushwhack to the viewpoint.

About a quarter mile below Laplash Falls, leave the trail and bushwhack your way to Mesachie Falls, which has the highest drop on the creek. Head into the brush when you can hear the noise from the falls.

My favorite cascade here is Klahanie Falls. To reach them, continue along the trail for approximately 1 mile past Mesachie Falls until you come to a large steel pipe. Follow the boot path to the right to an overlook of these classic falls, which plunge more than 50 feet into a punch-bowl.

To reach Lower Klahanie Falls, return to the large pipe and follow it steeply downhill to an interesting abandoned powerhouse. Look back upstream for the falls, which drop 70 feet.

During your return trip, look for a trail to the right just after you cross the footbridge. Head toward the old powerhouse and find lovely Abandonment Falls behind the structure. Though they are not large, these falls are beautiful.

If will be difficult to find another hike that offers this much fun in only 2 miles. It took me several hikes to locate all of the waterfalls, but you can see them in a single trip. When the weather is bad and the seasons are changing, head up here for a refreshing hike through mist and greenery.

Dennis Graver Camano Island, Washington

4 Turnbull National Wildlife

Region: Eastern Washington-Spokane

Total Mileage: 5.5 miles

Managed by: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

This is absolutely the most "something for everyone except mountain climbers" hike I know of. Turnbull protects a portion of the 'Channeled Scablands' of ice age flood fame. The refuge has a 5.5 mile auto route through part of it. This makes a comfortable undulating loop for hikers. (Where else can you walk 4 or 5 abreast, with leashed dogs and strollers?) Or you can drive or bike, stopping at the many viewpoints along the way. Depending on the season, you'll see some assortment of more than 200 types of waterfowl, cavity nesters and raptors cruising over the relatively flat landscape. The mammal list includes elk, deer, moose, badgers, river otters, porcupines, beavers, bobcats and cougars and, of course, their dinner. Three short hikes radiate from the main loop: two are out-and-back, the third is a loop that travels by Pine Lake. The visitors' center and online maps make it easy to see the range of hikes available here, including accessible boardwalks. Visit fws.gov/turnbull. The Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge is ten minutes from a coffee bar, quiet as you can imagine, and depending on the weather and your preference, you can cross-country ski, snowshoe (watch for tracks), hike, saunter, drive, ride or just sit.

No fees are charged between October 31 and spring. You can bicycle into the refuge from the Fish Lake Trail, or drive or bicycle by taking Interstate 90 to State Route 904 and going south from Cheney on the Cheney-Plaza Road.

Lunnel Haught Spokane, Washington

Flycatcher in Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge. Photo by NDormer73.





Waterworks Canyon, Mount Cleman

Region: Eastern Washington-Yakima

November + December 2011 » Washington Trails

Total Mileage: 3 to 6 miles Elevation Gain: 1,500 - 2,000 feet Highest Elevation: 3,582 feet

Managed by: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Map: Green Trails Manastash Lake 273

Great views, a canyon beneath spectacular cliffs, buttresses and pinnacles of weathered basalt. wildflowers in the spring, color and wildlife in the autumn, and sunshine through most of the day in the winter-all make the Point 3582-Waterworks Canyon loop on Mount Cleman one of my favorite hikes.

To get there, drive west from Naches to the Highway 12-State Route 410 junction and continue



straight ahead on State Route 410 for 0.4 miles and turn immediately right into the parking area after crossing a small bridge. If you just want to go up the canyon, go through the gate in the elk fence and find the well-defined boot trail to the right a few yards up the old fire road. Be sure to keep to the right when the canyon forks.

To do the loop, go through the gate, cross the creekbed and climb the ridge on the right-hand (east) side of the canyon. This is an often steep, airy climb with many interesting basalt outcrops and increasing views reminiscent of an alpine ridge walk in the Cascades. Point 3582 sits out from the main bulk of Mount Cleman and has wonderful views over the orchards of Naches Heights and the Naches Valley, out to Mount Adams, Nelson Ridge and Rainier, down into Waterworks and Meystre Canyons and back to Mount Cleman itself. Clearly, it makes a great lunch spot.

To continue the loop, drop into the saddle between Point 3582 and Mount Cleman. At the north end of the saddle, find the cairned trail traversing to the left down into the canyon. Once on the canyon bottom, turn left and follow the well-defined boot trail that will take you back to your car at the mouth of the canyon.

David Hagen, aka Mytho-Man Yakima, Washington



6 Nook Trail - Upper Section Line Trail

Issaquah Alps

Total Mileage: 6 miles round trip Elevation Gain: 2,000 feet Highest Elevation: 2,525 feet

Managed By: Washington Department of

Natural Resources

Map(s): Green Trails Tiger Mountain 204S

For those who enjoy the challenge of Mailbox Peak-style climbing, look no further than Issaquah to find her little brother, tightly packaged in a quad-exerting, heart-jerking direct climb to West Tiger 3's hilltop vista. Those who survive will enjoy the same great views we've all come to love on the summit—the Snoqualmie Valley, the Issaquah-Hobart basin and, on clear days, Mount Rainier and the Seattle skyline.

The trail starts off on the Tradition Plateau, which I'm pretty sure was a trail-builder's prank, built in an effort to confuse hikers. So many great trails start here; walking in nearly

any direction will lead you to immediately pull out your map and scratch your head. Adding to the befuddlement is the simple fact that nearly all the trails can make loops by using other trails. The Section Line follows that pattern and can be started or completed in a number of directions.

My favorite way utilizes the Nook Trail as its starting point. Find the Nook Trail by following the Bus Trail to the southwest. Pass the West Tiger 3 Trail and look to the south (left) for a small sign indicating the Nook Trail's start.

Climb the Nook Trail through dense Northwest forest canopy, enjoying the sounds made by quiet brooks, the tremble of evergreen ferns and the flitting of dark-eyed "Oregon" juncos in the trees above. At 1.5 miles, arrive at Talus Rocks Loop Trail. Stay right (southwest) for another 0.3 mile and find the Section Line Trail, where you'll lace up your boots and begin your ascent. Technically, the trail is "unmaintained"-hiker code for "this puppy is steep, steep, steep." Stop often to rest as you make your way up a very rocky, somewhat loose and tree-rooted 0.5 mile. Cross the West Tiger Railroad Grade which gives you hope, inspiration and some flat ground, before popping back into the climb. Continue your high-stepping, hand-to-tree holding huff-'n-puff for another 0.4 mile before you are spit out onto the unmarked West Tiger Cable Line. Turn right (south) 0.1 mile and arrive at the West Tiger 3 vista with endorphins dancing. After treating your eyes, resting your quads and catching your breath, descend the way you came, or go easy on your joints and take the West Tiger 3Trail back down to the Bus Trail.

Tami Asars North Bend, Washington





Volunteer Appreciation Parties

Oct. 29	Spokane
Nov. 4	Seattle
Nov. 9	Bellingham
Nov. 13	Vancouver

Dec. 3 Olympic Peninsula

Trail Work Parties

Nov. 1 - 5	Grand Ridge
Nov. 5, 6	Larrabee State Park
Nov. 6	Tiger Mountain
Nov. 8 - 12	Cougar Mountain
Nov. 13	Tiger Mountain
Nov. 15 - 19	Cougar Mountain
Nov. 19, 20	Larrabee State Park
Nov. 20	Tiger Mountain
Nov. 22, 23	Cougar Mountain
Nov. 25, 26	Cougar Mountain
Nov. 27	Tiger Mountain
Nov. 29 - Dec. 3	Taylor Mountain
Dec. 3, 4	Larrabee State Park
Dec. 4	Tiger Mountain
Dec. 6 - 10	Taylor Mountain
Dec. 11	Tiger Mountain
Dec. 13 - 18	Tiger Mountain
Dec. 17, 18	Larrabee State Park
Dec. 20 - 22	TBD, King County Park

To sign up, mosey your mouse on over to www.wta.org or give us a ring at (206) 625-1367.



Above: Margaret Ullman on the PCT

Kelly Butte Lookout Restored. continued from p. 11



Kelly Butte Lookout prior to restoration

shape of a pot."

Sandor traveled to Washington from Alaska to attend the rededication ceremony. "Though returning to Kelly Butte is wonderful, the best part of all this," Sandor said, "is seeing the dedication of volunteers and the wonderful partnerships made in the effort to restore Kelly Butte. It's just ... wonderful!"

Restoring the lookout wasn't easy. Adler and Clark and dozens of other volunteers toiled in both freezing cold weather and searing heat. Retaining the original wood of these old lookouts called for careful attention and meticulous care. They spent 140 hours restoring a door; the window sashes averaged twelve hours apiece. WTA volunteers contributed to this project by building a series of rock steps on the trail to Kelly Butte.

Now in his eighties, Sandor was unable to hike up to the lookout on that Sunday in September, but I stayed with him as he watched the summit closely-"I don't know why, but I'll be very disappointed if I can't see the hikers up there! For some reason, it's important to me." The ridge suddenly bristled with the silhouettes of hikers ascending the steps to the lookout, and Sandor's face beamed with excitement.

Volunteers like Bob Adler, Forest Clark and Ray Fischer, to name just a few, performed a great honor, not only to the romantic American heritage of fire lookouts, but to individuals such as John Sandor, Daniel Leen, and all the hikers who enjoy the history of these wonderful buildings.

Hats off to you, Bob Adler, and to all the volunteers who contributed many hours of loving labor to this restoration project.♦



Trails in Demand, continued from p.16

Cape Horn Conservancy, Pacific Crest Trail Association and Trailkeepers of Oregon across the river.

On the advocacy front, WTA can work closely with the Friends of the Gorge as they embark on their Gorge Towns-to-Trails campaign. a five-year effort to build the partnerships and funding base needed to develop a comprehensive new trail system in the Gorge. Nonprofits like the Friends and WTA need to work with agency officials and local stakeholders to reach consensus on where new trails should be-before the projects become mired with conflict during the environmental review

The recent discovery of the so-called Cruzatt Rim Trail reignited the conflict between trail advocates and environmental conservationists that stymied the development of the Cape Horn Trail years ago. This is tension that needs to be resolved before official trails can be created.

Given the inauspicious beginnings of the Cape Horn Trail, the hurdles it has overcome and the promising future it now has, many people hope that the work WTA and our partners have done here can serve as a model for better trail development in the future.

You don't have to live in northwest Oregon or southwest Washington to enjoy the Cape Horn Trail-or to help out. Make it your New Year's resolution to come down for one of our work parties at Cape Horn, or the equally lovely Catherine Creek, in 2012. Help us write the next chapter in Columbia Gorge history.◆



River Walks in the Olympics

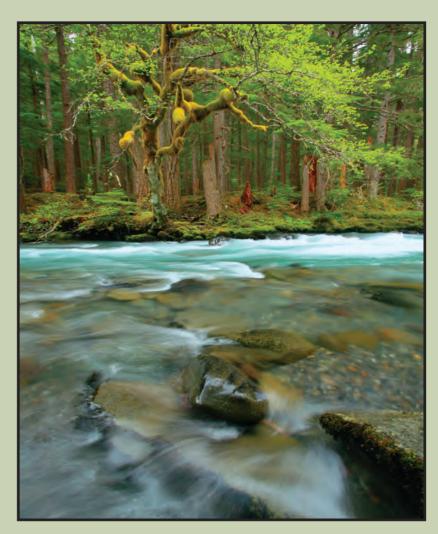
by Susan Elderkin

Drip, drip, drip.

That's the sound of another rainy winter day as you sit inside and dream about summertime. But why should you suffer cabin fever when there are places outside that are even more incredible when it is wet?

This fall and winter, get to the Olympic Peninsula and take a river walk among the *towering trees* of its temperate rain forest. You'll find *solitude galore*, view rarely seen wildlife, and feel the *true beat of the forest* under its tall canopy.

Here are three hikes that are great in any season. Each lies in a different quadrant of the Olympic Peninsula, and each offers a unique hiking experience.



***** Upper Dungeness River

Location: Northeast Olympic National Forest Distance: 6.8 miles round trip to Camp Handy Elevation: 600 feet gain to a 3,100-foot high point

Maps: Green Trails Tyler Peak 136

The Upper Dungeness River trail is an easy stroll along a roaring river and among towering trees. It's great for all ages (as long as the trail is snow- and ice-free), and the shelter at Camp Handy is a welcome and dry lunch destination on rainy days. The trail parallels the river during most of the journey, always within earshot and often in view. The forest canopy is magnificent, with old growth Douglas-fir more than 200 feet high and hundreds of years old. The forest floor is no slouch either, with green moss carpeting and an array of fascinating fungi. The trail crosses the river at 2.6 miles and a junction at 3.2 miles takes you right to the Camp Handy shelter. This is a great turn-around spot for a winter's day.

Reaching the trailhead: Drive Highway 101 to roughly 1 mile north of Sequim Bay State Park. Turn onto Palo Alto Road. In a couple of miles, Palo Alto becomes Forest Service Road 28. Turn right onto Forest Service Road 2880. In 1.7 miles, bear left onto Forest Service Road 2870. Follow for 8.7 miles to the trailhead, located just across the bridge over the Dungeness River. A Northwest Forest Pass is required to park at the trailhead.

Current Conditions: Hood Canal Ranger District, Quilcene, (360) 765-2200. **Guidebook:** *Day Hiking: Olympic Peninsula* (Craig Romano, The Mountaineers Books, 2007).

* Hoh River

Location: Olympic National Park Distance: 10.6 miles round trip to Five

Mile Island

Elevation: 300 feet gain to a 800-foot

high point

Maps: Green Trails Seven Lakes Basin-

Mount Olympus 133S

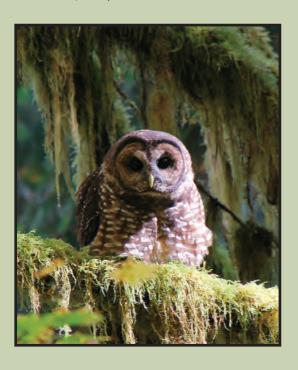
A classic hike in any season, but come in winter and you'll find that the hordes of tourists, hikers and climbers who use this trail in the summer have dwindled to just a trickle.

You can't escape a sense of magic at the Hoh. The huge trees, the cascading moss, the birds and Roosevelt elk, the Olympic Mountains rising above and the broad river valley extending up and downstream all add up to make this a hike that must be done at least once in a lifetime. The trail is easy, too, with minimal elevation gain, excellent tread (thanks to an annual WTA Volunteer Vacation) and an open understory.

Hike as far as you'd like; there are great spots to stop all along the way. Five Mile Island offers a sunny lunch spot with views of Bogachiel Peak. If it is raining, and you want to find a sheltered location, you can press on another half mile to the Happy Four Shelter.

Reaching the trailhead: Turn east off U.S. Highway 101 approximately 10 miles south of Forks onto the Hoh River Road. Follow this for 19 miles to the road end where the ranger station and trailhead are located.

Current Conditions: Olympic National Park, (360) 565-3100. Guidebook: Day Hiking: Olympic Peninsula (Craig Romano, The Mountaineers Books, 2007).





* Lower South Fork Skokomish River

Location: Olympic National Forest, Southeast section

Distance: 10 miles round trip

Elevation: 575 feet gain to a 850-foot high point

Maps: Green Trails Mount Tebo 199

The river is impressive, but the ancient forest is the star of the show along the Lower South Fork Skokomish River. You're likely to get a sore neck from craning your head skyward on this trail (or get a face full of rain). The trees here are tall, really tall. And the moss hangs like draperies from their many majestic branches.

After an initial climb, the elevation gain and loss is quite gentle as the trail meanders along the South Fork Skokomish River. The river is usually in view, but not always reachable. That's probably a good thing, because flooding in 2007 took out a section of trail that strayed close too the water near Camp Comfort. WTA crews have spent a good amount of time working on a reroute here. Come and check out their handiwork! According to quidebook author Craig Romano, a great place to turn around is a bluff just past Camp Comfort that offers amazing views of the river and the valley.

Directions: Drive U.S. Highway 101 37 miles north of Shelton and turn west (left) at milepost 310 onto Duckabush Road. At 6 miles, turn right on Forest Service Road 2510-060 to reach the trailhead.

Current Conditions: Hood Canal Ranger District, Quilcene, 360-765-2200. Guidebook: Day Hiking: Olympic Peninsula (Craig Romano, The Mountaineers Books, 2007).

WINTER SAFETY TIPS While you are not likely to encounter snow on these low-elevation hikes, be prepared for all conditions, especially ice on the trail or bridges. In addition to packing the Ten Essentials, it is helpful to bring a trekking pole and some sort of extra-traction device for your boots. Give yourself permission to turn around early if the weather turns foul or if you don't feel comfortable with the conditions. Call the forest or park for trail conditions and check the weather report before you set out.

Photos: Dungeness River, Jason Racey; Owl above Hoh River Trail, Tom Roe; Skokomish River Valley trees, Dan Miller.

Further Afield »



UNDER THE WHITE CLOUDS

Washington has some of the most beautiful wilderness areas in the world, no doubt. And while there are sufficient trails for more than one lifetime between its borders, sometimes we need a change in topography and landscape. Looking east, our neighboring Idaho offers the majestic Sawtooth Range and the expansive Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness. But my hiking group decided to experience the White Clouds in central Idaho. Why? Well, the White Clouds offer towering peaks and alpine lakes, but not the crowds you see in the Sawtooth Range, nor the long drives on poorly maintained roads that are required to get into the Frank Church.

My hiking group and I started taking weeklong trips together in 1982, and we've kept the tradition going in some form or another every year since. Over the years, we've hiked through some of the most fabulous country in the western United States including California's High Sierra (2007), Wyoming's Wind River Range (2003), and Nevada's Ruby Mountain Wilderness of Nevada (1999). A few of us even traveled to New Zealand to hike in their Southern Alps. Another hiking companion was raised in

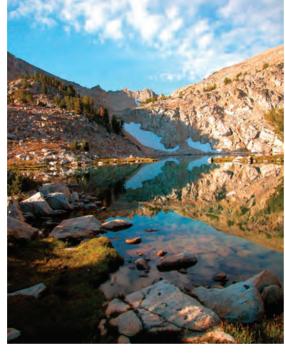
Idaho, and on his recommendation, we decided to explore the Big Boulder Lakes area a few summers back.

Our trip began at the Big Boulder Creek Trailhead, found next to the Livingston Mill approximately 18 miles east-southeast of Stanley, Idaho. To get there, you take Idaho Highway 75 toward Clayton, then turn south on the East Fork Road, where the East Fork of the Salmon River joins the main channel of the river. We began our five-day trip at 7,200 feet with a steady climb. At 2 miles, we came to Quicksand Meadows, complete with signs warning of the potential dangers of the quicksand. After a short break here, we continued on the trail, continuing to gain altitude until we reached Island Lake at approximately 9,280 feet, about 6.5 miles from the trailhead. This beautiful lake offers nice camping sites at its outlet and, after getting a late start that day, we were easily convinced to take Island Lake up on this generous offer. After setting up camp, we relaxed for the evening and enjoyed a good dinner and time to catch up since our trip the previous year to Teton National Park.

Charles Emlet

A lifelong hiker and backpacker, Charles is a professor in the Social Work Program at the University of Washington Tacoma. The Big Boulder Lakes line a basin approximately 600-plus feet above Island Lake. There is no trail up to the basin, so the trip requires cross-country travel. On the second day, my cousin and I did a no-pack reconnaissance hike up to the basin. There are numerous lakes in the basin, all sitting at approximately 9,800 feet, give or take a few. Sapphire, Cove and Cirque Lakes are some of the most picturesque. We came back down through the anklebusting boulder field, which put us at the west end of Island. From our recon, we determined that this lakes basin was sufficiently beautiful to be worth every ounce of sweat required to

pack up all our gear for a cross-country hike and 600 feet of elevation gain into the basin. On day three, we did just that, relocating our camp to Sapphire Lake at 9,889 feet. Sapphire is a beautiful lake with small trees and vegetation surrounded by peaks over 11,000 feet in elevation. Its name is well deserved. for it is indeed a gem. Significant snowfields lingered in mid-August, but we found nice dry places to set up our camp. At this elevation, the vegetation is quite limited and, to our knowledge, no fires are allowed. At nearly 10,000 feet, the evenings can get pretty nippy. After a



A true gem, Sapphire Lake

dip in clear, cold water and a nap, I was ready for an evening meal, some libations and good sleep.

The fourth day of our trip was simply spectacular. First, we saw virtually no other people in the basin that day. We hiked up above camp exploring Slide, Neck and Sheep Lakes. We then hiked farther up to a saddle above Cirque Lake at about 10,400 feet. This saddle provided fabulous views of the entire lakes basin, and it became obvious why the area is occasionally referred to as the Chain Lakes Basin. While I did not continue on, a few members of our group climbed up onto the ridge to reach some of the higher peaks over 11,000 feet. The barren saddle provided the beauty associated with alpine scenery and spectacular panoramic views of the entire basin and beyond. After returning from the saddle, we summoned our energy reserves to explore some of the other

lakes above Sapphire, including Gentian, Snow and Boulder. The area's numerous small tarns make exploration interesting.

On our fifth day, we packed up and headed out via Hook Lake. We took a cross-country route down to Walker (not Walter Lake as is indicated on some maps). A storm had blown in making the rocks and overall terrain of this cross-country route slippery and a bit treacherous. Once we made our way down to Walker Lake, the traveling grew easier but the steady, hard rain continued with us all the way to the trailhead. Needless to say, we were soaked af-

ter several hours of hiking and glad to be back to the car. Being from the Pacific Northwest, I was glad I brought my rain gear and didn't allow the delusion that I might stay dry to dissuade me from packing it.

We had hiked in the Sawtooths a few years earlier and it felt much like a freeway most of the trip. For this trip, the route we chose had no trails after Island Lake, a factor that likely contributed to the solitude. That said, the terrain was not too difficult. even with full packs. Venture into the White Clouds and you'll find great subalpine lakes, expansive panoramic views and, at least in our experience, not too many people.

Want to hike with the same friends twenty years from now?

For Charles's tips on keeping a hiking group together, see next page.

Trail Info

Getting There: Stanley, Idaho, is approximately 425 miles from Seattle. Take Idaho Highway 75 toward Clayton (from Stanley) and turn south on the East Fork Road, where the East Fork of the Salmon River joins the main channel of the river. Drive 17.7 miles to Big Boulder Creek Road. Turn west onto Big Boulder Creek Road (Forest Service Road 667). In 4.2 miles, the parking area for the trailhead will be just to the south of the Big Boulder Creek Road. We hiked this loop in a clockwise fashion; one could also hike to Walker Lake first, then up to the basin. **Topo:** Big Boulder Basin USGS Trail Map. Hiking Distance: Approximately 12 to 13 miles for the loop. Approximately one-third of this is cross-country, off-trail travel.



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Your Hiking Group: Care and Feeding Tips

For well over 25 years, I've taken an annual weeklong backpacking trip with a group of friends. In that time, the number of trips that have been cancelled could be counted on one hand, and knock on wood, our annual outing shows no sign of falling by the wayside. So how have we kept a geographically dispersed hiking group together for so long? Commitment is the key. Of course, we all love to hike and backpack, but staying on top of the logistics and maintaining



good communication have also been important to keeping our tradition alive. What has worked for us may not work for everyone, but perhaps our experience will give you a few ideas.

- **Responsibility:** Our group decided years ago that the responsibility for planning the annual trip would rotate through the core members. If that person is thinking far enough ahead, they can float ideas by the group while we are out hiking. I am up next and I am debating between the Trinity Alps in Northern California and the Mount Jefferson Wilderness in Oregon. Once I make my decision, I am responsible for finding a destination that we can reach within our timeframe and ability and for obtaining any required permits. I am also responsible for checking into hotel accommodations for either end of the trip, should we need any.
- **Trip Planning and Parameters:** Staying consistent in certain aspects of our trip planning has helped. For example, we always schedule our hike for the last half of August, and it's generally for five days, four night, or at most six days, five nights. Knowing this allows all of us to schedule our work and family responsibilities, and any other vacation trips. As the planner, letting the group know early where you have decided to go helps other members of the group make travel plans. Some will prefer to drive, while others may wish to fly.
- Expectations and Flexibility: We don't expect everyone to join every trip. One trip was bagged when unforeseen problems got in the way for the majority of members, but we generally proceed as planned. Some years it's been just a duo of hikers on the trail. Now that we have been hiking together for so long, our expectations about distance covered and elevation gained are evolving. The trips we did in the early 1990s (when everybody was in their late thirties) are not quite what we are able or willing to do now.
- **Commitment:** Our tradition has been kept alive by the great commitment shown by the members of our group. Everybody enjoys these weeklong trips, looks forward to them and barring difficult life circumstances, commits to going. We do not necessarily see each other much throughout the year, so during those days in August we reconnect with each other while exploring new wilderness areas or returning to our favorite places.

—Charles Emlet

Do you or did you belong to an informal hiking group? How did you make and maintain traditions? Share your hiking group story with us. Send an email to editor@wta.org.

Featured Landscape » Rialto Beach



Strolling Rialto Beach to the Hole-in-the-Wall

At this time of the year, with summer long gone and autumn a fading memory, I often turn my sights to the low-elevation wonderlands of Olympic National Park's wilderness coast, a hiking mecca for north-country hikers. This year, with epic snowpack leading to an egregiously abbreviated hiking season in the alpine heights, the coast offers a particularly welcome opportunity to keep getting out, to slow down and take the time to stop and smell the seaweed.

On this remarkable strip of dramatic seashore, there is no shortage of superb destinations. Over the years, when my window of getaway time is small, I find myself returning again and again to Rialto Beach and the Hole-in-the-Wall to recharge my psychic batteries and fill my lungs with the sweet smell of the sea. The hike is short—and exceedingly sweet.

From the parking area at Rialto Beach, make your way through the jumble of beach logs and head north beside the glittering sea. If possible, plan your journey in concert with a retreating tide so you'll enjoy easy walking and have lots of newly arrived flotsam and jetsam to examine as you make your way up the beach. In a half mile, you'll encounter Ellen Creek. Passage across this creek can usually be managed on logs, and then it's smooth sailing for another mile past momentous sea stacks to Hole-in-the-Wall. This graceful stone arch serves as a picturesque doorway through which the tides pass twice a day.

Campsites are plentiful above the beach to the south of the Hole-in-the-Wall, tucked into the first gnarled and weather-beaten trees. Position yourself at sunset between the two prominent sea stacks south of "the Hole" to watch the last rays of the sun shine through them like a hallelujah chorus.

HIKE IT>> Rialto Beach to Hole-in-the-Wall

Distance: 4 miles round trip Map(s): Green Trails Ozette 130S, Custom Correct North Olympic Coast More Info/Permits: Olympic National Park, Wilderness Information Center

